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IF the opinions of profligate and of mistaken men may be thought to reflect disgrace upon the nation, of which they constitute a part, it might verily be said that England was never so much disgraced as at this time. Never before had the country been engaged in so long or so arduous a struggle; never had any country, in ancient or in modern times, made such great and persevering exertions; never had any country displayed more perfect magnanimity, and scarcely ever had any contest been terminated with such consummate and transcendent glory:—this at least is universally acknowledged;—it is confessed as much by the rage and astonishment of the ferocious revolutionist, and the ill-disguised regret of a party whom the events of the war have stultified as well as soured, as by the gratitude and admiration of all true Britons, and of the wise and the good throughout the civilized world. Yet at this time, when the plans of government have been successful beyond all former example—when the object of a twenty years war—the legitimate object of a just and necessary war—has been attained, and England, enjoying the peace which she has thus bravely won, should be left at leisure to pursue with undistracted attention those measures, which, by mitigating present evils and preventing crimes in future, may, as far as human means can be effectual, provide for an increasing and stable prosperity;—at this time a cry of discontent

is gone forth, the apostles of anarchy take advantage of a temporary and partial distress, and by imposing upon the ignorance of the multitude, flattering their errors and inflaming their passions, are exciting them to sedition and rebellion.

During the great struggle between Charles I. and his parliament, the people required an appearance at least of devotion and morality in their leaders; no man could obtain their confidence unless he observed the decencies of life, and conformed in his outward deportment to the laws of God and man. There was much hypocrisy among them as well as much fanaticism, but the great body of the nation were sincerely religious, and strict in the performance of their ordinary duties; and to this cause, more than to any other, is it owing that no civil war was ever carried on with so few excesses and so little cruelty, so that the conduct of the struggle was as honourable to the nation as the ultimate consequences have been beneficial. It is a melancholy, and in some respects an alarming thing, to observe the contrast at the present crisis, when the populace look for no other qualification in their heroes than effrontery and a voluble tongue. Easily deluded they have always been; but evil-minded and insidious men, who in former times endeavoured to deceive the moral feelings of the multitude, have now laboured more wickedly and more successfully in corrupting them. Their favourite shall have a plenary dispensation for as many vices as he can afford to entertain, and as many crimes as he may venture to commit. Among them sedition stands in the place of charity and covereth a multitude of sins.

Were it not that the present state of popular knowledge is a necessary part of the process of society, a stage through which it must pass in its progress toward something better, it might reasonably be questioned whether the misinformation of these times be not worse than the ignorance of former ages. For a people who are ignorant and know themselves to be so, will often judge rightly when they are called upon to think at all, acting from common sense, and the unperverted instinct of equity. But there is a kind of half knowledge which seems to disable men even from forming a just opinion of the facts before them—a sort of squint in the understanding which prevents it from seeing straightforward, and by which all objects are distorted. Men in this state soon begin to confound the distinctions between right and wrong—farewell then to simplicity of heart, and with it farewell to rectitude of judgment! The demonstrations of geometry indeed retain their force with them, for they are gross and tangible:—but to all moral propositions, to all finer truths they are insensible—the part of their nature which should correspond with these is stricken with dead palsy. Give men a smattering of law, and they become litigious; give them a smatter-

smattering of physic, and they become hypochondriacs or quacks, disordering themselves by the strength of imagination, or poisoning others in the presumptuousness of conceited ignorance. But of all men, the smatterer in philosophy is the most intolerable and the most dangerous; he begins by unlearning his Creed and his Commandments, and in the process of eradicating what it is the business of all sound education to implant, his duty to God is discarded first, and his duty to his neighbour presently afterwards. As long as he confines himself to private practice the mischief does not extend beyond his private circle,—his neighbour's wife may be in some danger, and his neighbour's property also, if the distinctions between *meum* and *tuum* should be practically inconvenient to the man of free opinions. But when he commences professor of moral and political philosophy for the benefit of the public,—the fables of old credulity are then verified—his very breath becomes venomous, and every page which he sends abroad carries with it poison to the unsuspecting reader.

We have shewn, on a former occasion,* how men of this description are acting upon the public, and have explained in what manner a large part of the people have been prepared for the *virus* with which they inoculate them. The dangers arising from such a state of things are now fully apparent, and the designs of the incendiaries, which have for some years been proclaimed so plainly, that they ought, long ere this, to have been prevented, are now manifested by overt acts. On this point, therefore, it cannot be necessary to enlarge. But there is a class of political reformers who profess, according to Horne Tooke's expression, that they mean to *stop at Brentford*; and as these gentlemen, as far as they go, use the same arguments by which their more eager allies are stimulated to go the whole way and push forward for the Bank and the Tower, it may not be a useless task to detect their fallacies and expose their falsehood.

It is boldly asserted that the late war was undertaken and carried on against the wishes of the people, and in support of despotic governments against the liberties of mankind; that it is the cause of the existing distress, being itself a consequence of the corrupt state of the representation; and that the remedy for all our evils is a Reform in Parliament. The first of these assertions is in direct opposition to the truth. The second imputes the evil to a cause in itself inevitable, and which has only incidentally and partially operated in producing it. The third recommends a remedy which could no more mitigate the disease, than the demolition of Tenterden Steeple could remove Goodwin Sands.

* No. XVI. Inquiry into the Poor Laws.

If ever there was a war begun and carried to its close with the hearty concurrence of the nation, it was the late war with France. We appeal to every person who remembers the beginning of the French Revolution, whether, if the question of peace or war had been referred to the people of England and decided by universal suffrage, Mr. Pitt would have found one dissentient voice in a thousand? The question completely broke up an opposition, which, till then, had nearly equipoised the weight of the ministry; the few who remained with Mr. Fox sunk at once from the rank and character of a party to that of a faction as feeble as they were unpopular,—so feeble, indeed, and so utterly insignificant in the scale, that they took the memorable step of seceding from Parliament. The principle of loyalty was triumphant even to intolerance; in most parts of England the appellations of republican and jacobin were sufficient to mark a man for public odium, perhaps for personal danger, persecution and ruin: government was supported and even impelled by public opinion; and there is perhaps no instance in history wherein a nation has been more unanimous than the British nation in the great and decisive measure of declaring war against the French republic. The records of parliament, the addresses and associations are unanswerable proofs of this. None but they who are entirely unacquainted with the transactions of those times can believe that the war was undertaken against the opinion of the people; and the writers and orators who assert it, make the impudent assertion either in utter ignorance or in utter contempt of truth.

Thus much concerning the commencement of hostilities, at which time, if the government of England had been a pure democracy, and the people had given their votes by themselves instead of their representatives, the majority in favour of that measure would have been even more apparent than it was. As for the justice of the war, had it been undertaken for no other purpose than that of weakening France, by dismembering it, England would have been justified by the conduct of France in the struggle with America. But it rests upon better ground. It has been asserted, with reference to this subject, that one nation has no right to interfere with the internal arrangements of another; and this assertion is to this day repeated, as if it were an axiom in political morality. But as M. de Puisaye, who demolishes the arguments built upon this sandy foundation, has well observed—it is with the independence of nations as with the liberty of individuals—they have a right to do every thing which involves no wrong to others. So long as my neighbour demeans himself conformably to the laws his conduct is no concern of mine: but if he convert his house into a brothel, or commence a manufactory there which should poison my family with

with its unwholesome stench, I prosecute him for a nuisance. If he should think proper to take an air-bath in the street before my windows, his natural liberty would be restrained by the wholesome discipline of Bedlam or of the beadle; and if he were to set his house on fire, the services of the finisher of the law would be required. Just such are the relations of one country to another. With the internal arrangements of any neighbouring people we have nothing to do, as long as their arrangements have nothing to do with us. Should they be seized with madness, bite one another, and turn the whole land into one miserable Bedlam, God restore them to their senses, we cannot. But if this Bedlam breaks loose, and its inhabitants insist upon biting us, there is no alternative but that of resorting to those measures which unhappily are the only substitute for law between nations when they differ; wars, as Lord Bacon says, being 'suits of appeal to the tribunal of God's justice, when there is none on earth to decide the cause.' That the French were in a state of madness, is what all Frenchmen of every party have confessed since they came to their senses after the reign of terror,—or of cowardice, as one of their own countrymen has more properly called it: and that they invited other nations to follow their example by a decree, promising assistance to any people who should rise to vindicate the rights of men, can be no matter of dispute, for the fact is recorded in history.

There may be some who question the policy of the war, however just the motives for which it was commenced, and there may be some ground for criticizing the manner in which it was conducted, with a view to what was, or ought to have been its main, or rather exclusive object; but only those persons who set truth at defiance and are incapable of shame will assert that it was unpopular. It was a war by acclamation, in which the people went with the government heart and hand. In its progress many errors were committed; so that if men had looked to the conduct of the allies, their discordant views and their deplorable counsels, they might, without hesitation, have pronounced the contest hopeless, had they not perceived on the other hand a constant and reasonable cause for hope in the condition of France itself. For in the course of the French revolution one excess succeeded another, each more extravagant than that which went before it; follies were generated by follies, crimes begot crimes, and horrors were produced by the monstrous intermixture of both, such as former times had never seen, not in the most barbarous countries, not in the fiercest ages of superstition, not under the most execrable tyrannies. If depletion be a remedy for raging madness, it might have been thought that blood enough was let by their own executioners to restore this frantic nation to its senses. It was impossible that so unnatural a

state should be permanent, certain that the great body of the people must desire rest and security above all other things, more than probable that when they were wearied with sufferings and with changes they would look to a restoration of the exiled family as the easiest and surest means of putting an end to them. Many occasions offered in which this object might have been effected had there been less treachery and less imbecility in the councils of the emigrant princes, and more wisdom and more decision in the allied cabinets. These opportunities were lost; and when in the tenth year of the war, the spirit of jacobinism was burnt out in France, and in the regular progress of revolutions a military government had been established upon the wreck of principles and institutions, the peace of Amiens was made.

As the war had been eminently popular at its commencement, so was the peace of Amiens made in entire concurrence with the general wishes of the people. Not that the great majority believed it would be permanent, but because they thought it on every account proper that the experiment should be made. The minority which followed Lord Grenville and Mr. Windham in condemning it, was even smaller than that which had sided with Mr. Fox in reprobating the war: but the weight of their arguments was felt, and they manifested a sensibility for the honour of the country, and a warmth for its interests which sunk deep in the public mind. The danger from jacobinism seemed to be gone by; there remained no other vestige of it in France than the wreck which it had brought about: the French nation was returning to its old fondness for tinsel and gold chains; the Eternal Republic had already past from the despotism of many to the despotism of one; it was evident that the First Consul might exchange his mongrel title whenever he thought fit for that of *Grand Monarque*, Emperor, or Arch-emperor, if it liked him better; and there was good reason for supposing, or rather no reason to doubt, that his inclinations were taking that course. There was therefore nothing to apprehend from France on the score of political contagion; the practical lectures which had been read upon jacobinism in that country might have been thought sufficient to undeceive mankind till the very end of time. But a new danger had grown out of the war to which that principle had given rise. What was the position in which France was left at its termination? What were the views of the French government, and what was the personal character of the individual by whose sole will it was directed?

The political system of Europe had been fearfully dislocated by the war. France had accomplished that which for a century and a half it had been the great object of English policy to prevent. She had obtained possession of the Netherlands, extended her frontier

tier to the Rhine, and held Holland on one side and Italy on the other, in actual dependance. Switzerland also—unoffending and happy Switzerland, the asylum of literature, liberty and peace, which during three centuries of contention had been respected as the sacred territory of Christendom—Switzerland also had been added, by an act of atrocious aggression, to the dependencies of France. All or more than all that Louis XIV. attempted had been effected. Was it likely, was it in the nature of things that France should stop here? Ambition is one of those passions which are stimulated, not satiated by indulgence. And this nation was habitually ambitious, habitually fond of war, politic in council, acting fervently and perseveringly amid all internal changes upon one system of aggrandizement, and pursuing its purposes, even in the best ages of its history, equally without faith and without remorse. The French were now surrounded with their trophies and intoxicated with their triumphs; had there been no other cause, their national character and the known policy which had so long actuated all their governments, must have made reflecting persons doubt the continuance of a peace concluded under such circumstances with such a people. But to increase these apprehensions France possessed a portentous military force, the greatest which had ever been seen in the civilized world, perfectly organized, in the highest state of discipline, and under generals whose talents were believed to be incomparable, and who were at the very height of military renown. ‘If the clouds be full of rain,’ says Solomon, ‘they empty themselves upon the earth.’ War, to which the French, more than any other people, had always been inclined, had become the national passion, the preferable—or rather the only road to wealth, honour and distinction: and there no longer existed upon the continent any counterpoise to the power of this restless, politic and elated people. Austria had come out of the struggle with loss of territory, diminished reputation, and exhausted resources. But the contest which had impoverished Austria and loaded England with an enormous debt, had been to France a source of revenue as well as power; for the French, beginning with bankruptcy at home, had proceeded abroad upon the maxim of Machiavelli, that men and arms will find money and provide for themselves. And as the officers and soldiers had been trained in the revolution, the principles which they had learnt in that ferocious school might render them as dangerous at home to the adventurer for monarchy as they would be powerful instruments for carrying into effect his wider plans of foreign usurpation. It was to be apprehended then, that both from motives of political and personal prudence the First Consul would employ these turbulent spirits in their vocation. Louis XVI. the most benevolent, the most truly religious, the most

conscientious of the Bourbon kings, engaged in hostilities against this country for no other reason than that the contest in America offered an opportunity for aggrandizing France by weakening England. Could we suppose that the First Consul would be more scrupulous, and let pass any occasion of gratifying the old enmity of France, and avenging himself upon the only people by whom he had ever been baffled in his career? Was he so just, so pious, so humane, that we might rely upon his faithful observance of treaties, and his love of peace?

Sir William Temple, a man of great sagacity and much political experience, observes that he 'never could find a better way of judging the resolutions of a state, than by the personal temper and understanding, or passions and humours of the princes or chief ministers that were for the time at the head of affairs.' This observation holds good even in free governments: with how much greater force must it apply to a country where every thing is decided by the will and pleasure of an individual! In such a country the course of its politics can be inferred solely from the character of that individual. How far then had the character of Buonaparte been developed at this time?

The English are a generous people. However much they might regret the course of adverse fortune in which they had been engaged, they did not regard the First Consul with any invidious feeling because he had been their successful enemy. They had rendered full justice to Washington under more humiliating circumstances: even those persons who disapproved in principle the cause in which he triumphed, regarded this excellent man with admiration and reverence. There were causes also which might make men of opposite parties agree in the wish that Buonaparte should not be found wanting in the scale; so that when they weighed him in their own judgment, there was a bias given, perhaps unconsciously, to the balance in his favour. The disciples of the revolution reconciled themselves to the disappointment of their republican hopes, by considering that the First Consul was a child of the revolution—the Jupiter of that Saturn which had devoured its elder children—that he prevented the restoration of the Bourbons, governed in the name, at least, of the people, and still talked of liberty and philosophy. The enemies of the Revolution saw more accurately that Buonaparte had destroyed republicanism in France, and as they had now given up the Bourbons, whose cause indeed they had never supported either wisely or consistently, it would be some consolation for the failure of their plans, if the man with whom they had treated should prove worthy of the rank in which they had recognized him as legitimately established. But with what aspects had this Lucifer of the age risen above the horizon? His career had

had been not more remarkable for boldness in enterprize than for audacity in crimes. His conduct in Italy had been alike distinguished by perfidy, rapacity, insolent usurpation, and cold calculating systematic inhumanity. Here he began that system of military murder which before his time was unknown in civilized Europe. Three * of the most honourable inhabitants of Verona were condemned by one of his military tribunals, and executed in sight of the whole city, because their countrymen had been provoked to resist the intolerable exactions and outrages of the French. One of these victims was in his hands upon the faith of a treaty, another as an ambassador, and the third had received a solemn assurance of security. So far from having acted as enemies towards the French, one of them had saved Frenchmen during the insurrection, and another had many times removed their wounded soldiers from the field, when their brutal comrades, and more brutal generals, had left them there to perish. With the same contempt of the law of nations, the usages of war, and the common feelings of humanity, Buonaparte put the municipal officers of Pavia to death. Military executions were inflicted without remorse upon the slightest pretext; and giving full scope to the brutal passions and corrupted principles of his soldiers, he suffered them to perpetrate every kind of havoc, cruelty, and abomination.

Such had been Buonaparte's conduct in Italy. His Egyptian expedition was characterized by deeper horrors. The massacre at Jaffa, and the poisoning of his own wounded men have frequently been denied, and there have been authors who with felicitous ingenuity have attempted upon these charges to prove a negative in his behalf. Both charges are now established beyond all possibility of further denial, by the avowal of the criminal himself, and by the full testimony of eye-witnesses to the massacres, and of men who were in the camp. These had been his actions before the peace of Amiens; they proved him to be alike destitute of truth, honour, religion, and humanity. 'That which is crooked cannot be made straight'—Was peace likely to be durable when it depended upon this man's faith? Was it reasonable to suppose that we should gather olives from this upas tree?

During the short continuance of peace, Buonaparte annexed Piedmont to France; he made himself president of the Italian republic; he formed a new constitution for Switzerland, and

* The names of these victims were Emili, Verità, and Malenza.—A monument should be erected to them on the spot where they suffered. For the history of these transactions, and a view of Buonaparte's character as it was developed during his first Italian war, the reader is referred to an Account of the Fall of Venice, translated from the Italian by Mr. Hinckley. It is to be regretted that so interesting a story should be so ill told.

marched an overpowering force into the country to establish it. The nominal independence of Holland was as little respected; troops were kept there to hold it in subjection, and exact such loans as he thought proper to demand. When England remonstrated against these acts of aggrandizement, and declared her intention of retaining Malta as some counterpoise, inadequate as it was, he replied that England had nothing to do with any arrangements of France; she was *hors du continent*,—excluded from continental affairs; and so she must remain—for this was now to be the first principle of European policy. The relations between France and England were the Treaty of Amiens, the whole Treaty of Amiens, and nothing but the Treaty of Amiens: and as for her retaining Malta, he said, he would rather see her in possession of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine.

Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futura—

he has lived to see her in possession of both. Little dreaming of such an issue, he threatened us with immediate invasion, and the vengeance which five hundred thousand men were ready to inflict. As a mercantile power, supposing, he said, that those words (*puissance marchande*) were ever again to be allied, England was prosperous, but those Englishmen who knew that a nation never can lose its glory with impunity, had good reason to perceive nothing but disasters before them. He required the British government to send the members of the Bourbon family, and all such emigrants as wore their orders, out of the country; and to put a stop to the unbecoming and seditious publications with which the newspapers and other works printed in * England were filled. The answer of the British government to this latter demand is well worthy of being held in remembrance,—for the honour of those ministers by whom it was dictated, and the instruction of those simple men who are taught to believe that the war against Buonaparte was a war against liberty. ‘His Majesty cannot and never will, in consequence of any representation, or any menace from a foreign power, make any concession which can be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of this country.’ The laws, they stated, were as open to the French government as to themselves. They neither had, nor wanted, any other protection than what those laws afforded; and never would they

* Among the improvements which the French government at that time was obliging enough to suggest in our constitution, one was, that all ministers, upon going out of office, should be disqualified for sitting in parliament during the next seven years: another proposed that any member of parliament who should insult an allied power (or, in other words, who should express an unfavourable opinion of the designs of the First Causal) should be debarred from speaking for two years.

consent to new model them, or change their constitution, to gratify the wishes of any foreign power. His Majesty, it was added, expected that the French government would not interfere in the manner in which the government of his dominions was conducted, or call for any change in those laws with which his people were perfectly satisfied.—Is it to be imputed to an entire ignorance of the state of England, or to an insolent belief that every thing must be subservient to his pleasure, that after this decisive reply Buonaparte returned to the subject, and formally proposed that ‘ means should be adopted to prevent in future any mention being made, either in official discussions, or in polemical writings, in England, of what was passing in France; as in like manner in the French official discussions and polemical writings, no mention whatever should be made of what was passing in England?’ England desired no such reciprocity. There was no part of her history, no part of her conduct, no part of her intentions, which required concealment. Was she to put out her eyes, because Buonaparte wished to keep France in darkness?

It is not unseasonable to recall these facts to remembrance, as also the appointment of military spies in our seaports, under the character of commercial agents—Sebastiani’s report upon Egypt, indicating clearly a design of repeating the attempt upon that country,—the declaration of Buonaparte that Egypt sooner or later must belong to France, either by an arrangement with the Porte, or by a partition of the Turkish empire,—and finally the memorable assertion that England was not able to contend single handed with France. Were we indeed so fallen, so changed? Were we actually, according to the new public law which was now enunciated, excluded from all concern in the affairs of the continent? Had we lost not only our rank, but even our place, among the powers of Europe; and were we to be thankful for the moderation which permitted us still to exist as a mercantile community? If so, it behoved us to demolish Blenheim, to prohibit all books of English history, and teach the whole rising generation the use of French as their common speech, that they might be prepared for the decree which should include Great Britain among the dependent provinces of France,—and London among the ‘ good cities’ of the Great Empire!—The alternative proposed to us was war, or such submission as, if it were not necessitated by utter helplessness, could be imputed only to cowardice or fatuity; a submission which would have given Buonaparte time to create a navy, and make invasion practicable; which would have delayed the war for no longer a time than suited his convenience—that is—till that navy should have been completed, and which would have rendered the war infinitely more formidable when the hour was come. Nor would the interval

interval have been peace;* it could only have been an armed truce; a state of feverish suspicion, harassed insecurity, and exhausting vigilance. This the people understood; they had been desirous that the experiment of peace should be tried, they saw plainly that the experiment had failed; that no danger could be so great and certain as that of continuing on such terms with such an enemy: when, therefore, the government, in perfect accordance with the sound judgment, the common sense, and the honest honourable feelings of the nation, determined upon renewing hostilities, the news was welcomed in the city of London with huzzas.

There were writers and speakers at the time who affected to regard this manifestation of public opinion with horror, and represented it as proceeding from a brutal insensibility to the evils of war, or a more brutal delight in anticipating its gains. They libelled their countrymen because party-feeling made them incapable of understanding the right English spirit which looked danger in the face, and thus cheerfully defied it in reliance upon God and a good cause. But had the city statesmen forgotten this memorable and notorious fact when they *resolved* that the war had been undertaken in opposition to the wishes of the people? We have heard of the omnipotence of Parliament, but the town and country petitioners in their omnipotence attempt to go beyond it; they enact for the past as well as the future, and vote unanimous resolutions which are to alter what *has been*. A French historian was one day relating some circumstances which had recently occurred; when a person, better informed of the transaction, told him that the facts were not as he represented them: '*Ah Monsieur!*' he replied, '*tant pis pour les faits,*' so much the worse for the facts! It was honestly said,—and is characteristic of French historians: but when men either in public or private assert things in opposition to the truth, and their assertions are disproved, the common consent of mankind has determined that it is so much the worse for the assertors:—a loss of character and of credit is incurred;—they are convicted either of ignorance, or of wilful misrepresentation, and in such cases ignorance is as poor a plea in morals and in politics, as in law.

The little opposition which was made to the renewal of the war was of a very different character from that which had been manifested at its commencement. There was a deep, though mistaken

* 'War,' says Hobbes, 'consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting, but is a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known; and therefore the notion of *time* is to be considered in the nature of war, as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of good weather lyeth not in a shower or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many days together, so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary.'

principle in the opposers of the anti-jacobine war,—a passionate persuasion that England was engaged in a bad cause. They who thought thus, believed the declarations of the French, overlooking their actions, or regarding them through a false medium, and being, for the most part, ill-read in history and ignorant of human nature. But after the peace of Amiens there was nothing of this delusion; no man dreamt that the liberties of France were invaded, or the rights of men in danger. They who had wished most sincerely for the triumph of those rights, desired now with equal sincerity that the adventurer might be overthrown, who, having it in his power to establish free governments in France and Italy, had chosen to erect a military tyranny for himself. They who loved liberty, knowing what they loved and wherefore they loved it, could have no other wish: experience had shewn them how widely their principle had been misled, and that very principle having rubbed off the rust of its error, pointed to the true north, and directed them in the right course. The few who opposed the war, opposed it upon the score of its inexpediency, and the inadequacy of the plea which had been assigned to indicate the approaching rupture. That plea however was a mere official form, like a fiction in law, in no degree affecting the merits of the cause. The question was placed by the minister upon its true grounds, when he said we were at war because we could not be at peace:—and it is absurd to call that inexpedient which is inevitable.

The popular character of the war was further manifested by the numbers who immediately enrolled themselves as volunteers. Buonaparte had expected no such unanimity, no such enthusiasm. His generals from Egypt had informed him of what materials the British army was composed, and he had himself received a memorable lesson from the navy at Aboukir and at Acre. Loudly therefore as he had threatened to invade us, the spirit which was displayed upon our shores intimidated him from attempting to put the threat in execution; and he turned away to the easier course of continental aggrandizement; hoping to effect the overthrow of England by excluding her merchandise from Europe, and thus ruining her finances. His operations were now carried on upon a greater scale than had ever before been witnessed in European warfare; his victories were more decisive, his successes more rapid; for having men at command, and being his own general, his progress was never retarded for want of an adequate force, or embarrassed by vacillating counsels; and as for means,—being troubled with no scruples of any kind, he not only supported his troops upon the countries in which they were quartered, but exacted contributions from his allies as well as his enemies. One campaign was followed by another, each more destructive than the last; till the

the peace of Tilsit left him undisputed master of the continent from the Elbe to the Adriatic, with Spain in vassalage, Denmark for his ally, and Russia moving like a puppet as he pulled the wires. That he aspired at universal empire was now scarcely disguised; it even seemed as if some drama of religious imposture was in preparation, and that he meant to enact the part of Mahomed as well as of Charlemagne. As in Egypt he had proclaimed that *Destiny* directed all his actions, and had decreed from the beginning of the world that *after beating down the Cross* he should come into that country to fulfil the task assigned him; so now he was addressed as the anointed Cyrus of the Lord—the living image of the Divinity—the mortal after God's own heart, to whom the fate of nations was entrusted;—and in a catechism, which was to be the first thing taught throughout the French empire, it was inculcated in direct terms, that to honour and serve the Emperor was the same thing as to honour and serve God himself! Under these circumstances peace appeared more remote than ever. An attempt was made to obtain it under the motley administration of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, but even the Foxites while they were in power felt that peace was impossible. And on this occasion the opinion of the citizens of London was again manifested, as at the beginning of the war; for when the Lord Mayor communicated, on the Royal Exchange, the failure of the negotiations, the persons who were present gave three cheers, expressing their preference of open war to an insidious peace, as any peace with Buonaparte must have been, and their approbation of the only course which was consistent with the safety and honour of the country. The usurpation of Portugal followed, and at the close of the year 1807, every state upon the continent had declared war against Great Britain, with the single exception of Sweden. The enemy was undisputed master of the land, but England retained the empire of the seas, and two mighty powers were thus opposed to each other which could not be brought in contact. There was no other hope at this time than what wise men derived from a conviction, that such a system of tyranny as that which Buonaparte had established could not possibly be permanent; but nothing like dismay was felt, nothing like despondency; the people were convinced that the continuance of the war was inevitable, and they knew that while it continued the country was safe.

Things were in this state when Buonaparte kidnapped the royal family of Spain, and appointed his brother Joseph to reign in their stead. If error and guilt may be compared, the political blunder in this nefarious transaction was not inferior to the moral wickedness: it gave us the most persevering nation in Europe for our ally, and it gave us also a fair field. From that time the war assumed

assumed a new character. They who were acquainted with the country which was now to become the scene of war, and the people with whom we were thus connected by no ordinary bond of alliance, but by inseparable interest as well as by the loftiest sympathy, felt a calm and settled assurance, that to whatever time the struggle might be prolonged it could only end in the full and entire deliverance of Spain. An impulse of the most generous, the most animating, the most inextinguishable hope was excited in every heart which was not withered by faction, or corrupted by a false and foul philosophy even to rottenness. There were such among us, but they were not numerous; and for a while the general and ebullient feeling with which all Britain overflowed imposed silence upon the lying lips. Even now it is delightful to look back upon that exhilarating time, when after so long and unmitigated a season, hope came upon us like the first breath of summer;—when we met with gladness in every countenance, congratulation in every voice, sympathy in every heart, and every man felt prouder than in all former times of the name of Englishman, of the part which his country had acted,* and was still called upon to act. These very men who now tell us that the present distress is the effect of wars unjustly commenced and pertinaciously persisted in, when no rational object was to be obtained—these very men who tell us that the war was not popular, that it was the work of a corrupt Parliament and not of the people,—these very men belie themselves as well as their country. They knew that no object could be more rational than that for which the war was persisted in, no object more just, more necessary, more popular; they were not such idiots as to think otherwise, not such traitors to human nature, not such stocks or stones as to be unmoved: they partook the popular joy, the popular enthusiasm; they joined in the unanimous expression of public opinion, which called upon Government to assist the Spaniards with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength of England.

It would be superfluous to retrace, however briefly, the course of the Peninsular war, fresh as it is in recollection, and recorded for everlasting remembrance, as the noblest portion of British history. During its progress we had indeed our ‘battle critics’ at home, who in ‘their deliriums of dissatisfaction upon any advantage obtained by their country,’ as Steele says of their predecessors in Marlborough’s day, fought every action over again as the enemy’s allies, represented our victories as defeats, and triumphantly proved that Lord Wellington was no general. And we had our wise men of the North, who came forward, like the son of Beor, to take up their prophecy in behalf of the Moabite; but the voice of the country

country was in accord with its own honour and its duty ; with its own dearest interests and with those of mankind.

If the character of the enemy against whom we were contending had been any ways doubtful before the peace of Amiens, subsequent events had now cleared it from all ambiguity. Having touched upon the former part of Buonaparte's conduct, we will here complete the delineation ; and for the benefit of those eminent patriots among us who look upon the Emperor Napoleon as the model of an enlightened prince, in as summary a manner as possible, enumerate some of the acts of this their *beau idéal* of a philosophical sovereign,—this Perfect Emperor of the British *Liberals*. It shall be no counterfeit likeness, nor heightened by any false colours ; the man is depicted in his actions and in those of the government which was directed by his single will. There is no necessity for insisting upon the murder of Pichegru and of Captain Wright ; faith depends in no little degree upon volition,—these things were done in a corner, and damning as the proofs are, the *Liberals* do not chuse to believe them. Letting therefore these counts of the indictment pass among other acts of supererogatory wickedness, we will enumerate only some of those deeds of individual cruelty and guilt which were committed in the face of the world, in open defiance of God and man, and which no person except an English mob-orator has ever dared either to deny or to defend :—the detention of the English travellers in France ; the betrayal and imprisonment of Toussaint ; the murder of the Duc d'Enghien ; the murder of Palm ; the murder of Hofer. These were the individual deeds of Buonaparte, his own peculiar acts, the cold and cowardly crimes of a heart incapable in its very nature of magnanimity, and malignant upon settled system. The tyranny of his home government extended to every thing. His merciless conscription placed all the youth of France at his disposal, and so largely did he draw upon this fund, and so lavishly did he squander it, that great as the population of France is, it was at length unable to answer the demand, and support his enormous expenditure of blood. The system of education was determined by law, and conducted upon the explicit maxim that all public education ought to be regulated on the principle of—military discipline. The plan was framed partly in imitation of the Jesuits, partly of the Mamelukes ; and as no person was permitted to act as tutor to another, except upon this plan of instruction, the study of Greek, the mother-tongue of liberty, was so far proscribed throughout France, that no person could acquire it by any other means than self-tuition. Every servant in Paris was registered, that the police might have a spy in every house. The number of printers was limited ; only four newspapers in the capital were per-

permitted to touch on political events, and no newspaper or writing of any kind could be published without the inspection and approbation of the government.* To complete the tyranny, as the Bastille had been demolished at the beginning of the Revolution, Buonaparte appointed eight Bastilles in different parts of France, for the reception of persons whom it was convenient to hold in durance, and not convenient to bring to trial. Such was the system of government established in France by the Perfect Emperor of the Ultra-Whigs and Extra-Reformers.

The foreign policy of Buonaparte united falsehood, treachery, frantic pride, and remorseless barbarity. Witness the *noyades* at St. Domingo; witness the commandant at † Cerigo, who in his official correspondence with his superior, informed him that being inconvenienced with about 600 Albanian refugees, he had disembarrassed himself of them by poisoning their wells. Witness Holland, impoverished, deceived, oppressed, and finally usurped! Witness Germany, partitioned and re-partitioned, plundered, ravaged, and insulted, her children forced into the service of their enemy, and sacrificed by myriads to his insatiable lust of conquest! Witness Prussia, her wrongs, her long sufferings, her holy hatred, her glorious resurrection and revenge! Witness the black tragedy of the Tyrol! Witness Portugal, where, when the French entered professedly in peace and without the slightest opposition, they exacted a contribution, the amount of which was equal to a poll-tax of a guinea and a half per head, upon the whole population; and where, when they left it, they committed crimes and cruelties of so hellish a character, that it might almost be deemed criminal to recite them. Witness Spain! A certain great authority, indeed, to whose predictions we have before alluded, has said that 'the hatred of the name of a Frenchman in Spain has been such as the reality would by no means justify;' and that 'the detestation of the French government had, among the inferior orders, been carried to a pitch wholly unauthorized by its proceedings towards them.' The treacherous seizure of their fortresses, the kidnapping of their royal family, to whom, whatever might be the merits of that family, the Spaniards were devotedly attached, and the usurpation of their throne and their country, might in the judgment of ordinary men be thought to authorize a considerable degree of detestation for the government by which such acts had been committed: so it should appear at first sight:—to politicians gifted with the faculty of second sight, it may

* Incredible as the fact may appear, for its absurdity as well as the perverse disposition which it discovers, proposals were circulated in 1813 for reprinting the French *Moniteur* in London, because 'the English press was nearly in the same state of degradation as the press of Russia, and because important facts were often suppressed, coloured, and distorted in the English papers!'—Thus it is that faction makes men fools.

† The evidence for this atrocious fact may be seen in our Third Volume, p. 204.

appear differently. But if to these wrongs we add the details of this struggle so inexpiably and ineffaceably disgraceful for France, practised as these advocates may be in the defence of bad causes, this would not be found one of those cases which can be 'tolerably plastered over with light cost of rough-cast rhetoric.' Let us not, however, lacerate the feelings of the reader with particularizing the horrors of that most atrocious warfare,—suffice it to mention as public, notorious, undeniable and official acts, the wholesale murders committed by the military tribunal at Madrid, under that General Grouchy whom the friends of liberty are now honouring with public dinners in America; the cruelties of Marshal Ney in Galicia; the fore-purposed massacres of Marshal Suchet; the decree of Marshal Soult for putting to death all persons who should be taken in arms against the intrusive government; and the decree of General Kellerman by which, after all horses of a certain standard were seized for the use of the French, the owners of those which were left, as being below the standard, or as being mares pregnant for more than three months, were ordered to put out the left eye of their beasts, or render them by other proper means unfit for military service!—Such was the system carried on in foreign countries by the Perfect Emperor of the Ultra Whigs, and Extra Reformers. That any man should raise his voice in behalf of such a tyranny and such a tyrant is wonderful,—that any Englishman should do so is monstrous. The distinctions between right and wrong are broad and legible, and all men who have sufficient use of reason to be moral and accountable beings, are enabled by God to read them. But society has its idiots as well as nature: and the poor natural of the village workhouse who excites the mockery of brutal boys is less pitiable, in the eyes of thoughtful humanity, than he who, drunk with faction and inflamed with discontent, renders himself a fool at heart.

It was against the tyrant by whom these infernal measures were enjoined, and against the atrocious army by which they were enforced in full rigour, that our war was waged, not against the French people. We and our allies fought, as the Common Council truly expressed it in their address to the Emperor of Russia, 'not to subdue but to deliver a misguided people;' and our efforts were crowned (to use the language of the same address) by 'the deliverance of the afflicted nations of Europe from the most galling oppression and unprecedented tyranny that ever visited the human race.' Who does not remember the universal joy which the overthrow of that tyranny produced? The sense of the country cannot be more faithfully expressed than it was by the same Common Council of London in their address to the Prince Regent.

'We cannot, Royal Sir,' said they, 'upon such an occasion, but look back with the highest admiration at the firmness, the wisdom, and the energy

energy which have been exercised by our beloved country during this long and arduous struggle. Had not Britain persevered, the liberties of Europe might have been lost. Had not her valiant sons been foremost in victory both by sea and land, it is too probable that the glorious emulation exhibited by her great allies would have been still dormant. Had not her triumphant armies under the immortal Wellington co-operated with the brave inhabitants in rescuing the Peninsula from the grasp of an unprincipled invader, Germany and Holland might yet have groaned under the iron despotism of the oppressor, and the efforts of the magnanimous Alexander been ineffectual to relieve them. These astonishing energies we believe to have been called forth by that admirable constitution of government which Britons possess as the best inheritance derived from their fathers, and which with proud satisfaction we observe is considered as affording the true basis of civil liberty by surrounding nations.'

Here the Common Council unequivocally and in the strongest terms deliver their opinion that the policy of the war was wise; that the object was in the highest degree important and desirable, being nothing less than the liberties of Europe; that that object had been accomplished through the exertions of this country, and that its happy accomplishment was owing to the firmness and wisdom with which the contest had been pursued, and to the advantages which we derived from the possession of a free constitution. And in thus saying they spoke the genuine sentiments of the people of England. But lo—this very Common Council of London, before the shoes were old in which they followed their former address, make their appearance at court with another, in which they tell the Prince Regent, that the war was 'rash and ruinous, unjustly commenced and pertinaciously persisted in, when no rational object was to be obtained;' and that this as well as sundry other evils has arisen from the corrupt state of the representation by which the people had been deprived of their just share and weight in the legislature. If the Prince had been, like Charles II., disposed to jest with men of this stamp, in what a situation might he have placed them by desiring that the first address might have been read for their edification, as the second had been read for his; and then requesting them to reconcile the two!—The invention of printing in parallel columns was a happy one for consistency like this—e. g.

PHILIP SOBER.

1814.

'We cannot but look back with the highest admiration at the firmness, the wisdom, and the energy which have been exercised by our beloved country during this long and arduous struggle.

PHILIP DRUNK.

1816.

'Our grievances are the natural effect of rash and ruinous wars, unjustly commenced and pertinaciously persisted in.

'Had not Britain persevered, the liberties of Europe might have been lost.

'These astonishing energies we believe to have been called forth by that admirable constitution of government which Britons possess.'

'No rational object was to be obtained.

'All constitutional controul over the servants of the crown has been lost, and parliaments have become subservient to the will of ministers.'

It may be proper to shew cause why we should have affirmed that Philip was sober in 1814, and drunk in 1816, when Philip himself might chuse to reverse the statement, and plead drunk on the former occasion, having, at that time, been dining with kings and emperors. But Philip himself cannot be admitted as a fair judge of his own condition; and as persons, who, when in possession of their reason, are sensible, well-disposed, and decently behaved, will, when in liquor, talk nonsense, and become mischievous, quarrelsome, and insulting, it is clear, that Philip was sober when the first address was composed, and *non compos mentis* on the latter occasion.

In reality, as Great Britain never before had been engaged in so long or so arduous a war, so never was any war so constantly approved by the great body of the people, because none was ever more unequivocally just. It was a cause to which the strong language of old Tom Tell-troth might be applied, at being 'so just and so religious in all humane and divine respects, that if the noble army of martyrs were sent down upon earth to make their fortunes anew, they would chuse no other quarrel to die in, nor hope for a surer way to recover again the crown of glory.'

While the war continued, the large expenditure which it occasioned at home* kept all things in activity, the landlord raised his rents as the government increased its imposts, the farmer demanded higher prices for his produce, and every man who had any thing to sell advanced the price of his commodities in like manner and in full proportion. Upon annuitants, and other persons,

* There is a passage in Bishop Burnet which is strikingly applicable to recent times. He is speaking of Marlborough's war, and shewing how the nation abounded both in money and zeal. 'Our armies as well as our allies were every where punctually paid: the credit of the nation was never raised so high in any age, nor so sacredly maintained: the treasury was as exact and as regular in all payments as any private banker could be. It is true a great deal of money went out of the kingdom in specie; that which maintained the war in Spain was to be sent thither in that manner:—by this means there grew to be a sensible want of money in our nation; this was in a great measure supplied by the currency of Exchequer bills and bank notes; and this lay so obvious to the disaffected party, that they were often attempting to blast, at least to disparage this paper credit; but it was still kept up. It bred a just indignation in all who had a true love to their country, to see some using all possible methods to shake the administration, which, notwithstanding the difficulties at home and abroad, was much the best that had been in the memory of man: and was certainly not only easy to the subjects in general, but gentle even towards those who were endeavouring to undermine it.'

who,

who, from their sex or age and habits, had no way of improving their limited fortunes, the burthen bore with its whole weight;— a most respectable class, who suffered severely, but without complaining. It was shewn in our last Number, in what manner the transition from a state of war to a state of peace produced, inevitably, great embarrassment and extensive distress. The war, a customer to the amount of more than fifty millions annually, left the markets—it would be absurd to ask whether or not this must affect the innumerable persons who were employed in providing the articles which it required. The extent to which machinery has been carried has thrown many hands out of employment at home; and the use of that machinery, which was at one time almost exclusively our own, and most of which is of our invention, has been introduced abroad; both inevitable consequences of the improved state of knowledge. The continental nations have learnt to manufacture many articles of necessity for themselves, for which they formerly were, in a great degree, dependant upon us; and they have no money to spare for articles of luxury:—they have suffered too much during twenty years of warfare and oppression. To these causes must be added, what is perpetually operating as a cause of partial distress, the fluctuation of our own capricious fashions, which, as they vary from muslins to silks, and from silks to stuffs, injure alternately the looms of Glasgow and Manchester, of Spitalfields and of Norwich. Add also the consequences of a season which has been more unfavourable to agricultural produce of every kind than any within the memory of man; and whatever difficulties and distresses may exist either in the agricultural or manufacturing part of the people, may be explained without referring them to corrupt parliaments, profligate ministers, and the Prince Regent.

We have before us the resolutions of sundry meetings held in the city of London, to consider the propriety of petitioning the Prince Regent and the Legislature for a reform in Parliament.— The resolutions from Bishopsgate assert, that the people are ‘goaded with an army of remorseless tax-gatherers, urged on by the cravings of a rapacious, oppressive, and imbecile administration:’ they remind us that our history exhibits the patriotic sons of England as ‘dismissing and chastising those kings and counsellors, whose profligacy and arbitrary attempts had rendered them obnoxious;’ they say that ‘the most profligate expenditure among the people’s servants, from the lowest to the highest rank, and an unfeeling disregard of the people’s wants and miseries, are among the lightest subjects of complaint.’ They tell us, that ‘statesmen, living upon the public spoil and holding places of high trust, are found in this day to advocate the accursed doctrine of legitimacy:’ in

other words, the Divine right of kings. They tell us, that the British Government have employed 'their base engine, the standing army,' to assist in establishing the Inquisition. They say, the said resolutions of Bishopsgate-ward,—'We claim, we demand and insist that we may have a constitutional voice in the House of the people. A full, fair, and free representation of the people and parliaments of short duration will immediately tend to restore the country to health, happiness, and vigour.' And then they say, they 'shall no longer hear of Habeas-corpus suspension bills, of gagging and treason bills;—measures, be it observed, which they seem very naturally and properly to apprehend. The resolutions from Farringdon-without complain of 'the long, desolating and profligate war against the French people, a war whose object, character, and consequences, they both reprobate and deplore.' They complain also of 'a standing army, wholly unnecessary and dangerous:' and an 'intolerable horde of state and of parish paupers.' They require a 'complete and radical reform,' assuring us however that they wish it to be 'peaceable and tranquil,' and they are 'convinced that corruption will not dare refuse, or policy misunderstand the prayers and wishes of an united people.' Mr. Coates was the mover of these resolutions,—not Mr. Romeo Coates, the amateur of fashion,—but Mr. Coates, the amateur of gin, who recommends his gin as a wholesome and strengthening beverage, and inveighs in his advertisements against those canting moralists who represent gin-drinking as a vice! Mr. Coates is strong in his resolutions,—strong and fiery,—they smack indeed of the still,—but certainly not of the right British spirit. Mr. Hitchins of Cripplegate-without is even stronger. He tells us that 'the causes which blight all the hopes of the merchant, the manufacturer, the agriculturist, the peasant and the artist, are principally if not altogether to be traced to a system alike hostile to the interests of this country, the progress of freedom, and the welfare of the human race; a system first directed to crush the rising energies of freedom in France, and since employed as fatally in eradicating almost every trace of comfort, and every spark of independence at home.' He tells us 'it is in vain to expect that the friends and parties of abuses who now disgrace the honourable House of Commons will ever be brought to sit in judgment upon their own iniquities, or pass the sentence of condemnation upon their own misdeeds.' The inhabitants of this ward disclaim all party-feeling, all violent ebullitions of personal resentment,—they wish to avoid all excesses and disturbances; but they are convinced that nothing short of a radical reform will be effectual, and they recommend this measure as the only one which can save the state or satisfy the people:—'as the only means to prevent the country from experiencing *the danger of anarchy*

anarchy and the horrors of civil war, which appear to be the inevitable tendency and result of a further neglect of that constitutional method of restoring lost confidence.—Cripplegate has outdone Bishopsgate,—and Billingsgate may not be able to go beyond it.

‘We asked bread,’ says an orator at one of the mob-meetings in the country, ‘and they gave us a stone, by voting so many thousands for a monument to commemorate *that fatal day Waterloo.*’ At the same meeting, a man asserted, that ‘the horrors of the Inquisition had been restored at the point of the British bayonet.’ He, perhaps, in his ignorance, believed, upon the authority of Bishopsgate-ward, the infamous and detestable falsehood which he thus repeated. Truth, says a Jewish proverb, stands upon two legs, and a lie upon one;—but this lie has not a leg to stand on. The British government has, on one occasion—the only occasion in its power—interfered respecting the Inquisition, and it was to stipulate in solemn treaty with its ally, the Prince of Brazil, that he would take measures for abolishing it in his dominions. But the men who invent or repeat every kind of calumny against their country have neither ears to hear, nor understanding to comprehend, nor hearts to feel any thing to its honour. With them Buonaparte is no tyrant, Marshal Ney no traitor, and Waterloo a fatal day. The Monthly Magazine tells us that this country has occasioned the death of 5,800,000 persons, in Calabria, Russia, Poland, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal. Not Buonaparte—but this country, reader, England!—our country,—our great, our glorious, our beloved country, according to this Magazine, has been the guilty cause of all this carnage! And the worthy editor bawls out for condign punishment upon the authors of the war;—not meaning Buonaparte—he, injured man! being, in the opinion of the Pythagorean knight,* innocent of this blood! The said Sir Pythagoras has founded a society for preventing war—he should apply to his friend, the Ex-emperor, to become the patron of the society.

More than a century has elapsed since Steele expressed his wonder ‘that men should be malecontents in the only nation which suffers professed enemies to breathe in open air;’ and he observed, that the newspapers were as pernicious to weak heads in England, as ever books of chivalry had been in Spain: would that the madness which they engender was as harmless in its kind! What

* Mr.—we beg his pardon, Sir Richard Phillips, Knight, informs us, that he is a follower of the Pythagorean school, and has an utter aversion to all *animal* food. So had his fellow-disciple Oswald, the most ferocious and bloody agent of the French Revolution. So had the Egyptians:—

— *animalibus abstinet omnis*
Mensa, nefas illi factum jugulare capellæ;
Carnibus humanis vesci licet!

would he have said, had he seen the fearful humour of these distempered times, when men, 'who, of all styles, most affect and strive to imitate Aretine's,' are continually addressing the worst passions of the worst part of the community for the purpose of bringing the worst of all imaginable calamities upon their country?

Among the infirmities to which a state is liable, Hobbes reckons the agitations produced 'by pretenders to political prudence, who though bred for the most part in the lees of the people, yet animated by false doctrines, are perpetually meddling with the fundamental laws to the molestation of the commonwealth, like the little worms which physicians call ascarides'—an odd but congruent similitude! Of publications similar to the venomous diatribes which these men send abroad, Mr. Burke has truly said that—'if we estimated the danger by the value of the writings, it would be little worthy of our attention: contemptible these writings are in every respect. But they are not the cause; they are the disgusting symptoms of a frightful distemper. They are not otherwise of consequence than as they show the evil habit of the bodies from whence they come. *In that light the meanest of them is a serious thing.* If, however, he adds, 'I should underrate them, and if the truth is that they are not the result but the cause of the disorders,—surely those who circulate operative poisons are to be censured, watched, and, if possible, repressed.' This great statesman has cautioned us also against despising the leaders of factious societies as being too wild to succeed in their undertakings. 'Supposing them wild and absurd,' he says, 'is there no danger but from wise and reflecting men? Perhaps the greatest mischiefs that have happened in the world have happened from persons as wild as those we think the wildest. *In truth they are the fittest beginners of all great changes.*'

This also should be remembered, that men of real talents, when those talents are erroneously or wickedly directed, prepare the way for men of no talents, but of intrepid guilt, and more intrepid ignorance. Marat and Hebert followed in the train of Voltaire and Rousseau; and Mr. Examiner Hunt does but blow the trumpet to usher in Mr. Orator Hunt in his tandem, with the tri-color flag before him and his servant in livery behind.

We are assured that many 'intelligent men',—by which term is meant persons who can see farther than others into a mill-stone,—believe that the late attempt at insurrection was planned and directed by Ministers. In what manner they explain this curious plot has not been clearly stated; whether Lord Sidmouth hired persons to shoot at the Lord Mayor in order to revenge himself upon that magistrate for having ridden in triumph through the streets of Westminster; or whether, as appears more probable from the subsequent proceedings and correspondence between them, the Lord Mayor

Mayor has acted in collusion with Lord Sidmouth, and agreed to be shot at.—Upon this politic speculation, the hand-bills which instructed the mob to break open the gunsmiths shops were printed and circulated by order of Government, and young Watson is no doubt at this time concealed in the Secretary of State's Office. In sad and sober truth such absurdities are gravely advanced,—and no absurdities are too gross to be believed by men who are thoroughly possessed with the spirit of faction.

Is it then our opinion that there was a plan for overthrowing the Government by force? It might suffice to reply that those who ordered the flags, that those who circulated the hand-bills, that those who went to the meeting provided with arms, and they who broke open the gunsmiths shops in order to seize arms, as the hand-bills directed—acted as if they thought so, and as if there was. This we infer—

' That many things having full reference
To one consent, may work contrariously;
As many arrows loosed several ways
Fly to one mark;
As many several ways meet in one town;
As many fresh streams run in one self sea;
As many lines close in the dial's centre;
So may a thousand actions once afoot
End in one purpose.'

The circumstances which render the multitude more dangerous and more apt instruments for madmen and villains to work with than they ever were in other ages, have been indicated in this Journal on more than one occasion. We are treading upon gunpowder, and if we suffer the insane or the desperate to scatter fire-brands,—it will be but a miserable consolation to know that the explosion by which we perish, will bury them also in the ruin which they produce. It would be a perilous inference, that because the design of overthrowing the British Government would be to the last degree extravagant as well as wicked, therefore no such design can have been formed. Men who are under the influence either of political or religious fanaticism are not to be deterred from their purpose either by reason or remorse. What could be more absurd and at the same time more atrocious than the Gunpowder Plot? There were Papists in that day who spoke of it, some as of an accident, others as an extravagance of juvenile zeal, others as a ministerial plot, just as the anarchists reason at present. But the history of that conspiracy is authenticated beyond all future controversy;—the mine was made ready, and the train was laid. We had an able and vigilant administration—England has never produced greater statesmen than those who directed her counsels at that

that time, and yet when the intended victims were preserved it was by the providence of God, for the vigilance of man had been effectually eluded.

Are we then actually in danger of rebellion and revolution? What say the Bishopsgate statesmen to this question? They tell us that Englishmen are accustomed to *dismiss and chastise obnoxious kings and counsellors*:—whether they conceive the Prince Regent and his counsellors to be in this predicament may be readily understood from the whole tenour of their resolutions; and they *claim, demand and insist* upon such a reform as may seem good to the sages of Bishopsgate-ward who moved and voted them. What says Mr. Coates of Farringdon-without and the gin-shop? Mr. Coates informs us that corruption *will not dare refuse*, or policy misunderstand the prayers and wishes of an united people. What say the statesmen of Cripplegate-without?—they declare that Parliamentary Reform is the only means *to prevent anarchy and civil war*. A speaker at one of the Westminster meetings said, he trusted 'that under the guidance of Lord Cochrane, they would not scruple, if the load of taxation was still continued, to imitate the example of Hampden, and *refuse to pay it*?'—and this speech, it is added, was received with loud applauses. It is not for a court of criticism to take cognizance of such language as this, nor for us to say to what penal statute the men who have uttered it have made themselves amenable. Yet it was by mere accident that the Lord Mayor, who presided at one of these meetings, did not sanction its language in person as well as by deputy: and he with the aldermen and commons of the City of London in Common Council assembled, asserted in that address which called forth so well deserved and dignified a reproof from the Prince—that nothing but reform could allay the irritated feelings of the people:—'the corrupt and inadequate state of the representation' being, they said, the cause of all these evils:—all,—the war,—the progress of manufactures abroad,—the fluctuations of fashion at home,—and the unkindly season which has been experienced every where,—the state of the representation has occasioned them all.

Let us here transcribe an apposite tale to which we have before alluded,—it was related by Bishop Latimer in the last sermon which he preached before Edward VI. An assertion as logical as that the state of the representation has been the cause of the late war and the present embarrassments in trade, had been made against this father of the English Church. 'Here now,' said he, 'I remember an argument of Master More's which he bringeth in a book that he made against Bilney; and here by the way I will tell you a merry toy. Master More was once sent in commission into Kent, to try out (if it might be) what was the cause of Goodwin-sanda, and the

the shelves that stopt up Sandwich-haven. Thither cometh Master More and calleth the country before him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could of likelihood best certify him of that matter concerning the stoppage of Sandwich-haven. Among others came in afore him an old man with a white head, and one that was thought to be little less than an hundred years old. When Master More saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to hear him say his mind in this matter, for being so old a man it was likely that he knew most of any man in that presence and company. So Master More called this old aged man unto him and said, ' Father, said he, ' tell me if ye can, what is the cause of this great arising of the sands and shelves here about this haven, the which stop it up that no ships can arrive here? Ye are the eldest man that I can espy in all this company, so that if any man can tell any cause of it, ye of likelihood can say most in it, or at least wise more than any other man here assembled." " Yea forsooth, good master, (quod this old man,) for I am well nigh an hundred years old, and no man here in this company any thing near unto mine age." " Well then, quod Master More, how say you in this matter? What think ye to the cause of these shelves and flats that stop up Sandwich-haven?" " Forsooth, sir, quoth he, I am an old man. I think that Tenterton steeple is the cause of Goodwin-sands. For I am an old man, sir, (quod he,) and I may remember the building of Tenterton steeple, and I may remember when there was no steeple at all there. And before that Tenterton steeple was in building, there was no manner of speaking of any flats or sands that stopped the haven, and therefore I think that Tenterton steeple is the cause of the destroying and decaying of Sandwich haven.'

How often in private and in public transactions may this anecdote be recollected! Just so the corrupt state of the British Parliament has occasioned the events of the last six and twenty years, and produced the distress in Spitalfields, Birmingham, Staffordshire and wherever else it exists. Who does not see that when the French abolished monarchy and the christian religion, expelled their nobles, persecuted their priests, murdered their king and queen, guillotined more than 18,000 of their countrymen, and invited the people of other countries to follow their example, by promising to support them in the attempt,—who does not see that all this proceeded from the corrupt state of the British Parliament! This also is the secret clue to Buonaparte's policy,—the *cause causative* of all his measures. If he went to war with Mr. Addington's administration and refused peace from Mr. Fox's,—it was in consequence of the state of representation in England. He detained the British travellers, he proscribed our manufactures, he enslaved the Dutch, he oppressed the Germans, he plundered the Portugeze, he massacred the Spaniards,

Spaniards, he aspired openly and avowedly at universal empire, he spread havoc and misery from Lisbon to Mosco, and from the Elbe to the Adriatic because—'it has been offered to be proved that the great body of the people of England are excluded from all share in the election of members.'—The men who ascribe the war and all its consequences to the corrupt state of Parliament, should take their text from Rousseau, and say as he did, when advancing an opinion not more absurd and destitute of truth, 'let us begin by throwing all the facts aside, for they do not at all concern the question.'

All the reasoners, or rather the no-reasoners in favour of parliamentary reform, proceed upon the belief of Mr. Dunning's or Mr. Burke's famous motion, that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished. Whether that position was true when the motion was made and carried, might with great justice be controverted. That it had ceased to be so at the beginning of the French revolution in Mr. Burke's judgment, we know; he himself having recorded his opinion in works which will endure as long as the language in which they are written; and the converse of that proposition is now distinctly and decidedly to be maintained. The three possible forms of government, each of which, when existing simply, is liable to great abuses, and naturally tends towards them, have been in this country, and only in this country, blended in one harmonious system, alike conducive to the safety, welfare and happiness of all. That safety, welfare and happiness depends upon the equipoise of the three component powers, and is endangered when any one begins to preponderate. At present it is the influence of the democracy which has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Whatever additional influence the crown has obtained by the increased establishments which the circumstances of the age have rendered necessary, is but as a feather in the scale, compared to the weight which the popular branch of the constitution has acquired by the publication of the parliamentary debates.

But what is meant by Parliamentary Reform? Whenever this question has been propounded among the reformists at their meetings, it has operated like the apple of discord—the confusion of Babel has been renewed,—with this difference, that the modern castle-builders are confounded in their understandings and not in their speech. One is for triennial parliaments, another for annual; and one, more simple than honest, proposes to petition for triennial only as a step toward obtaining annual. One will have a qualification for voters, another demands universal suffrage. Mr. Orator Hunt proposes voting by ballot, and one of the Penny Orators says, that if Magna Charta were made the bulwark of a General Reform

form the country would be speedily relieved. He knows as much about Magna Charta as about bulwarks,—and as much about the philosopher's stone as of either. They talk of restoring the constitution;—what constitution? Every one must have seen a print of the mill for grinding old women young;—these state-menders might as reasonably take poor old Major Cartwright to a mill, and expect to see him come out as green in years as he is in judgment, as think that any country can go back to its former state. There are things which are not possible even by miracle. But if the impossible miracle were conceded, at what age would the restorers have their renovated constitution? Would they prefer that of the Norman kings, or of the Plantagenets with all its feudal grievances? Or the golden days of Elizabeth, when parliament trembled as the virago asserted her prerogative? Or would they have it as under James I. when the Commons 'did on their hearts' knees agnize' his condescension in making his royal pleasure known? Or as under William the Deliverer, and his successor Queen Anne, with all the corruption and treason which arrested Marlborough's victories, and betrayed Europe at Utrecht? Or would they accept it as it was even at the commencement of the present reign, when the debates were published in a mutilated and fictitious form, confessedly by sufferance? The multitude being ignorant are at all times easily deceived, and therefore sin through simplicity. But if any man who possesses the slightest knowledge of English history, asserts that the people of England, at any former time, possessed so much influence as during the present reign, and more especially during the last twenty years, he asserts what is grossly and palpably false, and what he himself must know to be so.

The British constitution is not the creature of theory. It is not as a garment which we can deliver over to the tailors to cut and slash at pleasure, lengthen it or curtail, embroider it or strip off all the trimmings, and which we can at any moment cast aside for something in a newer fashion. It is the skin of the body politic in which is the form and the beauty and the life,—or rather it is the life itself. Our constitution has arisen out of our habits and necessities; it has grown with our growth, and been gradually modified by the changes through which society is always passing in its progress. Under it we are free as our own thoughts; second to no people in arts, arms and enterprize; during prosperous times exceeding all in prosperity, and in this season of contingent, partial and temporary distress suffering less than any others, abounding in resources, abounding in charity, in knowledge, in piety and in virtue. The constitution is our Ark of the Covenant;—woe to the sacrilegious hand that would profane it,—and woe be to us if we suffer the profanation! Our only danger arises from the abuse of freedom,

freedom, and the supineness with which that abuse is tolerated by those whose first duty it is to see that no evil befall the commonwealth. Accusations are heaped upon them with as little sense as truth, and as little moderation and decency as either; let them, however, take heed lest posterity have bitter reason for ratifying the charge of imbecility, which it will have, if they do not take effectual means for silencing those demagogues who are exciting the people to rebellion. Insects, that only 'stink and sting,' may safely be despised,—but when the termites are making their regular approaches it is no time to sit idle; they must be defeated by efficacious measures, or the fabric which they attack will fall.

But it has been offered to be proved at the bar of the House of Commons 'that the great body of the people are excluded from all share in the election of members, and that the majority of that House are returned by the proprietors of rotten boroughs, the influence of the Treasury, and a few powerful families.' This has been said by all the reformers since Mr. Grey presented his memorable petition, and the Lord Mayor, with the Aldermen and Commons of his party, have repeated it in their addresses to the Prince Regent. Supposing that the assertion had been proved, instead of 'offered to be proved'—does the Lord Mayor—or would the Lord Mayor's fool, if that ancient officer were still a part of the city establishment, suppose that in a country like this it would be possible to deprive wealth and power of their influence, if it were desirable? or desirable, if it were possible? That the great landholders have great influence is certain; that any practical evil arises from it is not so obvious. The great borough-interests have been as often on the side of opposition as with the government; Sir Francis Burdett even makes use of this notorious fact as an argument for reform, and talks of the strength which the crown would derive from diminishing the power of the aristocracy. But that influence has been greatly diminished in the natural course of things. A great division of landed property has been a necessary consequence from the increase of commercial wealth. Large estates produce much more when sold in portions than in the whole, and many have been divided in this way, owing to the high price which land bore during the war, more especially in the manufacturing and thickly peopled counties. Thus the number of voters has increased, and the influence of the great landholders has in an equal degree been lessened. In Norfolk, for instance, though chiefly an agricultural county, the voters have been nearly doubled; in Yorkshire they have more than doubled; and in Lancashire the increase has been more than three-fold. This is mentioned not for the purpose of laying any stress upon it, but to shew that such a change is going on; and that in more ways than one the wealth of the country lessens

lessens the power of the landed interest. It ought thus to do : and that purchase of seats, which is complained of as the most scandalous abuse in parliament, is one means whereby it effects this desirable object.

If the reformers will shew in any age of history, and in any part of the world, or in this country at any former time, a body of representatives better constituted than the British House of Commons—among whom more individual worth and integrity can be found, and more collective wisdom ; or who have more truly represented the complicated and various interests of the community, and more thoroughly understood them, then indeed it may be yielded that an alteration would be expedient, if such an alteration were likely to produce an amendment. But in a state of society so infinitely complicated as that wherein we exist, where so many different interests are to be represented, and such various knowledge is required in the collected body, no system of representation could be more suitable than that which circumstances have gradually and insensibly established. Of the revolutionist, secret or avowed, adventurer or fanatic, knave or dupe, (for there are of all kinds,) we shall say nothing here but address ourselves to the well-meaning reformer, who has no intention farther than what he openly professes. What alteration would he propose in our county elections—to begin with these as being of most apparent importance. He would neither alter the basis nor the superstructure ;—the means nor the end. He would desire, perhaps, to improve the manner of election, to extend the qualification for voters in some respects, and limit it in others—things which might be desirable, if in reality they were not very unimportant. It might be well that copyhold estates, as is frequently proposed, should confer the same right as freeholds ;—that the qualification should be raised from forty shillings to as many pounds, or at least to half as many ; and that persons leasing lands to a certain amount, or assessed in direct taxes to a given sum, should be entitled to vote. It might be well also if the votes were taken in the respective parishes. Nothing is so easy as to propose slight alterations of this kind ; and in times of perfect tranquillity when they are not demanded with insults and menaces of civil war, it is exceedingly probable that such things may be taken into consideration among the numerous plans for promoting the public good, in which parliament, by means of its committees, is continually employed. They might be conceded for the sake of those who fancy them of importance. The representatives would still be what they are and what they ought to be—men of large landed property, whose families are as old in the country as the oaks upon their estates, having hereditary claims to the confidence of their constituents,—in a word, true English gentlemen,

lemen, well acquainted with local interests, liable to error like other men, but above all suspicion of sinister motives; perfectly independent, and, unless they are stricken with fatuity, sincerely attached to the existing institutions of their country. Such are the men whom the counties must always return upon any plan of representation: unless the frantic scheme of universal suffrage were adopted, which would inevitably and immediately lead to universal anarchy.

As men of family and large estates are the natural representatives of the counties, so are the great towns, with equal fitness, represented by men of eminence in the commercial world, or persons distinguished for ability in the senate, or for their services in the fleets and armies of their country; the first class well known on the spot, and therefore possessing that local influence which wealth and respectability properly confer—the two latter standing upon the high ground of honourable popularity. When county elections are contested, it is usually, as far as the great body of the freeholders are concerned, less a struggle between parties than between families, the colours of the candidates serve as sufficient distinction, and cause enough for as hearty an animosity while it lasts as that between Moor and Christian, or Portuguese and Jew. Unbounded license is given to libels in which truth and decorum are disregarded on both sides, and there is a plentiful expenditure of ale, ribbands and small wit. But in those large towns, where elections, strictly speaking, are popular, the fever is of a more malignant type. Here the contest is between parties, and is frequently carried on in a manner not unlike those private wars which are sometimes waged in London on successive Sundays, between the county of Cork men and the county of Tipperary men, or other tribes of the same nation, till heads and *shillelahs* enough have been broken on both sides to satisfy the point of honour, or till peace is concluded under the mediation of the constables and the magistrates. These elections are more passionate and infinitely more corrupt than those for the counties—in proportion as influence has less power, direct bribery has more; nor is there an imaginable device by which it can be performed, nor an imaginable form of deceit and perjury which is not put in practice. In one of the largest cities of England, the man who marries a freeman's daughter becomes free in right of his wife. When that city was contested, it was a common thing for one woman to marry half a dozen men during the election. The parties adjourned from the church to the church-yard, shook hands across a grave, and pronounced a summary form of divorce, by saying 'now death do us part;' away went the man to give his vote, and the woman remained in readiness to confer the same privilege in different parishes upon as many more husbands as the committee

committee thought it prudent to provide;—receiving her fee for each. In that same city, before the act which limited the duration of elections, (a measure of real reform,) we remember a contest which continued for more than six weeks, and not a day past without bludgeon work in the streets. But the ferocious spirit of a mob election has never been manifested so strongly in any other place as at Nottingham; and it has been asserted that the present state of that city, so ruinous to itself, and so inexpressibly disgraceful to the country, is attributable, in no slight degree, to the manner in which the excesses and outrages of party spirit have been tolerated, and even encouraged at such times.

It is exceedingly proper that the mode of election should be purely popular in some places, and that the populace and the ultra-liberty men should return such representatives as Wilkes and Sir Francis Burdett—or even Paul, if they will degrade themselves so far:—remembering what Lord Cochrane has been, we will speak of what he is in no other terms than those of undissembled compassion and regret. As for Mr. Orator Hunt, there is no likelihood that any place should return such a representative—unless Garratt were chartered to chuse a member as well as a mayor. It is not undesirable, in ordinary times, that we should hear exaggerated notions of liberty from men of ready language and warm heads, and in perilous seasons the gallery may always be cleared when harangues are made for the manifest purpose of circulating sedition through the country and inflaming discontent. But there is quite enough of this mixture in the House.

Money and faction bear about an equal share in great popular elections; it is in the small open boroughs where bribery and corruption have full play; where guineas during the golden age were served out of a punch-bowl; and where the voters paid their apothecaries' bill according to received custom after an election, from the thirty pounds which were the price of a vote. The law has provided pains and penalties against such practices; and why should government be reproached with a * corruption which exists wholly and exclusively among the people themselves? It is a transaction between Mr. Goldworthy the giver, and Mr. Freeman Bull the taker, of whom the former may be a staunch whig, and the latter a staunch patriot and honest Englishman, though the one is ready to pay thirty pounds for a vote, and the other to sell it at that price; and Mr. Goldworthy is just as likely to be found in the list of the opposition, or of the reformers, as of the ministerial members. There are indeed very few who sanction the silly question of

* As far as any good can be derived from counteracting false and pernicious doctrines by exposing them, it could not be done better than by circulating Mr. Windham's masterly speech upon this subject.

Reform; but few as they are the number would be lessened, if those among them who have come into parliament by means which that question attempts to stigmatize, were to abstain from voting upon it. Undoubtedly such practices are scandalous, as being legally and therefore morally wrong; but it is false that any evil to the legislature arises from them. When Mr. Curwen brought in his bill for more effectually preventing them, his main argument was that the bill would introduce a larger proportion of the landed interest into the House: that it would be an advantage to exclude all other influence from elections, except that of government, will not be admitted by the other branches of the community.

A laudable and useful ambition leads into parliament the opulent merchant and manufacturer; the lawyer high in his profession; the man who has returned with affluence from the East or West Indies, and is conversant with the customs, wants, and interests of our conquests and colonies; the military and naval officer, who in the course of their services have acquired a competent knowledge of affairs upon which the legislature must often be employed. It is for the advantage of the republic also that from a like ambition, men liberally educated, but more richly endowed with the gifts of nature than of fortune, should sometimes prefer the service of the state to that of the army or navy, or of the three professions, as an honourable path to distinction. These persons possess no landed or local interests; they owe their seats therefore to some one into whose hands such interests through the changes of time and circumstances have devolved, and with whom they coincide in political opinions. Agreeing thus upon the general principle, it is not likely that any difference should arise upon a great question; if it should, the member vacates his seat; and whether he who accepts a seat upon this implied condition, be not as unshackled, as independent, as conscientious, and as honourable a member, as the man who keeps away from the discussion of a question upon which his own opinion differs from that of the populace whose favour he courts, is a question which a child may answer. Others there are who have made a direct purchase of their seats, and these may thus far be said to be the most independent men in the House, as the non-representatives are undoubtedly the least so. In one or other of these ways the House obtains some of its most useful, most distinguished, and most intelligent members.

The Ultra Whigs differ widely in the means of reform which they propose, the object however in which they generally agree, is that of rendering all elections popular. The principle that the representative must obey the instructions of his constituents, which many of the reformers profess, would follow as a necessary consequence; and the moment that principle is established, 'chaos is come again,'

anarchy

anarchy begins, or more truly an ochlocracy, a mob-government, which is as much worse than anarchy, as the vilest ruffians of a civilized country are more wicked than rude savages.

But supposing it were possible to avoid 'the great and broad bottomless ocean-sea-full of evils,' which popular reform would let in upon us, what is the good which it is expected to produce?—what are the proposed advantages for which we are to hazard the blessings we possess? First in the list the Common Council reckon the abolition of 'all useless places, pensions, and sinecures.' Supposing the whole abolished, to what might the public relief, or in other words, the diminution of taxes, amount?—not to a yearly tax of twopence-halfpenny a head upon the population! So groundless and so senseless is the clamour which would take away from the sovereign the power of reward, and from the government that of paying the public services. And the consequence would be, that every person who was not born to a large estate, would be excluded from political life, and the government must fall exclusively into the hands of the rich. These things may sometimes be unworthily bestowed, and some of them may be unreasonably great, though be it remembered that those which are so (the tellerships) expire with the lives of the present holders. But their existence is indispensable to the very frame of government. Those persons who tell the credulous and deluded people that taxes are levied for the good of administration, and who represent our statesmen as living and fattening upon the public spoil, must either be grossly ignorant, or wicked enough to employ arguments which they know to be false. The emoluments of office almost in every department of the state, and especially in all the highest, are notoriously inadequate to the expenditure which the situation requires. Mr. Pitt, who was no gambler, no prodigal, and too much a man of business to have expensive habits of any kind, died in debt, and the nation discharged his debts, not less as a mark of respect, than as an act of justice. But as it is impossible from the emoluments of office to make a provision for retirement, no man of talents, who is not likewise a man of fortune, could afford to accept of office, unless some reasonable chance (and it is no more than a chance) of permanent provision were held out; and this is done in the cheapest manner by the existence of sinecures. Mr. Perceval, for instance, could not have abandoned his profession to take that part in political affairs which has secured for him so high a place in the affections of his countrymen and in the history of his country, if a sinecure had not been given him to indemnify him in case he should be driven from office,—an event which might so probably have occurred in the struggle of parties. In this instance there was an immediate possession; but in general the prospect

prospect of succeeding to one when it may become vacant suffices ; and in no other way could men of talents be tempted so frugally into the service of the state. Whether it would be an improvement upon the government to have it administered only by the rich, is a question which needs no discussion.

'A delusive paper currency' is enumerated by the Lord Mayor and Common Council, in their unfortunate petition, as one cause of our 'grievances.' What! is the ghost of Bullion abroad?—buried as it was 'full fathom five' beneath reams of forgotten disquisitions, colder and heavier than any marble monument, what conjuror hath raised it from the grave? No fitter person could be called upon to lay a ghost than the Rector of Lincoln, who could talk Greek to it if necessary. He truly tells us, that the difficulty does not consist in there being *too much*, but *too little* money; that the sudden subtraction of so much paper currency has been a direct and obvious cause of the stagnation of industry; and he recommends an increase of the circulating medium to a great amount as the first measure necessary for meeting the exigency of the times.

The main objects then which it is proposed to effect by Parliamentary Reform are these: the abolition either of all influence in elections, (which is just as possible as it would be to abolish the east wind, or annul the law of gravitation by act of parliament;) or of all monied influence, (which would take away all counterpoise from the landed interest in the legislature;) the abolition of pensions and sinecures, whereby every man who is not born to a large fortune would be excluded from state affairs, and the government must necessarily become an oligarchy of the rich; and a further subtraction of currency, (too much having already been subtracted). As far as a Reform in Parliament could effect any of these objects, (supposing it were possible that it should stop here,) it would aggravate every ill which it pretends to cure; and instead of relieving the distress of any one branch of the community bring infinite distress upon all. How indeed is it possible that it could relieve them? Could it increase the consumption of iron, and thereby set the foundries at work, and give activity to the collieries? Could it compel the continental nations to purchase more of our goods, and encourage English manufacturers while their own are starving? If experience has failed to teach our manufacturers and merchants the ruinous folly of making the supply exceed the demand, and glutting those markets where they have no competition, would a Reform in Parliament make them wiser? Could it repair the ruin which has been extended over the whole continent by Buonaparte's frantic tyranny, and enable those customers who now are in want of necessaries themselves to purchase from us those
super-

superfluities wherein, in better days, they were accustomed to indulge? Can it regulate the seasons, and ensure the growth of corn?—when we know to our cost how utterly unable it is to regulate even its price!

But the petitioners tell us that a Reform in Parliament will calm the apprehensions of the people, and allay their irritated feelings! Their apprehensions! Of what are they apprehensive? Are their liberties threatened? Is Parliament, then, about to be suspended or disused, and ship-money levied by virtue of the prerogative? Do they apprehend that arbitrary power is to be established by 'that base engine of our profligate statesmen, the standing army,' and the bayonets of the Hanoverians? Or do they apprehend that there is a design to bring back popery, and that the beautiful works of art with which England has recently been enriched, not from the plunder, but by the gratitude of Italy, may prove to be saints in disguise, to be installed each upon his altar as soon as the plot is perfect! Of this danger, at least, the Ultra Whigs stand in no fear.—Of what then are they apprehensive? This is a question for which the Caledonian Oracle has happily already uttered a response. That high and veracious authority affirms that there exists among us 'a servile tribe' composed of 'enemies of liberty,' 'cold-blooded sycophants of a court,' 'vulgar politicians,' 'impostors,' and persons of 'extreme bad faith,' all of whom the said Oracle designates by the apt and convenient name of Quietists, because they assert that the British people are at this time living under a free government, and that their freedom is in no danger, an opinion which, if it continues, to use the very oracular words, '*bids fair to naturalize among us even now the worst abuses of foreign despotisms.*'—Indeed! We have heard of nothing so alarming since the conspiracy between Dr. Bell and the Archbishop of Canterbury was revealed from the same infallible shrine. Yes, the Oracle tells us that it is our duty to keep alive a jealousy of royal encroachments:—that '*confidence in our rulers is as foolish as it is unworthy of a free people.*' 'We may rest assured,' it says, 'that a sovereign will be too apt to exchange his duty for the very easiest and basest of employments—the sacrifice of all a nation's interests to his own.' It tells us that we have seen the Crown 'calling upon Parliament to support the expenses of the war, and withdrawing from Parliamentary controul and from all participation, *the whole profits of the victory.*' It says, 'this servile tribe (the Quietists) have contrived to borrow the authority of Mr. Burke for their bad cause, and to persuade the unthinking mass of mankind that they act in concert with that great man in their warfare (*the warfare of the Quietists*) against the rights of the people, and their mockery of the champions of the constitution. But it is fit to be remarked how unfairly he is

called in to their assistance.' If that great man could speak from the grave, with what a voice of thunder would he give the lie to this impostor who tells us that our danger at this time is from the Crown, not from the spirit of revolution and anarchy; and that he, were he living, would throw his weight into the popular scale! 'At home and abroad,' the Oracle tells us, 'we are in profound peace;' and it adds, 'now then let us, instead of crouching before domestic oppression, bethink us in good earnest of repairing in that constitution which our triumphs have saved, the breaches which the struggle itself has occasioned.' Who but must smile to find the Oracle, which *Philippized* during the contest, confessing now that the country has been 'saved' by that triumph which the cowardly counsels of the tripod would have rendered impossible!

But are we in such perfect peace at home as is thus gravely asserted?—If so, with what reason is it, that one set of City Resolutions 'contemplate with the deepest dismay and agony the too probable issue of such a state of things'—that others menace us with 'anarchy and the horrors of civil war, as the inevitable result if Parliamentary Reform be further neglected'—that tavern-orators and mob-orators tell us 'a crisis is at hand,' and that the demagogues, in their weekly and daily diatribes, are stimulating the people to bring into practice what the Oracle at this precise time, with its usual felicity, calls the *sacred principle of Resistance*? A provincial paper is before us, in which 'every mechanic in the county who has legs to carry him, is invited to a general meeting to embrace the glorious opportunity of manfully asserting his rights in a peaceable and constitutional manner, and to hoist the flag of general distress.' And the petitioners of the Common Council assert that 'nothing but Parliamentary Reform will allay the irritated feelings of the people.' By the people, of course, the discontented faction is meant—the deceivers and the deceived—according to that figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole—a political synecdoche. Upon the propriety of concession to a faction in this temper, Barleigh has left us his opinion, when in reference to the factions of his days, he asked Elizabeth whether she would 'suffer them to be strong to make them the better content, or discontent them by making them weaker,—for what the mixture of strength and discontent engenders,' says the veteran statesman, 'there needs no syllogism to prove.'

The Oracle would be satisfied with a simple change of situation between the Ins and the Outs. How much would satisfy the petitioners of all classes, the London citizens who prepare their own grievances, and the poor deluded mechanics in the country who receive them ready-made in one of Major Cartwright's three hundred circulars,—it would be difficult to say; nor can they themselves tell.

tell. And if all these parties were contented, (than which, the mind of man can imagine nothing more impossible,) there remain the Spencean Philanthropists,—a set of men not to be confounded with any of whom we have hitherto spoken;—men who know distinctly what they mean, and tell us honestly what they aim at,—infinitely more respectable than the shallow orators who declaim about Reform ‘with many words making nothing understood,’ and far more dangerous, inasmuch as great and important truths, half understood and misapplied, are of all means of mischief the most formidable. It is fit that our readers should have their political confession of faith before them.

SPENCE'S PLAN.

For Parochial Partnerships in the Land
Is the only effectual Remedy for the
Distresses and Oppressions of the People.

The Landholders are not Proprietors in Chief; they are but the
Stewards of the Public;

For the LAND is the PEOPLE'S FARM.

The Expenses of the Government do not cause the misery that
Surrounds us, but the enormous exactions of these
‘Unjust Stewards.’

Landed monopoly is indeed equally contrary to the benign
Spirit of Christianity, and destructive of
The Independence and Morality of Mankind.

‘The Profit of the Earth is for all;’

Yet how deplorably destitute are the great Mass of the People!
Nor is it possible for their situations to be radically amended, but

By the establishment of a system

Founded on the immutable basis of Nature and Justice.

Experience demonstrates its necessity; and the Rights of Mankind
Require it for their preservation.

To obtain this important object, by extending the knowledge of the above system, the society of Spencean Philanthropists has been instituted. Further information of its principles may be obtained by attending any of its sectional meetings, where subjects are discussed calculated to enlighten the human understanding; and where also the regulations of the Society may be procured, containing a complete development of the Spencean system. Every individual is admitted, free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum.

The Meetings of the Society begin at a quarter after eight in the evening, as under:

First Section every Wednesday, at the Cock, Grafton-street, Soho.
Second, Thursday, Mulberry Tree, Mulberry-st. Wilson-st. Moorfields.
Third, Monday, Nags Head, Carnaby-market.
Fourth, Tuesday, No. 8, Lumber-street, Mint, Borough.

In all the schemes which have been devised for a perfect society since men first began to speculate upon such subjects, the principle

of a community of goods has in some degree entered; and certain approaches toward it, though under many modifications, have been made both in ancient and modern times, as in Crete and in Sparta,—among the Peruvians, and by the Jesuits in Paraguay. Such a community prevailed among some of the primitive Christians, though no law of the Gospel enjoined it; the Moravians in Germany approach very nearly to it at this time. The mendicant orders were established on the same principle and have thriven upon it, *nihil habentes et omnia possidentes*—the Papal Church, with its usual wisdom, (for that church assuredly possesses the wisdom of the serpent,) having prevented the principle from becoming dangerous, by thus sanctioning, and taking it into its service. In America also it is acted upon by many obscure sects, living inoffensively and industriously in small communities. A religious influence has prevailed in all these instances,—Lycurgus could not have succeeded without the assistance of Apollo, and Mango Capac was the son of the sun. The doctrine becomes formidable when it is presented as a political dogma, with no such feeling to soften and sanctify it. Joel Barlow, the American republican, who died when lackeying the heels of Buonaparte on his expedition into Russia, perceived that the fashionable doctrines of liberty, of which he was so warm an advocate, tended this way, and must end there; but he thought proper to adjourn *sine die* the time for carrying these ultimate principles into effect. There is reason for supposing that Robespierre at the time of his overthrow had formed some extravagant project of this kind; he spoke of ‘momentous secrets which a kind of pusillanimous prudence had induced him to conceal,’ and promised to disclose in his will, if he should be cut off prematurely, the object to which what he called the triumph of liberty tended. If Babœuf may be believed, this object was an equalization of property, an object which Babœuf* attempted by the most atrocious means to bring about, but perished in the attempt. Happily it was made too late;—sick of horrors and satiated with blood, the people were weary of revolutions, and France escaped a convulsion more dreadful than any which it had experienced.

This, however, is not the theory of the Spencean philanthropists. These root-and-branch reformers take their name from a poor man, who, if he had unluckily lived in the days of the French Revolution, might have been a very inoffensive member of society, and remembered only, if he had been remembered at all, among those writers who have amused themselves by building constitutions in the air, instead of castles. ‘When I began to study,’ says he, ‘I found every thing erected on certain unalterable principles. I

* An account of this conspiracy, collected from the official documents, is in our seventh volume, p. 417—423. It is a curious part in the history of the French Revolution.

found every art and science a perfect whole. Nothing was in anarchy but language and politics. But both of these I reduced to order: the one by a new alphabet, and the other by a new constitution.' The new alphabet of this modest reformer we have not had the fortune to see; it seems, however, that the first edition either of his *New Constitution*, or his *Trial*, was printed in what he calls his 'natural or philosophical orthography.' His political opinions were first propounded in the form of a *Lecture*, read before the *Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* in 1775, and printed immediately afterwards; from which time, he says, 'he went on continually publishing them in one shape or other.' They are fully and harmlessly explained in his '*Constitution of Spensonia, a country in Fairy Land; situated between Utopia and Oceana.*' 'The Spensonian Commonwealth is one and indivisible;' and, 'the Sovereign People is the Universality of Spensonian citizens.' Divested of such nonsensical language, which was then in full vogue, and too much of which still passes current, his scheme is,—That the soil belongs to the state, and that individuals should rent their lauds and tenements from their respective parishes; the rent being the revenue, and the surplus, after all public expenses are defrayed, to be divided equally among all the parishioners; every kind of property being permitted except in land. The larger estates are to be leased for one and twenty years, and at the expiration of that term re-let by public auction; the smaller ones by the year: and larger ones subdivided as the increase of population may require. The legislative power is vested in an annual parliament, elected by universal suffrage, women voting as well as men,—the executive is in the hands of a council of twenty-four, half of which is to be renewed annually. Every fifth day is a sabbath of rest,—not of religion; for though this constitution is proclaimed in the presence of the Supreme Being, no provision is made for worshipping Him. All the Spensonians are soldiers; and in the Spensonian Commonwealth, 'Nature and Justice know nothing of illegitimacy.' To the end of this Constitution an Epilogue is annexed, in decent verse, saying that the Golden Age will no longer be accounted fabulous, now that mankind are about to enjoy

—All that prophets e'er of bliss foretold,
And all that poets ever feigned of old.'

And these verses,—to shew the strange humour of the man, and the vulgarity which adhered to him, are followed by a '*Chorus*,' to the tune of '*Sally in our Alley*:'—

' Then let us all join heart in hand
Thro' country, town, and city,
Of every age and every sex,
Young men and maidens pretty;

To haste this Golden Age's reign
 On every hill and valley,—
 Then Paradise shall greet our eyes
 Thro' every street and alley.*

In any other age this might have gone quietly to the family vault. But the French Revolution made Spence suppose that the time for realizing his speculations was arrived; and the manner in which he proposed to do this, brought him under the cognizance of the Attorney-General,—how deservedly, a brief specimen of his philanthropical proposals will shew:—

'We must destroy,' he says, 'all private property in land. The Landholders are like a warlike enemy quartered upon us for the purpose of raising contributions, therefore any thing short of a total destruction of the power of these Samsons will not do; and that must be accomplished, not by *simple shaving*,'—(look to it, Mr. Coke, of Norfolk!) 'not by simple shaving, which leaves the roots of their strength to grow again;—no: we must *scalp** them, or else they will soon recover, and pull our Temple of Liberty about our ears. Nothing less than a complete extermination of the present system of holding land will ever bring the world again to a state worth living in. But how is this mighty work to be done? I answer it must be done at once. For the public mind being suitably prepared by my little tracts, a few contiguous parishes have only to declare the land to be theirs, and form a Convention of parochial deputies: other adjacent parishes would immediately follow the example; and thus would a beautiful and powerful New Republic instantaneously arise in full vigour. In fact, it is like the Almighty saying, Let there be light, and it was so:—So the people have only to say, Let the land be ours, and it will be so. For who, pray, are to hinder the people of any nation from doing so, when they are inclined? Are the landlords more numerous in proportion to the people than the officers in our mutinous fleets were to their crews? Certainly not. Then landsmen have nothing to fear more than the seamen, and indeed much less; for after such a mutiny on land, the masters of the people would never become their masters again.'

For this publication the Scalping Philanthropist was most deservedly prosecuted; having before richly entitled himself to this distinction by a periodical farrago called 'Pig's Meat,' wherein the same doctrines were promulgated, and circulated in the cheapest form among the lower classes of tradesmen and mechanics. We remember to have heard that he excited compassion at his trial

* This, as may be supposed, was a favourite passage with the author. He adds in a note, that 'the overbearing power of great men by their revenues, and the power of Samson by his hair, are strikingly similar, and shew such men to be dangerous companions in society, till scalped of their hair, or revenues. For it is plain, that if the Lords of the Philistines had scalped Samson, instead of only shaving him, they might have saved both their lives and their temple.' The Philistines in France were of this opinion, and to make short work as well as sure, they employed a machine which took off head and all.

by his wretched appearance, and the pitiable fanaticism with which he was possessed: for the man was honest; he was not one of those demagogues who, like Cobbett, make mischief their trade because they find it a gainful one; he asserted nothing but what he believed, and would have suffered martyrdom for his opinions. He called himself, in his defence, 'The unfeared advocate of the disinherited seed of Adam.'

'This, Gentlemen,' said he, 'is the Rights of Man! and upon this Rock of Nature have I built my Commonwealth, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.' 'I solemnly avow,' he continued, 'that what I have written and published has been done with as good a conscience, and as much philanthropy, as ever possessed the heart of any prophet, apostle, or philosopher, that ever existed. And indeed I could neither have lived or died in peace, having such important truths in my bosom unpublished.'

—A tough fellow: one that seemed to stand
 Much on a resolute carelessness, and had
 A spice of that unnecessary thing
 Which the mysterious call *Philosophy*.

He stood alone, he said, unconnected with any party, and considered as a lunatic, except by a thinking few. Even the professed friends of liberty kept aloof from him, and would rather, if they could consistently, join in the suppression than the support of his opinions. He pleaded his own cause, being too poor to retain either attorney or counsel. And when he was brought up to judgment, the simple statement which he gave of his treatment in Newgate, ought to have produced some reform in the scandalous state of our prisons.

'Perhaps, my lords,' said he, 'I have entertained too high an opinion of Human Nature, for I do not find mankind very grateful clients. I have very small encouragement indeed to rush into a prison, on various accounts. For, in the first place, the people without treat me with the contempt due to a lunatic; and the people within treat me as bad, or worse, than the most notorious felon among them. And what with redeeming and ransoming my toes from being pulled off with a string while in bed, and paying heavy and manifold fees, there is no getting through the various impositions.'

But he excused the Keeper of Newgate, saying these things were unknown to him, because it was dangerous to complain; 'for nobody could conceive what dreadful work went on among such ruffians, but those who have had the misfortune to be locked up with them.'

It is fortunate that this man was not a religious as well as a political enthusiast. He was poor and despised, but not despicable; for he was sincere, stoical, persevering, single-minded, and self-approved; with means less powerful, doctrines less alluring,

in far less favourable times, and under circumstances equally or more discouraging, Francis of Assissi and Loyola succeeded in establishing those orders which have born so great a part in the history, not only of the Romish Church, but of the world. No doctrine could be more directly subversive of the peace and welfare of society, than those which he was disseminating in the way which was most dangerous. The appropriate punishment (for they who can be blind to the danger, and who assert that such doctrines should be suffered to circulate unrestrained, are fitter inhabitants for Anticyra than for England) would have been transportation; at once doing justice to the community by preventing a repetition of the offence, and dealing mercifully with the offender by removing him to a country where he would be inoffensive, if not useful. He was sentenced to a fine of twenty pounds, and one year's imprisonment at Shrewsbury; a sentence so lenient as to shew that Lord Kenyon very properly regarded the individual with pity: the mildness of the sentence is honourable to the judge—its inadequacy is not so to the laws. Having suffered it, he became an itinerant vender of books and * pamphlets, chiefly his own works, and which he carried about in a vehicle constructed for the purpose, and he supported himself, whilst all his leisure was devoted to the promotion of his plan, till his death, which happened about two years ago. Thus it appears that for more than twelve years after the termination of his confinement, he was constantly employed in sowing the dragon's teeth! The harvest is now beginning to appear.

Let us hear the evidence of the Monthly Magazine upon this subject. This Journal asserts, that the late rioters were 'actuated by their convictions in favour of a plan published by one Spence, for the more equal occupation of land; to introduce which plan societies seem to have been formed throughout the metropolis.' It also claims for itself the merit of advancing the same principles as those of the Scalping Philanthropist: for these are its words:—

'Much curiosity being excited in regard to the Spencean Plan of Public Economy, it will be useful to state, that the details of the system may be found in a small pamphlet called Christian Policy, by Thomas Evans, Librarian to the Society of Spencean Philanthropists, at No. 8, Newcastle-street, Strand. Mr. Evans appears to have been most cruelly used by the Pitt administration: and having been drilled into the science of politics in the school of persecution, his pamphlet is written with considerable energy. We collect from it that the main object of the Society is a more equal *occupation* (not proprietorship) of

* The second edition of his Trial (now before us) was one of these pamphlets: it contains the whole of the work for which he was prosecuted.

land. A principle which has often been urged in the pages of this Magazine. Something must be radically wrong, if industry should suffer from want in a country in which there are but two and a half million of families to forty-two millions of acres of cultivated land, affording, under a wise policy, the produce of seventeen acres to every family, or four times as much as it could consume. Skillful labour in any branch of useful industry ought therefore to yield abundance, even though the proprietary in land should remain exactly as it does at present.'

Thus far the Magazine of Sir Richard Phillips, Knight and Ex-Sheriff, Buonapartist, Lamentor for the Battle of Waterloo, Chief-mourner for Marshal Ney, Member of the Society for Abolishing War, Pythagorean and Spencean Philanthropist.

There is however another person to be examined in this cause—Thomas Evans, the librarian, himself. And here, the first thing which appears is, that Mr. Evans, instead of having been drilled into the science of politics in the school of persecution, as the Pythagorean Journal asserts, was in reality sent to that school in consequence of being too forward as a volunteer in the said science; Mr. Evans telling us that he was arrested during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, as being at that time Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, and having given in his present pamphlet good reason for concluding that he was not arrested without good cause. Though this librarian has affixed the title of Christian Policy to his book, he makes no other pretension to the character of Christian himself than as a Spencean philanthropist, and informs us, that 'this man, Christ, was a Roman slave, crucified as a slave (the mode of execution peculiar to Roman slaves) for preaching the seditious doctrine that God was the proprietor of the earth, and not the Romans; that all men were equal in his sight, and and consequently ought not to be slaves to another, nor to the Romans, for which he was crucified by the Romans.' Mr. Evans is equally well read in history and in the Gospel! This is quite enough of his religion; let us look now at his political information. France, he says, at the beginning of the Revolution, supplicated peace upon bended knees, and would have conformed to just and reasonable restraints:—the authority for this important fact must be in the Spencean library, for it certainly exists no where else. England, however, went to war, and in the course of the war discovered that the export of grain was the most lucrative branch of trade. This produced the blockading system; and the orders in council; and this monopoly having been lost, all the means of greatness on which the empire depended are passed away as it were in a moment, never to return. Such has been the effect of the impolicy of putting down Napoleon to elevate Alexander.

The

The connection of this reasoning is as clear as the facts themselves are original.—

‘ Napoleon was a mere pigmy to Alexander ; his boasting served to talk about, but he could have been managed and guarded against. Alexander is a still steady man of business, laying firm hold of all he can get and relinquishing nothing.—We are at present under the influence of the Vienna Congress of Kings. The annihilation of the Irish parliament, and the establishment of a military government, have obliged the Irish people to exist almost entirely upon potatoes (potatoes, of course, not having been known in that country before the Union.) Here, in England, we are even worse, expiring, writhing and agonizing at every pore under the torturing domination of the Pagan flesh-mongers of the Continent. Courts, and kings, and lords, and landlords, and priests, are all pagans : they adhere with pertinacity to Paganism at this time ; for you find in their dwellings the pictures, the statues, the busts of their Jupiters, Junos, Apollos, Dianas, Venuses, &c. &c.

Such is the pamphlet which Sir Pythagoras recommends as being written with considerable energy ; and such the science of politics into which Mr. Evans has been drilled.

Let us proceed to its practical part.—

‘ Landlords, and landlords only, are the oppressors of the people.—The time is come that something must be done ; then let that something be effectual ; remember that had the French people established a partnership in the land, no imperial tyranny ever could have raised its head in that country, nor could the present Pagan restoration have taken place. Now is the time to cancel Doomsday-book, and establish a partnership in the land ; there is no other means to prevent the establishment of a military despotism, or all the horrors of a bloody revolution. Great as this undertaking is, it can be easily effected. The easy process is to declare that the territory of these realms shall be the people’s farm ; thus transferring all the lands, waters, mines, houses, and all feudal permanent property to the people. This will injure no one, and benefit all—the alteration which is proposed being only that all persons possessed of houses or lands shall in future pay rent for them instead of receiving it. The government is to remain as it is ; pensions to be allotted to the King, Princes and Nobles, Clergy and House of Commons, and the remaining balance of the whole rent-roll to be divided among the whole people,—to every man, woman, and child, being the profit of their natural estate, without tax, toll, or custom ; which would be near four pounds a-head annually.’

The great barons, it is admitted, may object to this ; but they must submit quietly : and all ranks and conditions are called upon to form affiliated societies to bring into effect this revolution of the Spencean or Scalping Philanthropists. There is, indeed, as Sir Pythagoras observes, *considerable energy*

in these proposals. Let not this be despised and overlooked for its extravagance.*

The reader will have observed, that king, lords, and commons, are tolerated in the librarian's scheme, whereas, according to the original system, 'the Spensonian Republic is one and indivisible,' a trifling concession to existing prejudices; or, more probably, to existing laws. The Ultra Whigs and Extra-Reformers disclaim the Spenceans, and with perfect sincerity. These levellers are not to be confounded with the factious crew who clamour they know not why, for they know not what, and huzza any blockhead with a brazen face and a bell-metal voice, who will talk nonsense to them by the hour. The Spenceans are far more respectable than these, for they have a distinct and intelligible system; they know what they aim at and honestly declare it. Neither is the Agrarian system so foolish, or so devoid of attraction, that it may safely be despised. It has found a miserable advocate in the quondam Secretary of the Corresponding Society; under such auspices the levellers have organized themselves into regular sections, they are increasing in numbers, and they are zealously spreading their opinions. But if the system were taken up by some stronger hand, (whether an enthusiast should embrace it, or some profligate journalist think it a profession to thrive by,) compared to all other weapons of discontent, it would be found as Thor's mallet to a child's pop-gun. If the English Revolution were once commenced it would go on to this point, before it reached its inevitable termination in an iron military tyranny. Let the Ultra Whigs make the breach, and the Spenceans will level the wall: what the snavers begin the scalpers will finish: but Samson is neither shorn nor blinded, and the Philistines have given him fair warning.

We have now examined the grounds upon which some weak men, some mistaken or insane ones, and other very wicked ones are endeavouring to excite rebellion. We have shewn that it was not in the power of the British Government to avoid the war in the first instance, or at any time to conclude it. It was a war undertaken not for ambition, not for the lust of conquest, not, as is lyingly asserted, for the interests of a particular family, but from a cause of just fear, as Bacon describes it, '*that justus metus qui cadit in constantem senatum in causâ publicâ*;' not out of umbrages, light jealousies, apprehensions afar off, but out of clear foresight of imminent danger. And as long as reason is reason, a just fear will be a just cause of a preventive war.'

* The last edition of the Spencean band-bill says,

•• Read!—'Christian Policy, the Salvation of the Empire.' Price 1s. 6d.—
Published by T. Evans, 8, Newcastle-street, Strand, and Sold by all Booksellers.

At the commencement it was popular beyond all former example, as being most unequivocally inevitable and just; and that popularity continued till its triumphant close. It is then impudently false, as well as egregiously absurd, to charge that war as a crime upon the Government, and arraign Government for the distress which is unavoidably felt upon withdrawing from circulation the war expenditure, and the other changes incident upon a transition from the state of war to the state of peace: that distress too, resulting in great part from the fluctuation of fashions, from the extent to which machinery has been carried abroad as well as at home, from the blind avidity of our manufacturers and merchants, who have overlooked this fact, and glutted the market when they had no competition,—from the state of the continent, impoverished by a grinding tyranny and laid waste by repeated campaigns,—and, lastly, from the state of the seasons, which is not more completely out of the controul of Government than most of the other causes which have been indicated.

We have shewn also that as the constitution of Parliament has not been the cause of the existing distress, so no change in that constitution could in the slightest possible degree alleviate that distress, or otherwise benefit the people. If every office, sinecure, and pension, which the boldest reformer has yet ventured to proscribe, were abolished, the whole saving would scarcely be felt as a feather in the scale: and, as directly tending to exclude talents from the Government, and confine places of great trust to the aristocracy, such an abolition would be most injurious to the commonwealth. They who seek to lessen the influence of the crown, keep out of sight the increased power which has been given to public opinion by the publication of the parliamentary debates, and the prodigious activity of the press.—The first of these circumstances alone has introduced a greater change into our government than has ever been brought about by statute; and on the whole, that change is so beneficial as to be worth more than the additional expense which it entails upon us during war. This momentous alteration gives, even in ordinary times, a preponderance to the popular branch of our constitution: but in these times, when the main force of the press is brought to bear like a battery against the Temple of our Laws; when the head of the government is systematically insulted for the purpose of bringing him into contempt and hatred; when the established religion is assailed with all the rancour of theological hatred by its old hereditary enemies, with the fierceness of triumphant zeal by the new army of fanatics, and with all the arts of insidious infidelity by the Minute Philosophers of the age; when all our existing institutions are openly and fiercely assaulted, and mechanics are breaking stocking-frames

in some places, and assembling in others to deliberate upon mending the frame of the government,—what wise man, and what good one but must perceive that it is the power of the Democracy which has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished?

Of all engines of mischief which were ever yet employed for the destruction of mankind, the press is the most formidable, when perverted in its uses, as it was by the Revolutionists in France, and is at this time by the Revolutionists in England. Look at the language which is held by these men concerning the late transactions, and see if falsehood and sedition were ever more audacious! ‘Perhaps,’ says the Examiner, ‘there may be a plot somewhere,—in some tap-room or other; like the plot of Despard, who was driven to frenzy by ill-treatment, and then conspired with a few bricklayers in a public-house, for which he was sent to the gallows, instead of the care of his friends!’ ‘We feel,’ says this flagitious incendiary, ‘for the bodily pains undergoing by Mr. Platt, and think his assassin (unless he was mad with starvation) a scoundrel; and some of the corruptionists, who in luxury and cold blood can provoke such excesses, greater scoundrels!’ As if of all ‘scoundrels’ the man who can in this manner attempt to palliate insurrection, treason and murder, were not himself the greatest. Mr. Cobbett goes farther than this: with an effrontery peculiar to himself, notorious as it is that the rioters were led from Spafields by the man who harangued them there, and that the tricolor flag which they followed, was carried to Spafields to be hoisted there for their banner—he says, ‘it is well known to every one in London, that the rioters had no connexion whatever with the meeting in Spafields.’ And though the existence of St. Paul’s Church is not more certain than that an attempt was made to murder Mr. Platt, whose recovery is at this moment doubtful, this convicted libeller has the impudence to express a doubt of the fact, for the purpose of making his ignorant readers in the country disbelieve it. ‘The rioters,’ he says, ‘consisting chiefly of starving sailors, though they had arms in their hands, did no violence to any body, except in the unlawful seizure of the arms, and in the wounding (if that really was so) of one man who attempted to stop them, and who laid hold of one of them!’ Another of this firebrand’s twopenny papers is before us, in which he says that the ministers, the noblesse, and the clergy of France wilfully made the revolution, in order to prevent the people from being fairly represented in a national council. ‘It was *they* who produced the confusion; it was *they* who caused the massacres and guillotings; it was *they* who destroyed the kingly government; it was *they* who brought the king to the block!’ And in the same spirit which dictated this foul and infamous falsehood, he asks, ‘was there any thing too violent, any thing too severe, to be inflicted

on these men?' He says that 'Robespierre, who was exceeded in cruelty only by some of the Bourbons, was proved to have been in league with the open enemies of France.' He asks 'whether the Americans gained their independence by quietly sitting by the fire-side? Oh! no—these were all achieved by *action*, and amidst bustle and noise.' He says, 'the quiet fire-side gentry are the most callous and cruel, and therefore the most wicked part of the nation.' Towards the close of this epistle he says, 'I will venture my life that you do not stand in need of one more word to warm every drop of blood remaining in your bodies;'—and a few lines lower he tells the journeymen and labourers to whom this inflammatory paper is addressed, that he has neither room nor desire to appeal to their passions upon this occasion. With equal consistency this firebrand concludes a letter to the Birmingham printer whose house was attacked by the mob, by expressing 'a sincere wish that no further violences may ever be committed on him;' and prints in the title-page these words in large letters, that all who run may read: 'A Letter addressed to Mr. Jabet of Birmingham, shewing that he richly merits the indignation of all the labouring people in the kingdom, and of his townsmen the people of Birmingham in particular.'

No city in the kingdom is at this time experiencing such difficulty and distress as Birmingham; for this obvious reason, that no other place received so much direct employment from government during the war. This great annual expenditure was suddenly withdrawn, and there are now nearly a fifth part of the population receiving weekly relief; the masters being no longer able to employ the men, very many indeed having been ruined themselves. This is a deplorable state of things, but it has not been occasioned by any misconduct or impolicy; it is the plain unavoidable consequence of events over which no man or body of men could have any controul. In such a case what is to be done? Any man who is not either a madman or a villain, must see that there is but one course,—to mitigate the evil by giving as much temporary relief as possible, till new means of subsistence can be provided, by opening new channels of employment. To this accordingly the inhabitants have applied themselves with a zealous liberality of which no example is to be found in other countries, and which perhaps has never been equalled in this. Every parish, every religious congregation of whatever description, has its Benevolent Society. There are subscriptions for providing soup, for blankets, for clothing, for coats, for the relief of the sick; for women in child-bed, for the wants of infancy. There are above an hundred guardians of the poor, who go through the town, which is divided into districts for their superintendence, and see where relief is wanted, what relief, and that it be properly applied.

plied. It is scarcely too much to affirm, that beneficence was never more liberally, more generally, or more strenuously employed, than it is at this time in Birmingham, where all who have any thing to spare from their own necessities, are doing whatever can be done by human and Christian charity for the relief of those who are in need. And it is to the journeymen and poor of this town at this time that Mr. Cobbett addresses himself, seeking to irritate and inflame them, by the most seditious language, and the most calumnious falsehoods, and telling them that they are 'coaxed and threatened, with a *basin of carrion soup* in one hand, and a *halter* in the other!

Why is it that this convicted incendiary, and others of the same stamp, are permitted week after week to sow the seeds of rebellion, insulting the government, and defying the laws of the country? The press may combat the press in ordinary times and upon ordinary topics, a measure of finance, for instance, or the common course of politics, or a point in theology. But in seasons of great agitation, or on those momentous subjects in which the peace and security of society, nay the very existence of social order itself is involved, it is absurd to suppose that the healing will come from the same weapon as the wound. They who read political journals, read for the most part to have their opinions flattered and strengthened, not to correct or enlighten them; and the class of men for whom these pot-house epistles are written, read nothing else. The *Monthly Magazine* asserts that from 40 to 50,000 of the two-penny Registers are sold every week, and the editor thinks it his duty to assist the sale by recommending it to his 'liberal and enlightened readers.' The statement may probably be greatly exaggerated,—this being an old artifice;—but if only a tenth of that number be circulated among the populace, for it is to the populace that this ferocious journal is addressed, the extent of the mischief is not to be calculated. Its ignorant readers receive it with entire faith: it serves them for law and for gospel—for their Creed and their Ten Commandments. They talk by it, and swear by it;—they are ready to live by it; and it will be well if some of these credulous and unhappy men are not deluded to die by it; they would not be the first victims of the incendiary press. We have laws to prevent the exposure of unwholesome meat in our markets, and the mixture of deleterious drugs in beer.—We have laws also against poisoning the minds of the people, by exciting discontent and disaffection;—why are not these laws rendered effectual and enforced as well as the former? Had the insolence of the French journalists been checked at the commencement of the Revolution, those journalists would not have brought their king to the guillotine, and have perished themselves among the innumerable victims of their folly, their falsehood, their extravagance, and their

their guilt. Men of this description, like other criminals, derive no lessons from experience. But it behoves the Government to do so, and curb sedition in time; lest it should be called upon to crush rebellion and to punish treason. The prayer in the Litany will not deliver them from these things, unless they use the means which God and man have entrusted to them for delivering us and themselves.

How often have we heard that the voice of the people is the voice of God, from demagogues who were labouring to deceive the people, and who despised the wretched instruments of whom they made use! But it is the Devil whose name is Legion. *Vox Populi, vox Dei!* When or where has it been so? Was it in England during the riots in 1780? Has it been in France during the last six and twenty years? Or was it in Spain when the people restored the Inquisition?—for it *was* the people who restored that accursed tribunal, spontaneously and tumultuously—not the government, which only ratified what the people had done; still less were they assisted by that ‘base engine of our corrupt statesmen, the standing army,’ by which is meant the soldiers who fought and conquered with Wellington, as some of the city resolutions have asserted with equal regard to truth, and to the honour of their country—What will not these men traduce! *Vox Populi, Vox Dei!*—Was it so in the wilderness when the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us Gods which shall go before us? Was it so at Athens when Socrates and Phocion were sacrificed to the factious multitude? Or was it so at Jerusalem when they cried, Crucify Him! crucify Him! The position is not more tenable than the Right Divine, not less mischievous, and not less absurd. God is in the populace as he is in the hurricane, and the volcano, and the earthquake!

What then are the prospects of the country under the awful dispensation with which it is visited? and what is the course which the government and the parliament are bound, or competent to pursue?

Of distresses, such as now pervade the mass of the community, small indeed is the part which parliaments or governments either create or cure. The causes of them, as we have abundantly shewn, either lie without the limits of human controul, or have been carried beyond our reach by the tide of time. We cannot command the seasons whose unkindness has aggravated the pressure bequeathed us by a long and exhausting war; we could not annul the consequences of that war even if we were unsteady enough to recant its policy, or recreant enough to repudiate its glories. But what little might have been in our power (may we venture to say it?) has unhappily, perhaps inadvertently, been thrown away. In passing from
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a state of war to a state of peace, the shock of the revulsion might not improbably have been lessened to all orders of society by somewhat graduating the transition. The die is now cast—the results, be they what they may, must be abided; and we speak therefore with the freedom of history, when we say that had the government been left a short time longer in the possession of the extraordinary resources confided to them during the war, some of the evils which (to the surprize of so many well meaning persons) have been found associated with peace, might possibly have received mitigation. To speak words of kind omen—of *hailing and farewell*—to the spirit of the departed Property-tax, is, we know, to incur the anathema of those who have been shouting over its grave. But it did good service in its time: and though he would be a mad politician indeed who should now think of reviving it, we suspect that there are not wanting some among the persons that laboured most eagerly for its extinction, who doubt whether the use of it, or of a portion of it, during the present year, might not have been attended with advantages to the country. It might not have been unwise to ascertain by a little experience, on what portion of our system the pressure of a new state of things would be most sensibly felt, and where relief might be most usefully administered:—and to have made this experiment with the means of such relief in our hands.

If stagnant manufactures, and languishing agriculture, and a population suddenly turned loose from the military or naval services of the country, produce a supply of hands for which there is no work, a partial and temporary remedy might perhaps have been found in undertakings of public utility and magnificence—in the improvement of roads, the completion of canals, the erection of our National Monuments for Waterloo and Trafalgar—undertakings which government might have supplied, if the means had been at their disposal. To attempt to raise money for such a purpose in the present state of the country would be, indeed, an adventurous policy. The clamour against the new burden would be echoed from the very mouths which it was intended to provide the means of filling.

The sudden reduction of establishments cannot well be denied to aggravate in a degree, and for a time, some of the evils, which it is ultimately to cure. It throws, as has been already observed, new hands into the overstocked market of labour. By a singular and whimsical injustice, it brings a new odium upon the government, exactly the opposite of that which they had incurred from the suspicion of a desire to prevent or avoid reduction. Parliament cuts down the naval estimates, and then the Mansion-house cries shame upon the Admiralty for the distresses of the discharged seamen!

These consequences of peace, however, it will be said, are unavoidable. True: but they *are* the consequences of peace,—they are produced by that transition from war to peace which has at once taken a customer for millions sterling out of the market of labour and consumption, and thrown into it thousands of competitors for agricultural and manufacturing employment. They *are* as clearly the consequences of that revulsion which is asserted to have had no operation in producing the present derangement in all sorts of prices and property—as the absolute inability of the Government to come to the aid of the suffering classes is the consequence of that defalcation of their means which was forced upon them by the House of Commons, and upon the House of Commons by the clamours of the country.

Whether Parliament can devise the means of alleviation, is what we would not willingly decide beforehand in the negative; though, we confess, our hopes are very faint of any immediate and sensible good from legislative interference. The revision of the Poor-Laws—a work now of crying necessity—may lead to such corrections and improvements in that system, as shall at once extend its efficacy and lighten its almost intolerable burden. But this is an operation for distant—comparatively distant—effect. To the actual pressure of the moment, what remedy could even a reformed House of Commons apply that would not ultimately resolve itself into taxation?

Of this we may be tolerably sure: that if, after the most anxious consideration of every plausible suggestion, Parliament should reluctantly come to the conclusion that there is nothing effectual to be done till the tide shall turn in our favour; the House of Commons will be held up to detestation, as insensible to the distresses of their constituents: while, on the other hand, indications are not wanting that all the batteries of political economy are ready to open against any plan of relief which may be found liable (as what plan for such a purpose must not be?) to objections of theoretical science, and that any assistance which should be proposed to be given to individuals on the part of the public, would be stigmatized as a project of corruption.

In the midst of all these difficulties, however, one duty there certainly is which Government and Parliament are both competent and called upon to discharge. They cannot stay the pestilence; but they can take care that, while it rages, the city is not plundered. They cannot (would to God they could!) charm away the embarrassments of the rich, and the privations of the poor; but they may, and they *MUST*, save both the poor and rich from the common curse and misery of a Revolution.