

T H E
C O M M O N W E A L T H
I N
D A N G E R ;
A N E S S A Y .

BY JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

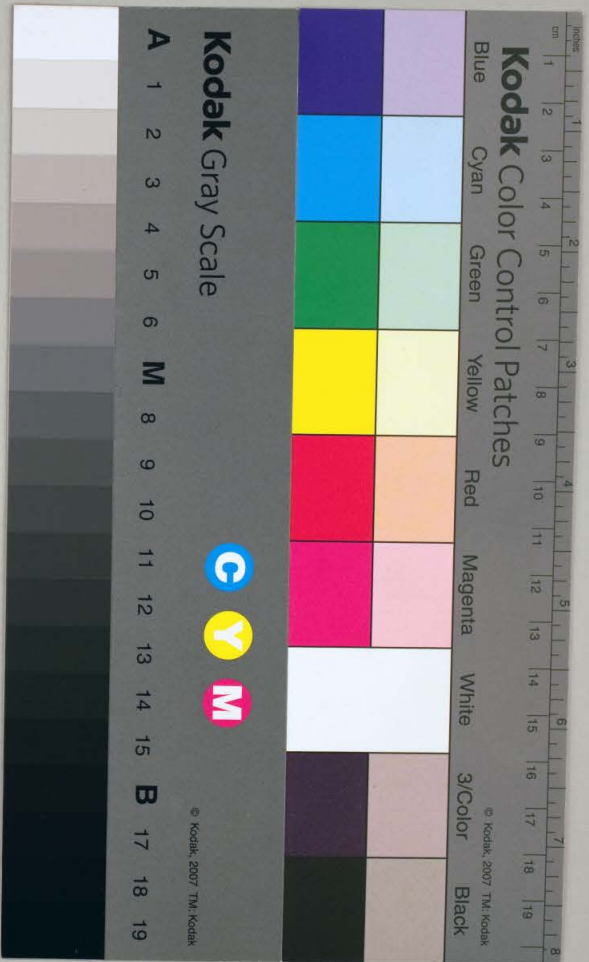
“ To be, or not to be, that is the question.”

Shakspeare.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, No. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD.

1795.



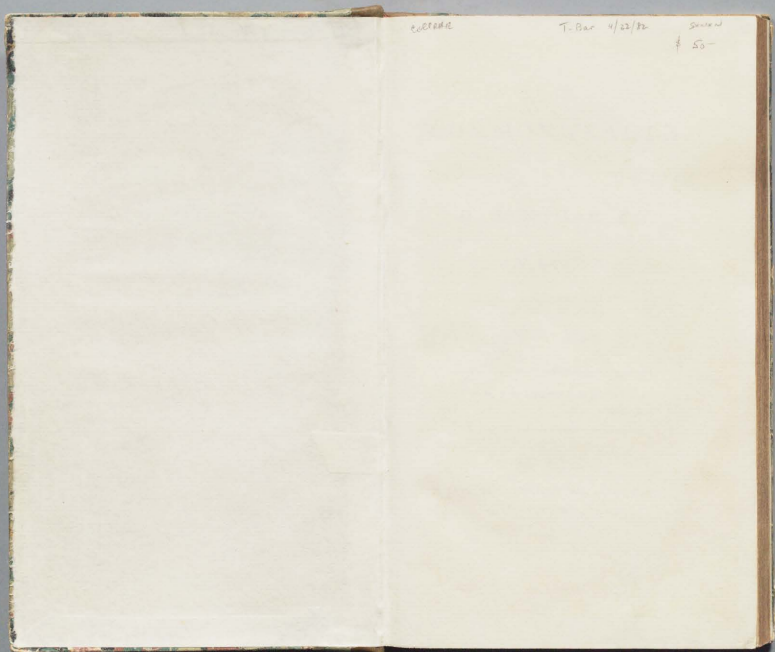
COMMONWEALTH IN DANGER

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THE
COMMONWEALTH
IN
DANGER;
AN ESSAY.

BY JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

"To be, or not to be, that is the question."
Shakspere.

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CONSIDERING how much political and moral blame is imputed to me, in the book on which I have animadverted in my Introduction, it may be asked, why I remained so long silent. My silence has proceeded from different causes; of which accident was one. I never saw the book in question until I bought it at the publisher's on the 8th of November, 1794; nor did I, till then, know that it contained a syllable in which I was personally concerned. I had ordered the book many months before, together with *Peace and Reform*, which I understood to be in answer to it. The former being then out of print, the latter was laid upon my study table, with the leaves uncut, where it lies to this hour in the same state; as I thought it only common candor to the prior author, to give him the prior reading.

When, indeed, I came to read *The Example of France a Warning to Britain*, I then perceived that I had before seen part of its contents, in the *Annals of Agriculture*, more than two years before; and a part in which my own writings were censured with some severity. That severity at the time did not move me so far as to make me interrupt the occupations of farming, for those of political controversy. Although I pretend not to have been indifferent to the imputations cast upon me, I confided in the truth of the principles I had maintained, and in the evidence of my own right intentions, to justify me in the opinions of all men truly attached to the cause of morality and human-happiness; and I wished nothing more, than that every man in this country would guard against being misled by any thing written on either side of the questions I had discussed, by seriously and conscientiously investigating them for himself.

In a letter on subjects of rural economy, which I had occasion to write to the author of the *Annals of Agriculture* some time after the publication of the paper alluded to, I
noticed

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noticed in general terms the attack he had made upon me; expressed some surprise at the inconsistency of his own conduct; and intimated that as soon as I discovered the error of those opinions, I had obtruded on the world, I should hold myself bound publicly to retract them.

From the foregoing circumstances, it will appear that I did not busy myself very much with what was passing on the political theatre; as well as that I was easily enough diverted, even from getting into my possession a pamphlet which had been widely circulated, and had, as I understood, attracted much attention: and, had I not been called to town as a witness on the late State Trials, it is possible that the constant occupations of my farm might have still longer diverted my attention, and kept me ignorant of the contents of a book, which will not, by any person capable of reflection, be read with indifference.

I certainly read it at last with great advantage, for it was after the enormous mass of evidence for the prosecution, on the trial of *Thomas Hardy*, was closed; when I found the proceedings in that cause, and the doctrines in the pamphlet to illustrate each other in no small degree; leaving me satisfied that they were in fact links of the same chain forged for British Liberty;—the distant parts of a connected plan, forming a deep and daring conspiracy against the constitution. Although the decisions of three immortal juries have stamped this conspiracy with merited infamy, the conspiracy still exists in all the vigour of mischief; and its all pervading influence is felt in whatever concerns the public; and is found to affect the very means of discussing with effect every political question of importance that can arise amongst us. After composing the following Essay, it was a sense of this influence, far more than of any prejudice I had to encounter from a misrepresentation of my own writings, which induced me to write an Introduction.

THE

COMMONWEALTH

IN DANGER.

THE tremendously awful situation in which, as a people, we now stand, must arrest the attention of every thinking man. It has arrested that of the writer. Abroad, we are involved in a war, new in all its characters, and of an aspect truly alarming: at home, we are disunited, without much ground to hope for a cordial reunion; unless a due sense of the common danger shall bring us into better temper, remind us of the duty of mutually allowing for past errors, and begot, not only a more charitable interpretation of one another's present designs, but a conscientious endeavour to divest ourselves of the prejudices of party, and to devote our utmost powers, and exert our united endeavours, to save the state.

Under the present melancholy circumstances of the country, who shall say that *Britain* will prove

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equal to the contest which seems to await her? Mr. Young, in the *Annals of Agriculture*, No. 129, has lately drawn a picture of the French republic which merits our most serious regard; and calls upon us in terms that cannot be resisted, to look well, and without delay, to the security of our own island. But as some of that gentleman's reasonings seem exceptionable; and as his principal proposal for our domestic safety falls, in my opinion, somewhat short of what the nature of the case, and the times, require, the following remarks and suggestions are offered to the public.

According to Mr. Young, the French republic, through unforeseen causes, is at length become of a description which makes it in fact, as to its nature and essence, what the wonderful republic of *Sparta* was in ancient times. But inasmuch as the territory of *France*, especially if it shall be extended to the *Zuyder Zee*, will be of infinitely greater magnitude than the petty state of *Lacedæmon*, not exceeding in extent the county of *Lincoln*; so the power of this new republic must be infinitely more formidable to all its neighbours, than was that with which it is compared. Its very existence, considering its own internal diseases, and the prodigious force externally employed to destroy it in the cradle, is matter of astonishment to the courts and people

of

of *Europe*. What then must they think of the gigantic size and energy to which it has so soon attained! nothing *modern* can resist its power. All fortifications of nature and of art fall before it. Wherever appear the numerous and veteran armies of their enemies, the republican legions, like torrents of lava,* pour down and overwhelm them. Such effects must have causes; and Mr. Young, who had expected other consequences from the war, is led by his disappointment and the surprize it occasioned, into an investigation of those causes; although his principal inquiry is, how to avert the danger to ourselves from an enemy so formidable.

Before I proceed to this part of our subject, I shall just observe, and it is what Mr. Young seems to think, that the present energy of *France* is simply the result of republican government and arming her people. The cause of manifesting this energy is war. And the cause of the war—that I leave to be explained by Mr. Young and others more acquainted with the motives of ministers than myself. Whether the war could, or could not have been avoided, consistently with the duty of ministers to their country, is a question which every one must

* The grand expression of Mr. Young.

decide for himself as well as he can.* The common arguments on this head take us, in general, no farther back than to the period of our own interference in a war commenced by other parties. But when we contemplate that enlarged wisdom and foresight which belongs to the character of statesmen, perhaps the question cannot be properly decided, without ascending to a higher period of time. The period to which I allude, is that at which the French king accepted the constitution in 1791.† On the point under consideration I wish to speak with diffidence. I do not want unjustly to criminate any men; nor to add to our unhappy divisions. But if the war by the influence of British counsels might have been prevented, if our statesmen should have any recollections of having had the opportunity and the means, they must now I trust be disposed, on reviewing scenes of which no tongue can describe the horrors, to sheath as soon as possible the cruel sword.

At the time when, of the French king's acceptance of the constitution, was not the peaceful,

* "The temperate mode in which the French conducted themselves in the beginning of the dispute, and the insufferable and puerile arrogance of our ministry, will be seen in the correspondence between M. *Chavault* and Lord *Crawford*, which is inserted in our state papers." *New Annual Register*, 1793, page 25.

† September the 13th.

bloodless revolution thereby accomplished, the joy of the public heart, and a theme of general congratulation and praise in this country? Was it not a period when a closer alliance with *France* would have been acceptable to this nation? Might not British statesmen have conceived the intrigues and attempts which were likely to take place for overthrowing the new liberties of *France*; and the probabilities that even *war* would be amongst the means resorted to? Had the interests of royalty and liberty in that country found advocates in their bosoms; had the peace of *Europe* employed their thoughts; and the quiet and prosperity of *Great Britain*, so dependent on general harmony, called forth their anxious cares and forecast for their preservation; what could have been more natural, politic and honourable, than to have stepped forward with alacrity as sincere and cordial friends, to have supported the tottering infancy of French freedom, and to have manifested in the eyes of *Europe* that the preservation of that freedom and of general tranquility could not to *Britain* be objects of indifference? Had such been their magnanimous and glorious policy, it seems even more than probable that the war would not have taken place; that the constitution of 1789 would gradually have taken root; and that *Louis XVI.* might at this day have been the first magistrate of a free people.

Or had our ministers less generous sentiments? Did the supposed weakness of a rival nation tempt them to a cold and insidious neutrality, waiting for the confusions it was to produce, and of which they meant to take advantage, for purposes of national aggrandizement and patronage? And had they also motives referable to domestic reforms that were likely to press upon them; unless by connivance at continental preparations for hostility, they could so manage as to have the nation necessarily involved in a war, which should at its commencement be falsely attributed to unforeseen causes, and at the same time furnish them with plenty of swords for parrying the thrusts of reforming petitions? * These are questions on which I presume not to decide. If there are hearts which they can touch, they may

* * We have reason to believe that the intervention of the war with France, and the alarms, whether well or ill founded, which have prevailed throughout England, during the last winter, and which we have no doubt were excited and inflamed for the special purpose of checking the disposition of the country in favour of a reform, and of *calumniating the characters* of those who promoted it. These we believe are the true causes of that silence and inactivity on the part of the nation, which have been objected to us in parliament. *Authentic Copy of a Petition in Parliament, presented to the House of Commons on the 6th May, 1793, &c.* Printed for D. Stewart, Fifth-Street, Soho.

It has since been seen to what all this calamity tended. How inflexible that palladium of English liberty—*Trial by Jury!*

then

then be of use. If not, it is the better for our country; and we shall have the firmer ground for such a reconciliation of parties at this fearful moment, as the exigency of our situation seems to require.

Let us now return to Mr. Young, from whom we collect; 1st, That the force of France is "greater than in any former period, and Europe trembling around;" 2d, That a natural result to be expected is, that this force, in consequence of the peculiarities of its origin, will "dash in pieces the whole fabric of European trade and industry which has taken three centuries to form;" 3d, "That annihilation is the palpable fate of the whole body of landlords" in this and the other civilized countries; 4th, That we require an "union of all that is respectable in the kingdom to oppose that united mass of atrocity which threatens to overthrow every established government, and sweep from its very basis all that renders mankind superior to brutes;" 5th, "While war is decidedly for the interest of every man in arms, and every man in power, will they readily have recourse to peace—

* *Annals of Agriculture*, No. 129, Pages 281, 283, 284, 287.

" will they not more probably determine that
 " there never shall be any such thing?"* 6th, " A
 " war vibrating in its events would be the most
 " favourable to the establishment" of a system
 " in France similar to that of Sparta or Laco-
 " nia; " and every one knows that Laconia was but
 " a great camp, with no employment but arms for
 " every free man in it;"* and he adds, the
 " manners of the French are changed; " the equality
 " which is introduced, and the banishment, death,
 " or ruin of all who had fortunes, &c. have esta-
 " blished a simplicity, a ferocity, and a hardy
 " courage, that may have effects, if not entirely
 " similar to the institutions of Lycurgus, sufficiently
 " so to render France a camp and its soldiers the
 " terror of the world." 7th, " But the circum-
 " stance most interesting is, the enormity, re-
 " sources, extent, and energy of the force which
 " has thus been created,"* which, " ought
 " to alarm every individual that has property in
 " any country of the globe;" " that this force has
 " been greatly underrated," and " its manifesta-
 " tion ought to increase the terror of all its neigh-
 " bours." 8th, That the incredible resources
 " created in France" are " upon principles that

* Annals of Agriculture, No. 129, Pages 293, 289, 296,
 294.

" set

" set all experience and all ancient policy at de-
 " fiance.*"

Such are the outlines of our danger. We will
 now attend to the means pointed out by Mr. Young,
 as our security.

9th. As the power of France " is absolutely in-
 " consistent with the safety of her neighbours,"
 " and " incompatible with the existence of property
 " in any country of Europe;"* " the repub-
 " lican system," must not be allowed to " esta-
 " blish itself permanently," but must be " op-
 " posed with the most determined vigour, and on
 " principles as energetic as its own." 10th,
 The first proposed imitation of conventional energy,
 is either to silence all societies professing to meet
 " to reform abuses,"* or to let them count
 amongst " the wretches in prisons," 11th, To
 enrol, arm and officer a militia of " Five hun-
 " dred thousand" men;* " fortify our advanta-
 " geous posts to an impregnable strength; and con-

* It is plain they set at defiance the experience and calcula-
 tions of Mr. Young, who in his *Example of France*, p. 185, 186,
 187, thought he had given a complete statement of them; and
 therefore proved the utter impossibility of their carrying on the
 war.

† Annals of Agriculture, No. 129, Pages 289, 300, 301.
 * *Strutt*

"*Byzè a capacious citadel near the capital.*"* As
 "to imagine that we should be able long to pre-
 "serve ourselves were other nations ruined and
 "enslaved by the French system, would be a vain
 "idea, nothing probably can save the world but
 "such a concert of every power in Europe as has
 "not yet taken place." 13th. A new experiment of
 "military quixotism is to be tried for CONQUERING
 "FRANCE: we must "penetrate by the Seine to
 "Paris," Dunkirk, Gravelines, and Calais" ought
 "to have been "conquered" in our former cam-
 "paigns, "the inhabitants all driven out, and the
 "places peopled entirely with emigrants;"* "when
 "Russia moves, as move she must in time, Russian
 "auxiliaries might be landed at once in the heart
 "of France,* and "if the Convention in the mean
 "time attacked Germany or the eastern line of
 "Flanders, the country should have been made a
 "desart, at the expence of the common cause;"*
 "but as "no force or principle of attack can be
 "rationally expected to have effect, if the people
 "in France, disaffected to the Convention, are
 "not induced to give their aid to those who come
 "to their assistance;" so "A MANIFESTO of future
 "liberty consistent with royalty should be held out
 "to them as the ONLY object of the allies."*

* Annals of Agriculture, No. 129, Pages 302, 303, 304,
 305, 306, 308.

After thus exhorting and instructing the cabinets
 of Europe, and attempting to comfort his country-
 men with the hopes that may be entertained, of
 re-establishing monarchy on the ruins of jacobin-
 ism* in France; he seems, however, to have had
 some prefaces of the little reliance we could have
 on our allies. "That general concert and con-
 "mon feeling," says he, "which ought to cement
 "in the strictest bands an alliance of different
 "powers, which has been so often looked for and so
 "rarely attained, can ALONE render the war suc-
 "cessful; if the present call for new measures and
 "new principles be not sufficient to insure it, the
 "hope is for ever delusive. If our allies are not
 "sensible of their danger; if there is only a com-
 "mon languid exertion at a moment which de-
 "mands an unexampled vigour, it is beyond the
 "power of Britain to supply the deficiency. SUCH
 "A SITUATION DEMANDS DOUBLE ATTENTION TO
 "THE MEANS OF PROVIDING FOR THE DEFENCE
 "OF THIS ISLAND†, &c."

* I use the author's favourite word, without, I confess, know-
 ing what it means; because it seems to comprehend, as applied
 by him, meanings the most opposite; viz. a respect for liberty,
 and a lust of despotic power; a desire of reform and of purity,
 and a thirst for anarchy and blood. Here it may be taken to
 mean simply, that species of republicanism which excludes roy-
 alty from the composition of government.

† Annals of Agriculture, No. 129, Page 308.

Is this, then, the goal to which the wisdom of ministers has conducted the nation! Is this our "indemnity for the past, and security for the future!" Is this the report to be made to a *con-sulting* House of Commons! But what shall I say of my country at large, which has with so wonderful an insatiation given its sanction to this work of madness and of blood! *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*

If the recent remembrance of *one hundred and twenty-one* millions of money and rivers of blood lavished in the iniquitous attempt to establish taxation without representation, with its disgraceful event; if a debt of three hundred millions * sterling, with a yearly taxation exceeding the whole yearly rent of the soil; and if a petition to the House of Commons offering proof at the bar of that House, that it *does not represent the People*;† if these

* With the additions of the present war it now exceeds this sum.

† The words are, "Your Petitioners, in affirming that your Honourable House is not an adequate representation of the People of England, do but state a fact, which, if the word 'Representation' be accepted in its fair and obvious sense, they are ready to prove, and which they think detrimental to their interests, and contrary to the spirit of the constitution." The correct and candid Mr. Young, who, for the purpose of acrimo-

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these considerations have been insufficient to awaken *Britain* to a sense of some impending calamity, I fear that although an *Hampden*, or an *Alfred* were to rise from the dead to give her counsel, she would not listen to their voice. The nation's inconsistency, is not amongst the smallest tokens of its latent disease. The writings of a pamphleteer can throw it into agonies of apprehension; but neither the discomfiture nor treachery of its allies; the flight of its armies; nor the rolling forward of that irresistible torrent of military lava poured from the volcanic bosom of *France*, which threatens it with extinction as a people, can do more than barely suffice to give some zest to the news of the day. O, Influence, how fascinating thy powers! O, Corruption, how extended thy sway!

Where now are our Alarmists?—our loyal Associations?—worn out with cares and watchings, to circumvent those desperate men, the Reformers, do they now sleep? Hear they not the trumpet, whose sound they so lately obeyed with such pa-

nious abuse, quotes this passage in his usual way, that is, *not in the words of the author*, (p. 200) says, (and no farther off than in the preceding page) "They make no distinction between a government, and the principles of that government; which is neither more nor less than nonsense." Now it should seem that the *distinction* is theirs, and the *nonsense* his.

triotic

triotic alacrity? or is its note so changed they know not its voice!* I hope these gentlemen do not forget that the peace and property, the lives, liberties and religion of Englishmen, are at this time of as much value as when we entered into the war and invaded France, in defence of those blessings: and that when the French, in their turn, may actually become the invaders, it may be somewhat too late to have their plans of resistance then to concert. They ought in good time to be aware, that *Paine* and *Pichegru* are to be dealt with in two very different ways. It is therefore seriously to be recommended to these associations, to lose no time in assembling, in order to consult THAT LAW and THAT CONSTITUTION to which they are so firmly attached, on the preparatory measures to be taken towards the safety of our island; and to communicate the result of their inquiries to the country at large. There are sundry valuable tracts which would greatly assist them on such an occasion; but I would particularly recommend to their notice, "A Discourse on a national and constitutional Force;" by the present Lord Hawkebury; and "An Inquiry into the LEGAL mode of suppressing Riots; with a

* "Those who have attempted to persuade us, that we are in danger in this war, from the strength and vigour of a republican France, have their motives far such an opinion!" *Example of France, a Warning to Britain*. Fourth edition, Published in 1794.

"constitutional plan of future defence," by Sir William Jones, now a Judge in the Supreme Court of Bengal; a *Plan of Association, on constitutional principles, for the parishes, tythings, hundreds, and counties of Great Britain*;* and some publications on the same subject by Mr. *Graville Sharpe*.

If I err not, it will be found, that *the vital and essential part* of a plan of national defence, is what every householder will not only discover to be permitted to him, but required of him, by the law, as a sacred duty he owes his country. Unless prepared as the law points out, he can neither aid the civil power with effect in suppressing riots or insurrection; nor at the call of his sovereign defend his country against foreign invaders. Why it hath not "for the three last centuries," been the practice of ministers to make these uses of the loyalty of the people; and why they have suffered the ancient laws for peace and defence to sink into disuse and forgetfulness, *Lord Hawkebury* (p. 65.) will inform the inquisitive.

Apprehending that it is already too late, by reason of the desertion of our allies and subsidaries, to concert with Mr. *Tewng* on the execution of his military plans for restoring liberty and royalty in

* Published in 1780, by Kearsley.

France; but that we are brought precisely into that situation which, he thinks, "DEMANDS DOUBLE ATTENTION TO THE MEANS OF PROVIDING FOR THE DEFENCE OF THIS ISLAND;" we are to presume that something yet more efficacious than arming *five hundred thousand men* is in his opinion necessary; for such was the force recommended, while he reckoned upon such a concert of the European powers "*as has not yet taken place,*" and an army of "*Russians to be landed at once in the heart of France.*"

Now, while it follows from that gentleman's own premises, that continuing the war must be the likeliest means of bringing to a dreadful maturity that giant whose very infancy nor all the hosts of Europe can resist, surely such a proposal could not have been the effect of sober counsel; but wears the features of that sort of courage which desperation alone inspires. A more sedate fortitude now becomes us. It will be time enough to give the reins to our fury, when upon British soil we shall be called on to conquer or to die. If we are to meet the war at our own gates; if Britons are to bleed defending their own lands and laws, families and firesides, I trust that we shall be found equal to the task. Men with a free constitution in their hearts, and swords in their hands, are not to be conquered.

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But knowing the solid, concentrated "wedge-like force" of our enemy's phalanx, to be victorious, we must be united. Disunion must be put away: and mutual confidence once more taken to our bosoms. Squinting suspicion and polluted treachery must no longer be our torment and disgrace; but the generous, manly openness of free men again become our characteristic. Internal alarm, thank God and our laws, begins to subside: and I trust will leave nothing behind it to prevent a reconciliation of parties. **THE ENEMY IS AT THE GATE, AND WE MUST BE FRIENDS, OR PERISH.** Adversity is the school of the sublime virtues. Necessity is an eloquent reconciler of differences. By means the most simple, he bends the will, and enlightens the understanding. By saying to Britain, **BE AN ARMED NATION,** she secures her defence, and seals her freedom. A million of armed men* supporting the state with their purse, and defending it with their lives, will know that none have to great a stake as themselves in the government; nor more right to have a voice in the direction of affairs. The circle of representation will consequently be at least co-extensive with the circle of arms. Hence arming the people, and reforming parliament, are inseparable.

* Such at least will be our force, as soon as we resort to the true original principles of our Saxon constitution.

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But some distempered imaginations will have it, that the third estate ought not to be created by, to represent, or be responsible to the people themselves; and are wild and inflammatory enough to assert, that such a representation, if once effected, must abolish the Lords and disinherit the King. These affected fears are to be referred to the same impure source, from whence flowed the insidious policy, "for the last three centuries," of disarming the people. Had Mr. Young seven years ago proclaimed that *five hundred thousand men* ought to be instantly armed in this country, he might by many have been thought a fit inhabitant for the Tower, or for Bedlam; and the constitutional truth he uttered, would doubtless have been treated as other constitutional truths have lately been treated in a certain book.* Now in the imaginary scale of dangers to the king and the nobles, that of a free House of Commons would probably at least be somewhat remote. It would operate, as may be supposed by those who entertain the idea, gradually, and by mere encroachment. But, according to the reasonings of our author, the danger of those privileged orders, from arming the people, must be immediate. Having then the power of destruction, they will, as he reasons, have the will; and proceed without delay to the act. If you ask why? his answer is, Go to France.

* *The example of France is never to Britain.*

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For my own part, I do not feel the force of this mode of reasoning; and before I can imagine a French hatred, antipathy, and insatiable revenge towards all men possessed of property or power, and the bloody-mindedness of Frenchmen to actuate *English* bosoms, I must suppose against notorious fact. The supposition includes centuries of despotism in the crown; intolerable oppressions and insolence from nobles as numerous and rapacious as locusts; the abominations of an idolatrous, beastly superstition, under the name of religion; an atheistical priesthood; and that deluge of national vice and impiety which must ever flow from sources so impure. I must suppose the people to bear towards the nobles and the clergy, the antipathy of women and children towards vipers and serpents. But is this a picture of the English nation?—Is it a picture of any nation that ever appeared on earth except France?—Did an armed Roman people abolish Patricians? Did the iron Spartans dismiss *hereditary* Kings? Do the armed American people level property and dissolve government?

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* "Look through the annals of the world, and see if any
"one instance of a militia can be produced, that was felicitous
"of itself; or of a people, who, when the sword was put into
"their hands, converted it to their own destruction.—Free states
"have almost always been subject to commotions, and the same
"have

When I said that *arming the people and reforming the parliament* are inseparable; I said it in compliment to the understandings of our ministers; for I certainly do not suspect them of the folly of *thinking*, that a British House of Commons ought not to be chosen by, to represent, and be responsible to the Commons of *Britain*. In the case then of calling those Commons to arms, I should trust to that prudence, or, as Mr. *Barke* terms it, that "civil discretion," by which the counsels of wise statesmen are governed, that on a question

"have generally been defended by a militia; but that the military establishments of such a people were the cause of their commotions can never be proved;—and though Rome had *many soldiers as citizens*, tho' her senators and plebeians had frequent contests for power, where THE BALANCE WAS UNEQUALLY ADJUSTED; yet her people, when in the greatest fury, and when driven by injustice almost to despair, never once had recourse to arms; they urged their claims by supplications and secessions; and though disciplined and ready at all times to take up arms in the defence of their country, they never lifted up a hand against it; for several centuries not a life was lost amidst all their contentions; and it was not until the nature of their armies was changed, until their legions received pay, were transported into distant provinces, and never suffered to return to their domestic occupations; in a word, not until the honest Militia-men of *Rome* were changed into STANDING FORCES, that their contests blazed out into civil wars, destructive to the Commonwealth."

Lord Houghton's Discourse on a national and constitutional force, 49.

which

which has so long agitated the public mind, and now so peculiarly occupies it, they would act according to what *they believe* to be the true sense of the nation on the subject. Sanguine as I am, and have been for many years past, to see that House reformed, I shall be well content, and even desirous, that the reform may not precede the national wish. Amidst the calamities of this awful moment, when we must either arm in a mass, or cease to be a people, it is to me a consolation the most solid, that the measure of *arming*, must either set us at the same time about *reforming*; or at least obtain that most important question, *a fair bearing*. And here again, I shall trust in the wisdom of ministers. When the British Commons, by the stern voice of necessity, shall be called in a mass to arms, when they shall thereby feel and know, that, not by a minister of the war department, not by a standing army, not by any of the inventions of "the three last centuries," their liberties and constitution are to be preserved, but by THEIR OWN IMMEDIATE GUARDIANSHIP, THEIR OWN PERSONAL, INDIVIDUAL EXERTIONS, THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDINGS AND COURAGE; under such circumstances, I say, ministers will be too wise to bring themselves under a suspicion, of rewarding prostitute journalists, for incessantly scattering through the land the poison of corrupt and arbitrary doctrines; or of patronizing perverted

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genius,

genius, AT THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, in its lunatic attempts to *write down* the doctrine of LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION, on which the very existence of our liberties depends.

There never was a period in which we had more need than at present, seriously to consider of the means to preserve, not only the constitution, with its king, and its lords; but our country itself, and the power of calling ourselves a people. If a conquest to *France*, we must thenceforward be what it should please *France* to make us. If there be a nation in *Europe* that this conquering Republic would choose to hold as a province; instead of assimilating it to its own system of government, and treating it afterwards as an equal, that nation is *Great Britain*; for in no other nation can *France* behold a RIVAL. It is the very characteristic of a boundless ambition, that it bears no rival. In exact proportion as a rival is great and formidable, such is the magnitude of their mutual enmity. But if he that is gaining the ascendant still bleeds at wounds inflicted by his adversary, aimed at his very life; forgiveness he treats as folly; retaliation and extirpation possess his soul. *Cæsar* had forgiveness for every Roman, *Pompey* alone excepted. *Rome* afflicted every other conquered city; but *Carthage*
the

the devoted to destruction. *Delenda est Carthago* is a language founded in nature.

At this crisis, when the allies of *Britain* seem deserting her side one by one; and all to be seeking safety by courting the friendship of *France*, can *Britain*, I say, the rival state, she who has been the sinner of the war, who has strained every nerve to knit together, and to augment the grand confederacy; can *Britain*, deserted, abandoned, impoverished, expect to have peace?—She must not entertain the hope. She must, ere long, expect to find the war in *Ireland*. She must prepare to meet the Republican armies in *Kent*, in *Hampshire*, in the west, and in the north. She has to deal with a war new in all its aspects; and with a people prolific in new ideas. They are in the familiar habit of calling old things and old places by new names; weeks they have utterly abolished; and time itself they have subjected to new denominations. Could we therefore be surprized if, as a prelude to their future designs, and as one of those strokes by which they so well know how to touch the republican mind, and to wind it up to their purpose, the Convention should transmit to their armies a decree, that thenceforward amongst Frenchmen the island of their enemy should be called *New Africa*, and its capital, *Carthage*?

But whether their intentions shall be thus manifested or not; what those intentions are but too likely to be, we know,* and indeed, if ambition and the rival spirit were wanting, there is yet another motive which may impel them to the enterprise alluded to. We have stripped them of their foreign possessions; we have destroyed their external trade; and we have annihilated in a manner every manufacture not applicable to domestic purposes and to war. What, then, is the Convention to do with the *twelve hundred thousand men* they have in the armies? If the present manufacturers and husbandmen are equal to the cultivation of the land, and to the supply of domestic and military manufactures; how is this vast soldiery, if disbanded on a sudden, to find either employment or subsistence? Is not here a danger, which in the judgment of the Convention, may be thought infinitely greater, than that of invading this island?—an island inhabited by a DISARMED DEMOCRACY, who were first basely betrayed, as disaffected to their own constitution, and then committed to the custody of the armed bodyguards of an Oligarchy, raised for defending their rotten-borough incroachments on the democratic branch of the legislature.

* Since this passage was written, our newspapers have given us conventional language, sufficiently strong to prepare us for any measure grounded on the principle of rivalry.

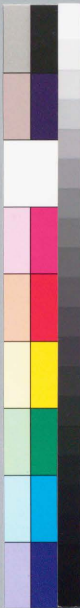
What

What then is there in the present posture of *England* to forbid invasion? Are there fifty thousand men in arms including the militia, and the new cavalry? Recal the fragments of your wasted army from the continent, and collect every soldier within your reach, you will not still muster *one hundred thousand men*. Those who have more than a *million*, stung with revenge, flushed with conquest, and for whom their rulers *must* find an enemy to attack, such a force may not appear very formidable. Neither should I feel over-confident of our security, had we even *Mr. Young's five hundred thousand men, irrelled, armed, and officered*,* although they were also in some degree trained; for unless our preparations for defence go to the full extent of our population, and to all the means which the *Saxon* principles of our constitution so admirably point out; that is, unless we oppose our invaders “*on principles as energetic as their own*,”† when we shall have manured the soil of *England* with our blood, we may not yet be able to transmit it to our posterity; but it may be parcelled out amongst our conquerors; and *England*, so long the glory of nations, may sink into a military colony of *France*.

I have not forgotten the British navy, nor am I ignorant of its value; but when my countrymen,

* Annals of Agriculture, No. 129, Page 301. † lb. 289.

indulging



indulging prejudice and sway'd by national vanity, tell me that it affords a safe protection from such a power as the French republic, encircling us with a coast from the Texel to Ushant, and from thence extending to the confines of Spain; my answer is, "Lay not this flattering unctio[n] to your soul."—Your navy, believe me, will have enough to do, to protect your foreign possessions, and your trade. How it has of late performed this last office, *Lloyd's* List but too plainly declares. A superior navy may, or may not, intercept an invading fleet. We have good Admirals; but they are not Gods, with power over the elements. A *Howe* has shewn us, that an English Admiral will do *with ships* what man can do; but before the French Commander *purposely* gave him battle, do we not all remember, that our great Admiral was the perpetual butt of satire, lampoon, epigram, calumny and insult, because he did not bring the enemy to action. Superior as proved the British fleet on the first of June, the French gave it battle, and gained their object. And when the conquest of this island shall be their object, are we to suppose they will scruple to secure a landing, although at the hazard of sacrificing half a score ships of the line! Those who shall put their trust in such wretched suppositions, and shall recal to our recollection the fate of the Armada, must carry with them, that *Philip* did not possess the whole south coast of the English Channel, nor

were

were his mariners acquainted with its navigation; and those who shall remind us of our victories off *Quiberon*, and *La Hogue*, will do well to recollect, that there was as wide a difference between the French Monarchy, and the French Republic, as between a *Louis* and a *Lycurgus*.

It was *Hannibal's* victory at *Cannæ*, shaking the very foundations of *Rome*, that determined her on carrying the war into the country of the Carthaginians. She carried it thither, and *Carthage* fell. But our *Hannibal* is not victorious; nor does *Paris* tremble at his name. Retreating from post to post, from river to river, the utmost we have to hope is, that he will not share the fate of a *Burgoyne* or a *Cornwallis*, and his army be lost to the defence of their country. To that country a navy is indeed a valuable auxiliary, for balancing against other navies, and for scouring the coasts; but from its own nature, and from the nature of the element on which it acts, it must of necessity be always separated and detached from the main force on which the security of the country properly depends; viz. ITS ARMED INHABITANTS.

If, therefore, we should neglect to arm, and the armies of our enemy should be poured in upon us from all the harbours extending from the *Texel* to *Cheerburg*; while our grand fleet in an easterly wind

should

should be cruising off *Brest*, to prevent another French army visiting *Ireland*; who is it that can answer for the safety of the country? A change of wind may then take place: a strong westerly wind may bring our fleet up channel, and drive it into the *Downs*.* By this time the French transports are returned in safety, and again loaded with a second embarkation of troops and ammunition. The western counties are now exposed; and the *Brest* army, instead of steering for *Ireland*, lands near *Plymouth*; while other bodies from all the ports between *Ushant* and *St. Maloes* direct their course to some important point in the neighbourhood of *Perthmouth*.—Attacked at so many points, who shall say the country might not be subdued, before the *unprepared* people could arm, and put themselves in a posture of defence †

If such events as I have described are *possible*, even although *France* had no line-of-battle navy,

* Or it might be a manoeuvre of *France* to carry the naval war into the *West Indies*, provided they previously secured a port, by a peace with *Spain*, or other means. In this case, our grand fleet must follow, and either our coasts or our commerce at home must be left undefended.

† From *London*, at a centre, to the coast of *Essex*, to *Margate*, to *Deal*, to *Dover*, to *Portsmouth*, or to any intermediate point in this circle of coast, the distance does not exceed *three days march of an army*.

how much more possible are they, when he has a fleet of large ships so considerable in number, that it is the employment of a very large part of the *British* navy to attend upon their motions. But if any part of the navies of *Spain* and *Holland* should speedily come into the hands of *France*, the balance of naval force might become more nearly equal, if not in favour of our enemy. And it ought to be remembered, that on the prosperity of *France*, in the present state of things, the loss of twenty, or even thirty ships of the line, could make no sensible impression; whereas such a disaster on our side would be dreadful indeed. Having neither foreign colonies, nor foreign commerce to protect, and in consequence of being an *armed nation*, absolutely invulnerable to any attack we can make upon her territory, to her navy is not an arm of defence, but of offence. As neither her national, her colonial, nor her commercial existence depends upon it, so, for the accomplishment of any grand object, it may be her policy to hazard its defeat, knowing that it cannot be beaten without much damage being done to the victors, who can less afford to waste any of their naval strength. The news in *London*, of a glorious victory crowned with the capture of a dozen ships of the line brought in by our crippled fleet, might not cause much rejoicing, if accompanied with intelligence that a large army had made good its landing on our shore.

When

When in the beginning of October, the *warning* voice of Mr. *Young*, announced the absolute necessity of arming *five hundred thousand men*, even should circumstances turn out the most favourable he could possibly imagine; and that, in case our allies failed in their exertions, our situation would then demand "double attention to the means of providing for the defence of this island," I presumed he spoke the language of ministers, and I gave them credit for seeing at length in *one particular* the interest of their country, and being prepared to pursue it; but now, that the dark side of Mr. *Young's* alternative presents itself, and three months have already elapsed, the important business is suffered to sleep; and parliament itself has been but just assembled, although this serious alarm has been so long in circulation. Do ministers, then, if they can patch up a disgraceful peace, think of continuing the people disarmed, and unrepresented; and hope to persuade them they will be safe against a rival nation of more than double their numbers and completely armed; by having for their protectors a standing army, and a standing House of Commons, such as we have seen described by Mr. *Young*?* Is the British Constitution, is our existence as a people, to be thus hazarded to the last moment of criminal experiment, that the rotten-borough system, which holds both king and people in chains to the ruling faction of the day, may be preserved! But if the hope of

* See the Introduction.

peace

peace amuse our ministers, what are the terms which a *defenceless* nation can obtain? To make a good peace, it is necessary to be in the best posture for war. With an ARMED NATION at his back, a minister might at least capitulate on honourable conditions; but if he treat when he can make no resistance, he must surrender at discretion. If therefore a capitulation be signed, before the garrison be armed, they will have more than reason to suspect, that they have been betrayed.

Thus, at a crisis like the present, when all *France* is ARMED, when she has *twelve hundred thousand victorious soldiers in the field*, and when *Britain* has nothing better to hope than to defend herself against the most gigantic power she ever encountered; at such a crisis, I say, whether it is to be war, or whether it is to be peace, the honour, the interest of *Britain* must be grossly sacrificed, if she be not instantly armed; that she may look her danger in the face without dismay, and take care that she be not fold in that market of corruption, where the interests of the borough-mongers have so long been preferred to the interests of the nation.

In truth, it is not any minister; it is not any negotiator; it is not any exercise of diplomatic skill; that can now obtain this nation a satisfactory peace. The nation itself *armed to a man*, and *represented in a free parliament*, is alone equal to the arduous task.

talk. So cheap do I hold changes of ministry as a means to save a state, that even on the present occasion I should be ashamed to lay a stress upon it, did we not recollect the insufferable arrogance with which our ministers treated the ruling men in *France*, and how they vilified and insulted every one with whom we must now treat, if treaty be not altogether rejected. It were therefore to dictate not only of common prudence, but of common decency, that in speaking to *France* on the subject of reconciliation and peace, this nation should do it through other organs than the present.

But when, by means of reforming the House of Commons, arming the people, and changing our ministry, we may be raised to a proper level for treating with the high-minded republicans of *France*, a wide, a new, and difficult field of speculation presents itself. Reductions we must make; and a little consideration will shew it to be our best interest so to do. At present, we have stripped *France* of her *Newfoundland* Fishery, her small settlements in *Hindostan*, and her *West India Islands*. We must not suppose she will consent to cease being a maritime power. Now a navy has but two supports: Commerce or War. If, therefore, we refused to restore any thing, she could not make Peace. It would ruin her navy. Are we, then, to have perpetual war, for the sake of retaining our conquests? I fear it would be paying too dear for them.

them. If by completely arming, by perpetual vigilance, and by meeting every attack with the spirit of Englishmen, we could defend our own island; how could we defend a commerce spread over the face of the whole world?

Has not recent experience shewn, that while *France* was making unparalleled exertions by land, she yet could find means to prey upon our Trade to a most alarming extent? What then must be the case, when, safe by land, similar exertions shall be directed towards her navy, and against the commerce of this country! such a war would be a nursery of seamen equal to her utmost wish. British capital would be employed to furnish a rich Lottery, stuck thick with prizes, for animating and rewarding the spirit of French adventure. Britons would plough and sow; Frenchmen would reap. In short, in such a war the commerce of Britain must be annihilated, unless all her shipping became ships of war as well as trade; and none put to sea but in fleets and with strong convoy. And what would that commerce be worth, carried on at such an enormous expence?*

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* Is the astonishing indifference of our *London* merchants to the present situation of this country and its trade, a proof of that political knowledge, with the supposed possession of which they are so often complimented? I fear it is rather a strong and decisive fact, which must henceforth bring into utter contempt the political pretensions of the mercantile man; and mark him, in confirmation,

In every view of the present contest ending in a naval war between the two nations, it is big with ruin to this country; and has I trust so little charms in the eyes of the French government, that nothing but extremity will urge them to it. I persuade myself they mean yet to be a civilized nation, and to cultivate the arts of peace. I am sure it is our interest not to counteract such inclinations. It were good policy methinks, if I may so express it, to take *France* into partnership on liberal terms; instead of driving her into hostility to the very existence of Trade. The world is wide enough for us both. Besides, being next neighbours, we ought especially to cultivate a mutual intercourse, as the nearest markets are generally the safest and the best.

The general interests of commerce are at this moment critically situated, and very much depend on the fate of *France*. By the late astonishing

confirmation of the efficacy of *Smith*, as the most dangerous being, that can be suffered to enter the closet of a minister. If these money-hunting gentlemen trust to the wings of their wealth for transporting them in prosperity and safety to other regions, while those whose property is in land must remain to abide the pitiless pelting of the approaching storm; even in that case, it seems to be time for looking to their retreat; or the unexpected lightnings of war may scorch their paper wings, and both their property and their persons may be overtaken by the coming hurricane.

combination

combination formed against her on one hand, and by the almost supernatural energy she has manifested on the other hand, her people are well-nigh driven into that singular state of society, adapted only to self-preservation and war, from which it is difficult to return into those paths of luxury, arts and refinements on which commerce depends; and fatal must it be to the commerce of *Europe*, if such return should be made wholly impracticable.

What has *France* even to fear from a perpetual war with all the maritime world? The adventurers of all countries would flock to her standard, and pirate under her flag. Her ships, not being worth fighting for, no private adventurers would cruise against her; and the trade of all nations would be her prey. It were possible to drive her against her natural habits and genius, into this horrible system, or else to an extremity more confined in its object, but perhaps more fatal to ourselves. For the sake, then, of humanity, and of all that adorns the civilized world, but especially for the sake of ourselves and our posterity, it is to be hoped that she will be induced, by our temper and moderation, to return into the paths of peace and commerce.

What are the precise restitution to be made or conditions to be acceded to on our part, it may be presumption in an individual to think of pointing

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out.



out. But at such an epoch as the present, when the continental governments, like their own light and adulterated coin, seem as if they would not long be passible, but must one by one return to their national mints, to receive weight, purity and a new stamp; it may be of importance to suggest that negotiators ought to elevate their minds and extend their ideas to higher and more enlarged systems of policy, than have hitherto occupied the attention of courts. In treating with the French, we ought, as far as human frailty can be shaken off, to get rid of the narrow-mindedness of rivals; and aim at an alliance and friendship, calculated to perpetuate liberty and peace to the two nations, and gradually to extend those blessings to all the nations around, by means only which the strictest moralist must approve. These two nations, distinguished for whatever benefits, adorns and dignifies human nature; the busy marts of the globe, the gay scenes of elegance and social happiness, the crowded theatres of instruction, the peaceful seats of industry, art, science, letters and liberty, will become as it were the Universities of Man, the attractive resorts of all nations; where the willing students, imbibing those delightful lessons, those stores of knowledge, those ennobling sentiments, and those grand views of the duties and the rights of men, with which, returning to enlighten their countrymen, the emancipation of mankind will make a rapid progress. If national rivalship

rivalship must remain, hither be it directed. What a wide field is here, for the race of emulation! What a magnificent theatre, for the exercise of a bloodless ambition!

The world, I say, is wide enough for us both; and when our governments shall be so reformed, that WAR, which, although a poisoned apple of discord destroying nations, is the natural food of unrestrained monarchy and unbridled aristocracy, shall never be revived between us, until *the real interest of the people on either side require it*, (which is a case so far from probable, that it is scarcely possible) we may look forward with a pleasing confidence of durable peace, a total extinction of national debt, an immense reduction of taxes, an highly improved cultivation of our soil, a vast increase of population, and every other proof of prosperity.*

Arming the people, which is a fundamental of national freedom and security, at the same time that, at a trifling expence it would render us unconquerable; must free us from the greater part of that

* The mystery and iniquity of WAR, its real causes, and the true means of its prevention, may be seen luminously stated in the *Advice to the Privileged Orders*, by *Jos. Barlow*, Esq. True—he is an American; he is a Republican; but if he will instruct me in peace, wisdom and virtue, I will be his disciple.

enormous

enormous expence at which we keep up a standing army. An alliance with *France*, in like manner, on a basis of friendship, sincerity and wisdom, might relieve us also from a large proportion of the cost, at which an immense navy is created, repaired and maintained. When I ask, 'why is our navy so large?' the answer must be, 'that it may not be inferior to those of rival powers.' But the principal of those powers may fall to the reformed Legislature of *Britain*; 'Seeing that war is the consequence of only of governments wherein an interest hostile to that of the people is predominant; and knowing that both you and ourselves have freed our respective systems from so monstrous a defect; why burthen our respective people any longer with navies, beyond what is necessary to teach the despotic states their duty to mankind?*' It were unnecessary to suggest the reply. Policy and the public good would admit but of one.

What a consolation to the human race, what an earnest of freedom to enslaved nations, must be such an union between *Great Britain* and *France*! Where is the mighty monarch that must not listen to their expostulations, or be awed by their me-

* "The possession of many sailors, as *instruments of future wars*, ought to be esteemed in the same light as great Russian or Prussian armies; that is to say, as the pests of human society."

Yeung's Travels, page 493.

naces!

naces! Where is the oppressed people, that, suing to them, need despair of redress! Ah; deserted, abandoned, brave, but devoted Poles, wherefore are the only two nations on earth that could rescue you from the gripe of despots, wicked as fiends, hateful as hell, at strife and war with each other!—and why, O Englishmen, are we in close alliance with the very powers whose armies are at this moment enslaving Poland! A conduct so abhorrent to the genius of English freedom cannot be right. An inconsistency so glaring, no sophistry can reconcile.

But what says Mr. *Yeung*?—"The revolution that has taken place at *Geneva*, THE WAR IN POLAND, and the conspiracies in almost every part of *Europe*, all created and fomented by FRENCH GOLD and French agents," &c. What! no vitiated aliment, no foul humours, no internal obstructions and oppressions, in the body-politic of *Europe*; which, like the elements of a long-forming gout in the human frame, are now beginning to work themselves off by violent and highly inflammatory paroxysms! Can we discern no cause of commotions and war, but in *French gold*? Have the *Poles* had no other cause for drawing the sword! Where is Mr. *Yeung's* proof of a French subsidy to *Kojcinjko*? and would it not have been glorious had they even marched an army

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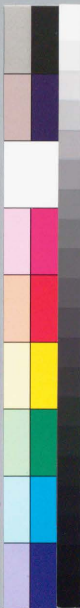
to his aid?—I would to God that British armies and British gold had not been worse employed!

How changed are Mr. *Young's* sentiments, since he penned the following lines! "Oil and vinegar—fire and water—Prussians and Austrians are united to carry war against twenty-six millions of men, arranged behind an hundred of the strongest fortresses in the world.—If we are deceived, and Frenchmen are not fond of freedom, but will fight for despotism—something may be done; for then *France* falls by the power of *France*: but if united but tolerably, the attack will be full of difficulty in a country where every man, woman, and child is an enemy, that fights for freedom. But suppose this idea erroneous—suppose an impression made—and that the German banners were flying at *Paris*.—Where is the security of the rest of *Europe*? IS THE DIVISION OF POLAND FORGOTTEN? IS an unforeseen union of two or three great powers to protrude through *Europe* a predominancy dangerous to all? Gentlemen who indulge their wishes for a counter-revolution in *France*, do not, perhaps, wish to see the Prussian colours at the Tower, nor the Austrian at Amsterdam. Yet success to the cause might plant them there. Should real danger arise to *France*, which I hold to be problematical, it is the business and direct interest

interest of her neighbours, to support her."* Such were the sentiments of Mr. *Young* but four months before he published the first part of his *Example of France, a Warning to Britain!*—"Is the division of Poland forgotten"! Perhaps it is, as I find it has been forgotten to insert the whole of this passage in the author's second edition.

But to turn once more towards the angel peace, and to reflect on the conditions on which she may be rendered a perpetual guest, to cheer and bless our happy island; perhaps it were now the critical season for well considering a system of policy in which this country is deeply concerned, and on which there is even amongst well-informed men, a considerable difference of opinion. I allude to the system of colonies and distant dominions. Few have denied the wisdom of our originally founding colonies in *America*, or fortified factories in the east; but many there are who think, that colonizing and conquering abroad, have had too much of our attention, and may be carried to a fatal extreme. Universal empire is the very phrenzy of ambition. When you have discovered the limit, beyond which the bounded faculties of man cannot govern but with oppression, you have discovered the boundaries of a just dominion.

* *Young's Travels*, page 566.

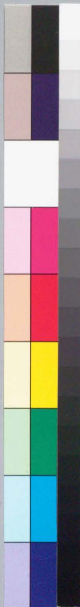


Populous nations may possibly be so circumstanced, that, to govern, may be to protect them from savage tyrants: but this implies extraordinary defects in the intellectual, moral and political improvement of such nations; which defects it is the duty of their lords to remove; nor do such defects in any wise release them from the obligations, which lie upon all rulers, to govern with justice. In the administration of distant provinces, men may be rewarded for quitting their native country in the prime of life, and for encountering unhealthy climates, in the public service; but in providing for, and proportioning, such rewards, beware not to alienate the minds of the governed. Take care, in particular, not to render them a prey to rapacity, the victims of imbecility, or the sport of insolent tyranny. Let them not, from observing the lawlessness, the odiousness, or the contemptibleness of the men sent amongst them, be able to ascribe to the presiding government that sent them, such an ascendancy of faction and corruption, as to produce a system of dirty private patronage, instead of an enlarged superintending policy, built on impartial law and official integrity.

How essential then to a just, a prudent, a conciliating system of colonial and provincial government, is independency and purity in the legislature
at

at home! Distant dominions fleeced and insulted must ever be insecure. If watlike, they will copy *America*; if pusillanimous, they will intrigue with your enemies. A government of injustice, is a constitution with poison in every vein, disease in every fibre. The more distant such a dominion, the more difficult to hold; and the greater the magnitude of the whole empire, the more certain is misgovernment to bring it to ruin. While *Britain* has cause to know that she is in immediate danger; while her every exertion is requisite for self-preservation; while all her native energies and activity will be little enough to defend her own existence; how can she with an *unreformed House of Commons* and an *unarmed people*, bear on her shoulders the pressure of her feeble dominions in *North America*, her insecure islands in the *West Indies*, and her wide-extended provinces in *Hindostan*!

It is time she sought to know, in what the natural, solid, well-wearing strength of a nation depends. It is time the thought of employing more capital on the cultivation of her native soil, and less on that of distant countries. And it is time that the thought of seeking republican energy in the full recovery of her constitution. The rotten-borough cancer in her breasts taints, relaxes, and debilitates her whole frame. It corrupts every department, every branch, every
ramification



ramification of the state. It utterly extirpates all principle, to make way for universal venality: it repels from office real patriotism; it renders even zeal in the public servants, a feeling against nature; and, besides proving, in the first instance, a most exhausting drain of that blood of the political body, money, it effectually undermines all wholesome discipline civil, military, and judicial, at home and abroad. Borough interest, or parliamentary influence, is an almost universal qualification for office; a substitute for all the human virtues; and a letter of impunity to the greatest crimes.—To suppose that in the present awful contest, such an enfeebled, sickly government will enable this country to contend with republican *France*; exhibiting the intellect of *Athens*, the discipline of *Rome*, and the military enthusiasm of *Sparta*; would be no wiser than to suppose that a company of the silken sons of sloth and debauchery, would come off victors over double their numbers of the hardy sons of temperance and active labour, at such gymnastic exercises as wrestling, boxing, or throwing the sledge.

To restore the constitution at home, is the only mean by which the attachment and fidelity of your dependencies can be secured: and on that attachment and fidelity depends your ability to concentrate the force of the empire for the defence of the seat of empire. It was by the radical defect in

our

our government,—it was to feed the insatiable maw of that monster CORRUPTION,—it was to preserve an infamous system of factious patronage, bowing our necks to the yoke of a few insensible usurers,—it was to gratify the Borough-mongers and their creatures to the fiftieth link of connection and dependence, that we violated a fundamental principle of the constitution, which brought on a most calamitous war, that rent from our dominion the most prosperous and affectionate colonies that ever rendered an empire great and illustrious.

Discontented provinces at a distance which, instead of being animated to union and vigour for self defence, require to be kept in subjection by your troops, are, at such a period as the present, sources of weakness instead of causes of strength; and in exact proportion to their discontents. But how can those discontents be removed, unless you remove the cause! You cannot shield them from oppression, while their oppressors lord it at home over *Britain* herself. While *India* patronage is upheld by, and at the same time upholds, the rotten-borough system, *India* must be fleeced by the hand of rapacity, and insulted by the unfitness of men for the offices to which they are appointed. And while that system remains, there must be so great a disparity between liberty in the *United States*

of

of America, and liberty in the remaining British provinces on that continent, as to nourish discontents that must end in another dismemberment:—and when is such an event so likely to happen as at the very moment when the war shall be at the gates of London.

In the hour of your distress, instead of receiving succours from your distant provinces; or even the consolation of knowing that their fidelity remains unshaken; you may expect to hear that your distress was the signal for their revolt, and that the monopoly of their trade is for ever gone from you. Good God! and are there men in this country such enemies to its every interest,—to its very preservation,—to its security from becoming itself a province, a dependency on the proud republic of France; as, at a moment of such accumulated peril as the present, not to come forward with a voluntary surrender of their boroughs, and heartily to concur in rendering the Commons House of Parliament a genuine representation of the people!—Can they obstinately persist in being the cause of national disunion; of spunging to themselves the heart's blood of the state;—of expelling from our government every principle of energy; and of loosening the bands of union between Great Britain and her provinces; if not of converting those provinces rather into a burthen than a benefit!

Are

Are they prepared for the consequences of such a conduct to their country? Are they prepared to brave the public odium in such a cause? Are they fortified against the detestation and contempt of all mankind? Whenever, and wherever, they shall appear in our streets, what will be their feelings, when they shall see themselves continually pointed at by the finger of scorn! And, in truth, I believe the moment is fast advancing, when we shall endure the sight of a spy, an informer, a perjured witness, or the vilest apostate, with more composure than that of a Borough-monger. Three years ago, that appellation was merely synonymous with *Political Swindler*; but now—thanks to *Robert-piere*—it means much more. The Borough-monger's trade is national pillage and depredation; and his means, fraud, menace, or murder, as his occasions require.

There are writers of eminence, who are against the holding of any colonies or transmarine dominions at all, as injurious to the interest of the presiding country. Mr. Young is of this number. According to him, "It would be right for every country to open her colonies to all the world, on principles of liberality and freedom; and still it would be better to go one step farther, and have no colonies at all. The sugar islands of all nations, in the *West Indies*, including the great island

“ island of *Cuba*, are considerable enough to form
 “ an independent free nation; and it wants not
 “ many arguments to shew, that the existence of
 “ such an one would be far more beneficial to the
 “ English, French and Spaniards, than the posses-
 “ sion of those islands as colonies.”*

After much able reasoning in support of his doctrine, he proceeds; “ I have used,” says he, “ no arguments against the French sugar islands that are not applicable likewise to the English: I hold them to be equal obstacles to the prosperity of both kingdoms; and, as far as the experiment of the loss of *North America* goes, I am justified by that vast and important fact— that a country may lose the monopoly of a distant empire, and rise from the imaginary loss more rich, more powerful, and more prosperous! If these principles be just, and that they are so is confirmed by an immense range of facts, what are we to think of a politician who declares, that the loss of *Bengal*, or the Dutch withdrawing their money from our funds, would ruin England.”†

And again: after relating a conversation on the same subject with Abbé *Raynal* at *Bourdeaux*, he

* Young's Travels, Page 492. † Ibid. 495.

proceeds

proceeds—“ When will the obvious conclusions,
 “ to be drawn from that prodigious event,* be
 “ adopted? that all transmarine, or distant do-
 “ minions, are sources of weakness, and that to re-
 “ nounce them would be wisdom. Apply this in
 “ France, to *St. Domingo*; in Spain, to Peru; or
 “ in England to *Bengal*, and mark the ideas and
 “ replies that are excited. I have no doubt, how-
 “ ever, of the fact.†”

As this doctrine is said to have made of late great progress in *France*, it might not be altogether surprising if, on treating with her for peace, (whenever that time shall come) the should propose as a condition, that neither nation should in future hold any *West-India* island. If, then, the government and the parliament of *England* should not be ready to subscribe to the doctrine of Mr. *Young*, and if such a proposal from *France*, and its practical consequences, would merit to be thoroughly weighed and considered before they were adopted; we have additional arguments for putting ourselves in a posture of the utmost strength, before we enter on any treaty for peace. But, indeed, there is no point of view, in which the situation of this country can be seen, that does not im-

* The American Revolution.

† Young's Travels, p. 180.

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pres upon the intelligent mind, the wisdom of completely arming the people.

The supposition of relinquishing all our *West-India* islands, seems to imply in it, not only a mutual guarantee of the two nations to the independence of those islands, but that all the isles of all other nations should be included in the system, and taken under the same protection. If this were acceded to, there would then be wanting *Ports* to the navies of *England* and *France*; with stores and necessaries; officers and artificers; for repairs, supplies and equipments; or how is the guarantee to be maintained? And farther;—in the islands where the Negroes are not yet emancipated, how are the whites to be protected from the blacks, until the latter, by a gradual conversion to free men, thro' instruction, indulgence, kindness and encouragement, shall no longer be dangerous to the existence of the former? And then; for the support of such a system; for the means of this protection; and for the maintenance of this guarantee; a general tax must be levied on all the islands in favour of *England* and *France*. How is this tax to be raised, without an adequate power being for that purpose vested in the two guaranteees? And how will the other nations be convinced, that by acceding to the relinquishment of their islands, they

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have not in fact surrendered them into the hands of the two guaranteeing powers?

But notwithstanding these difficulties and causes for hesitation, and even admitting that the whole *West-India* trade would be open and free to all, which, on Mr. *Young's* principles, would be favourable to that nation which had most capital and most credit; yet how far the *United States of America*, with the great advantages they possess in the *Lumber* trade, and in consequence of their vicinity, might be able gradually and necessarily to exclude you from the carrying trade, as fast as their trading capital increased, and they could increase the number of their ships, (an object to the attainment of which they want nothing that nature or art have to give); is another very important consideration.

At all events, now that a relinquishment of colonies, and a free trade all over the world, are ideas afloat in French minds, we ought to stand on ground of great solidity, and be in the full possession and exercise of our natural strength, ere we venture into a treaty in which propositions of such a nature are likely to come forward, and to be supported with ardour. And if a proposal for renouncing the *West-India* islands, is to be followed by one, for abandoning our remaining provinces in *Norib America*; and another, for evacuating



our immense possessions in *India*; still more and more is it necessary, that we put ourselves in a situation to send our ambassadors to meet those of *France* at the *Hague*; rather than expose ourselves to the possibility of being compelled to treat through *Picbegrn*, encamped on *Blackbeath*, or quartered in the city and suburbs of *London*.

Nothing that I have advanced amounts to a denial that *Mr. Young* is right in his principle, that "all *transmarine* or *distant dominions* are sources "of *weakness*;" but it must be allowed, that the question is too important to be lightly decided; and that, in case he be in an error, we ought not to hazard our being driven by *compulsion* to adopt it in practice. I am inclined to think that a perfectly free trade all over the world is extremely desirable, and would prove most beneficial to that nation which should be superior to all others in capital and in shipping: as may be inferred from our trade with *China*, where, although we have no dominion, we almost monopolize the traffick with that country. And who can doubt that universal *peace*, *hospitality*, and *social intercourse*, between all nations, are greatly to be desired; but at the same time, who, in various parts of the world, would venture to *ab*, as if such a principle were universally established?

Ic

It is likewise to be feared, that, in respect to commerce, we are at a great distance from any thing so perfect; and can only approximate towards it progressively and slowly. At all events, so long as we hope to derive prosperity from colonies and provinces, we must be guilty of extreme folly in not holding them by their own interest and affection, founded on our sacred regard to justice. It was by the most stupid and wanton violation of this principle, we lost *America*.

So early as in the Spring of the year 1775, ere an hostile stroke had been struck beyond the *Atlantic*, the writer of this essay tendered to his country the following advice: To declare the colonies independent of parliament, and united with *Britain* only by the link of one common crown; and to form with them a federal league, under which the mother country should be the umpire of all the differences between her colonial children, the common guarantee of the independence of each separately, and the naval protector of the territory and trade of all: and in consideration of these services, either to receive a specific annual payment, or such a degree of commercial monopoly, as Congress should think adequate thereto.*

* See *American Independence the Interest and Glory of Great Britain*.

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Had this advice been at that time taken, his Majesty and his heirs might have been Kings of that vast continent for ages to come; neither the prosperity of the *United States*, nor the commerce of *Britain*, had received a temporary check; and this foolish country had been richer than she is, by a sum more than equal to her debt, at the commencement of the present war, enormous as that debt then was, viz. nearly 248 millions.* The actual debt incurred by the American war was about 121 millions; to which add the depression of rents, the depreciation in the value of landed produce, as well as all the disasters, captures and bankruptcies, during a seven years contest, as actual *loss*: Then again take into the account the failure of that profit which must have accrued, had there been no interruption of peace and harmony: When the whole is brought together, it cannot make an aggregate of *loss* less than 250 millions; without even reckoning three millions, for at least one hundred thousand men's lives, at thirty pounds a life, according to the market prices in *Hesse* and *Hanover*.

And is a nation to pay at such a rate, every time that a minister makes a political mistake; or has the abandoned wickedness to rush into war, intentionally to violate the constitution, or the

* See *Sinclair* on the Revenue.

Rights

Rights of Man!—But a nation that suffers the representation of its millions to be in effect annihilated, in favour of fewer persons than a minister can at once set down to his dining-table, must expect to have frequent occasions to make such melancholy reflections!

At the commencement of the present war, no less than at the commencement of that with our colonies, this happy nation was at peace with every other; no power on earth had the means to do her hurt; her commerce collected for her citizens a revenue from a tributary world; her cup of prosperity was full, and overflowing. See, then, what a dreadful scourge is that fiend called a minister, when he is the tool of a powerful faction, and when a people has no representative to controul his actions! By the wickedness of a *North*, in a few years our country was humbled, degraded, and brought to drink deep of adversity: but by the more detestable wickedness of a *Pitt*, in less than a third part of the same time, she is brought into a situation, in which nothing short of every latent energy, every particle of native strength, being brought into action, can preserve her existence.

The advice, therefore, now offered to my country, is too late to operate as that given in the case of *America* might have done. It cannot prevent the

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enormous

enormous expence that is past, of blood and of treasure; it cannot restore the seventy millions already added to the public debt.* But, if timely adopted, it may prevent the extremity of evil, to which the iniquity of the minister is hurrying this devoted land: it may prevent a compulsive abandonment of *Canada* and *Nova Scotia*; it may prevent a forced relinquishment of our whole *East Indies*; it may prevent *Bengal*, *Babar* and *Orissa* (a territory as extensive and populous as *France*) being torn from our dominion by an unforeseen, abrupt, and destructive revolution; and it may prevent an open and free trade prematurely taking place, when we shall have little other capital left, for embarking in it, than what our soil and our industry shall leave, after furnishing us with the humble necessaries of existence: in short, it may prevent *Britain* from being brought into the situation of a rich man, with all his treasure in his house, awakened from sleep, and the dreams of security, by a murderous knife at his throat, and compelled to cry out—*spare my life and take all I have.*

An open and free trade has doubtless its recommendations; and there are reasons against distant transmarine dominions. By wholly withdrawing

* See Walker's Review of Political Events in Manchester, p. 166.

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dominion, instead of exercising it with wisdom and benevolence, we doubtless should cut off the temptation of becoming tyrants, and prevent the evils flowing from that source; and commerce, if there were nothing to obstruct it, might doubtless be more profitably carried on, without, in the first instance, embarking at great hazard capital in the cultivation of distant soils to the neglect of our own; and, in the next place, adding to the expence of the outfit, the vast charge of fleets and armies, with the additional burthen of civil establishments, and all the grandeur of government.

But if this system of an open and free trade all over the world is to be adopted, let it be an object of independent treaty and free choice; not the dictate of compulsion and despair. In the former case we should come in for our full share; and a share much larger than any other nation; because of our superior capital and credit; the variety and excellence of our manufactures: in the latter, I fear its introduction would be our utter ruin. Supposing the system voluntary and optional, and that in the *West Indies* our superiority of capital* should

* We could not enter into the Lumber Trade from the North without the permission of the *United States*; but the system of an open trade implies not only their concurrence, but that of all other states. In which case, it seems to follow, that we might employ our shipping in the carrying trade between the *United States* and the *West Indies*.

countervail

countervail the vicinity and other natural advantages of the *United States*; and suppose again, that when our *power* was withdrawn from *India*,* we found the effeminate people under no worse government than our own, and none to interrupt the perfect freedom of commerce; while our shipping could be sure of every accommodation for repairs and refitments; then, indeed, I know not but it might be our interest if the system were established. We might be less exposed to war and to debt; and the unshackled energies of national commerce would, I doubt not, work the wonders of republican freedom and enterprise. Provided we strengthen ourselves in time, it will be in our power to say to *France*, whether such a system shall, or shall not, be adopted between us. If we delay the means of security too long, it may become prudent, for fear of more fatal consequences, to acquiesce against our will: but if we suffer *France* to serve us, as she is serving *Holland*, our country, our commerce, and our colonies must all lie at her mercy.

* Supposing we could treat upon the ground of such a renunciation, the situation of our Asiatic provinces, and the circumstances of our connection, would seem to require a period of at least twenty years, for giving up our pretensions without vast loss to the *India Company*, and for placing the natives in a situation in which they could preserve their independence. They must be provided with free constitutions; and, by the practical exercise of the rights of free men for some years, be taught how to preserve them against enemies both within and without.

A free trade, while it laid open our colonies to others, would afford us some advantages. No part of the *West Indies* reverting to *France*, the whole of the islands would invite our commerce. All the ports of *Mexico* and of *South America*, to which our present access is by the circuitous and less profitable route of *Cadiz* and *Lisbon*, would be open to our manufactures; and we might visit the *Spice Islands*, *Batavia*, and all the other monopolized settlements in *Asia* and *Africa* without restraint. The commerce of the world thus laid open, those who have most capital, most character, most skill and activity, will of course have the preference in all markets, and carry off as much of the trade as they can occupy. In these grand essentials *Britain* certainly has no rival. And when we contemplate the infinite demands of civilized *Europe* and *Asia*; the astonishingly increasing wants of the *North American States*; and likewise the supplies required by the immense regions in *Asia*, and *Africa*, and *America*, where civilization and commerce are only in their infancy; how were it possible that *Britain* could want markets for her commodities, or employment for her growing capital.

And another very important advantage would be much accelerated by a relinquishment of all foreign dominion. In cultivation, *Britain* to the tops of her mountains would become a garden; in population,

tion, a hive. Superiority in commerce, must furnish the proportional means of superiority in naval power, whenever we might have occasion to call it forth. An armed nation, and the republican energies of free government, would give us perfect security at home.

With peace and an open trade, I do not see how *France* could possibly keep peace with us. It is a race in which, if we do not by our folly throw away our advantages, she must be distanced. After the revolution of centuries, each having started with their present means, she must still be far in the rear. As a commercial rival, she is an actual bankrupt, and the very basis of her manufactures, the very tools of her trade are nearly annihilated; while an empty purse denies her any other means of recovery than the utmost frugality and the most laborious industry: while we, on the contrary, have manufacturers of every kind in activity; stocks, and capital, and credit almost boundless; and the commerce of the world in our possession. They are, however, superior, in having more arms and armed men, and a government of more energy. May we not be so befitted, as to suffer these, their only advantages, to deprive us in a moment of all that we possess!

I have touched on the subject of an open trade, that in case the desperation of the minister, and the tameness

of the public, should bring us into such an extremity, that we could not with prudence or safety, refuse even such a trade to the detendant of *France*, we may not give up all for lost. In my mind, it would be far better to accede to even that demand, than, disarmed as the nation now is, and deprived of an energetic government, by the treasonable usurpation of our Borough mongers, to expose ourselves to the hazards incident to the continuance of this detestable and most destructive war. The day seems rapidly approaching which must decide our fate; and four distinct events seem to hang in the scales. 1st, An honourable peace, with security for the future; but no indemnity for the past: 2d, An end of colonial monopoly, and an open trade throughout the world: 3d, A perpetual naval war, with an enemy invulnerable to our attacks, and without any trade on which we can retaliate: Or 4th, a national and universal bankruptcy, and *Britain* at the feet of *France*.

But the speech and the address are silent on *arming* and *reforming*, and breathe nothing but prosecuting a war of extermination.

Whether any of the allies can be rallied once more in the crusade against *France*, or not, the game played by *Great Britain* is full of peril in the extreme. Another offensive campaign, which will
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the Russian army landed in *France*, will, in the judgments of many, be thought far less likely to restore monarchy in that country, than ultimately to abolish it in this, as well as to drive the Republic such lengths in the Spartan system, as to confirm her in it beyond the power of a retreat. In that case all foreign trade would be inconsistent with the genius of her government; but it would be her policy to make eternal war upon the trade of *Great Britain*; and continually to harrass her coasts with predatory expeditions or serious invasion. Should the fierce *Sewarrows* lead his Russians along the banks of the *Seine*, it would not be surprising if none opposed his march, but that armies of observation should hover on his flanks, until fore of their prey. And while we were dreaming of his entering *Paris*, it might be well if that very moment should not be chosen for *Pichegru's* marching to *London*. Such an attempt, whether successful or not, would produce melancholy countenances and aching hearts in this scene of gaiety, bustle, and dissipation. A double security would then be felt to be wanting. Those who remembered the year 1780, and who might think there were not wanting in *London* emissaries of the enemy, and still more-dreaded incendiaries, would not repose on their pillows with much tranquillity, although forces were mustered to meet the invaders in the field; unless a complete interior

defence

defence also remained, for the security of this great commercial city; the bank, the funds, the merchandize, the shipping, and the dwellings of its millions.

Take, then, the unfavourable side of the question, and admit but the possibility of the fortune of war putting the enemy in possession of *London*; can we be sure they would not instantly give it to the flames?—They who strike at the heart, mean destruction. Destruction, indeed, would too probably follow their victorious entry into our capital. The funds would vanish, and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a rack behind. And who could describe the wide-wasting ruin of their annihilation! the calamity it would bring on thousands, and tens of thousands! the endless chain of bankruptcies that must follow; the poverty, the confusion, the agony and wild despair of such a period! What would it avail that a week before, we had had dominion in every quarter of the globe, and could have numbered twenty millions of subjects in the provinces of our empire! Here in a moment would be an end of all—our *Babylon* fallen—our Empire given to another!

Can the government, seeing the possibility of such an event, delay one moment a call to arms! Can it see the tide of conquest overwhelming nations,

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tions, swallowing up our allies, and rolling towards our shores, and neglect to remind the people of their duty! When it suited ministers *for the object explained by Mr. Young**, (207) to hurry the people headlong into this dreadful war, both their inclination and their every interest forbidding the folly, then indeed no man was to be left untrifled into the mad measures of the cabinet; insidious proclamations were to be sent forth, to spread delusion; associations and committees of alarm were to circulate their poisonous falsehoods; and the most infamous calumnies on all who resisted the torrent, were to be propagated at any expence. How busily at that time ministers and their echoes pictured forth the imminent dangers of the capital from plots, conspiracies, assassinations, and treasons, we all remember.

Then, forsooth, no man could sleep in his bed, for the terror of expecting it to be wrapped in flames ere day-light returned! and when, again the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*, notwithstanding the insinuations and menaces against its promoters, still gained ground, new alarms were to be propagated, and the dread of immediate invasion and plotted insurrection were to be impressed upon us, the fraudulent trick was played off, and the Borough-mongers were provided with their chosen bands.

* See the Introduction.

And

And the very men who were most active to counteract the real conspiracies and treasons against the constitution—the *conspiracies and treasons of the very Borough-mongers*—were then to be generally stigmatized as disaffectionate perfons; and to be apprehended as being themselves enemies to that state they were labouring to save. But now, that not the Rotten Boroughs only, but the country itself is in the most imminent danger; ministers can slumber over their preparations for defence for more than three months after their Herald has proclaimed the necessity of *five hundred thousand* Englishmen arming for self-defence, and of all *Europe* combining more closely than ever to resist the gigantic force of *France!* At such a moment it is, that ministers with much indifference can see us a *disarmed, defenceless, unprepared people*, scarcely more capable of resisting a torrent of French invaders, than the herds and the flocks of *Smithfield!*

But if ministers thus criminally neglect their duty, is this once martial nation, are Englishmen to hold their necks ready for the slaughter, or for the yoke of a foreign power! Have we no ancient laws, prior to the policy of standing armies, and at this day unrepented, by which we are secured from such wretchedness; and taught and required to stand forth in legal military array, in our country's defence? * Is the wise and virtuous policy of Al-

* See the Appendix, No. 1. and 2.

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fred in less esteem with our Rulers, than that policy which has lost to the Emperor Brabant and Flanders, and drivn the Stadtholder from Holland.

If I judge rightly from the awakening quality of some late proceedings; from those restless rays of truth which are even now piercing and dispersing the mists of delusion; and from the generous feeling which begins once more to tingle in English bosoms; the late portentous, dreadful torpor of the public mind, the deep insensibility to a public interest, the almost utter incapacity of even *thinking*, but as ministers and their parasites were pleased to prescribe, are fast departing from this once glorious life; to make way for that love of country, that independency of spirit, that manly sense, and that well-directed courage, which know how to deal either with internal corruption, or foreign force.

As an individual I have done my duty: I have exposed ministerial delusions;* I have endeavoured to dispel national infatuation: and I have provided myself with arms, to stand or fall with the liberties of my country.† From all present appearances,

I expect

* See the Postscript to my Letter to the Duke of Newcastle, containing Strictures on the Proclamation of the 21st of May, 1792. Also a Letter on the same subject, in the Newark Herald, 1792, given in the Appendix; and my

Letter to a Friend at Boston, dated Jan. 28, 1793.

† When the insidious plan for arming the body-guards of the Borough-mongers was in its progress, I proposed its rejection in the

I expect that through procrastination, and the traitorous policy of keeping the people disarmed till the last moment, the defence of those liberties, if under such circumstances they can be defended, will cost much English blood, and on English land. It is a crisis, however, that, when it comes, so far as my conscience is concerned, I can look on with composure. I have no head that will be forfeited, for plunging my country into unparalleled calamity in a very suspicious cause; nor a

the district where I live, and moved in its stead the following Propositions; of which my copy being in the country, I can now only give the sense. 1. That we should publish an invitation to every taxed householder to provide a musquet, with its appendages and ammunition. 2. That we should appoint a Committee, to examine the common and statute law of the land, as well as the best legal authorities; to learn how such a constitutional arming of the inhabitants might be rendered most effective towards the preservation of the peace, and the defence of the country. 3. That the magistrates acting in that district, with other competent persons, should form such Committee.

No one seconding these motions, they fell to the ground; and the minister's plan, on the very face of which it appeared, that the persons then to be armed were at the return of peace to be *disarmed* again, was adopted. The design and effect of such Court systems, our good unsuspicious Associates against Republicans and Levellers do not seem to penetrate: But their oracle, the author of *The Example of France a Warning to Britain* will inform them, that "When we see, as in all the monarchies of Europe, the government only armed, DESPOTISM IS ESTABLISHED." See *Young's Travels*, p. 530.

heart that will reproach me for not having watched over her dearest interests, and anxiously studied her preservation. The same straight line of conduct that I have ever held will be then before me. I hope not to survive my country's liberties. Unless detained by prison bolts, I will not live in a land of slaves.

I have spoken of *conspiracy*, and of *treason* committed by the Borough-mongers. I say again, CONSPIRACY;—I say again, TREASON. But in saying this, I acknowledge my language to be *figurative*; and only expressive of that which, although no treason by law, is an act more immoral and atrocious than legal treason itself; as more conducing to that destruction of the state, which it is the object of the statute against treason to punish. The crime, I say, is against the *state*, the *constitution*; and “the statute of Edward III. by which we are governed, hath not declared “this to be high treason;” because such an attack is not “a specific treason to compass and imagine “the death of the king.”* Why the *part* should have attracted so much more attention than the *whole*, is for history to unfold:—Why it should be a greater crime to kill the prince upon the throne, which is not a killing of the *king*;—for our law says the *king* cannot die;—than to take away the

* Lord Chief Justice's Charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, Oct. 2, 1794.

very

very foundations of the throne and kingly office, and to stab to the vitals the constitution itself, remains yet to be explained. Lord Chancellor *Somers* says, “Treason is a betraying of the *state*; and THE “FIRST AND HIGHEST TREASON IS THAT WHICH “IS COMMITTED AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION.”

And herein we have now another great law authority; I mean that of Lord Chief Justice *Eyre*, in the Charge just quoted. After speaking of “a “conspiracy to depose or to imprison the king, to “get his person into the power of the conspirators;” &c. he proceeds thus; “need I add, that if it “should appear that it has entered into the heart of “any man, who is a subject of this country, to design to overthrow the whole government of the country, to pull down and to subvert from its very foundations the British Monarchy, that glorious fabric which it has been the work of ages to erect, maintain, and support, which has been cemented with the best blood of our ancestors; to design such a horrible ruin and desolation, which no king could survive, a crime of such a magnitude that no lawgiver in this country hath ever ventured to contemplate it in its whole extent;” need I add, “I say, that the complication and the enormous extent of such a design will not prevent its being

* The passage here given in Italics, in the original is distinguished by Roman capitals.

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distinctly

“ distinctly seen; that *the compassing and imagining the death of the king is involved in it, is in truth of its very essence.*

“ This is too plain a case to require further illustration from me. If any man of plain sense, but not conversant with subjects of this nature, should feel himself disposed to ask whether a conspiracy of this nature is to be reached by this medium only; whether it is a *specific* treason to compass and imagine the death of the king, and *not a specific* treason to conspire to subvert the monarchy itself; I answer that the statute of Edward III. by which we are governed, hath not declared this (WHICH IN ALL JUST THEORY OF TREASON IS THE GREATEST OF ALL TREASONS) to be High Treason.”

Let us, then, inquire, how a proof of what I impute to the Borough-mongers is to be brought home to them. I know but of *one* tribunal, which is permitted to receive such proofs; and as that tribunal will not suffer an appeal from its decisions, it should seem to be its indispensable duty, to inquire into every serious charge brought before it. I speak of the House of Commons, *to whom*, as a tribunal for inquiring into all conspiracies and treasonable practices against the state and the constitution to be proved by *covert acts*, which subvert the

the rights of election in the people, and consequently subvert the freedom and independency of the House itself, all *indiments*, in the form of *petitions*, must be preferred. A stronger *indiment* of this kind, against the whole gang of Borough-mongers, I cannot easily conceive, than that which, in the form of a *petition*, was presented to that Tribunal on the 6th day of May 1793, by some of the members of a society to which I have the honour to belong. Of *seventy-six* counts, or paragraphs, I shall refer to no more than six.—Therein the attention of the *Tribunal* is called “ to the greatest evil produced by the defects in the representation of which they complain; namely, the extent of PRIVATE PARLIAMENTARY PATRONAGE; an abuse which obviously tends to exclude the great mass of the people from any substantial influence in the election of the House of Commons, and which, in its progress, *threatens* to usurp the sovereignty of the country, to the equal danger of the King, of the Lords, and of the Commons.”

“ By these means, a weight of Parliamentary influence has been obtained by certain individuals, forbidden by the spirit of the laws, and in its consequences most dangerous to the liberties of the People of Great Britain.

* If the petitioners had used stronger terms, I see not how they could have exceeded the truth.

“ The

" The operation of the first species of patronage is direct, and subject to positive proof. **EIGHTY-FOUR** individuals do by their own immediate authority send **ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN** of your Honourable Members to Parliament. And this your Petitioners are ready, if the fact be disputed, to prove, and to name the members and the patrons.

" The second species of patronage cannot be shewn with equal accuracy, though it is felt with equal force.

" Your Petitioners are convinced, that in addition to the 157 Honourable Members above-mentioned, 150 more, making in the whole **THREE HUNDRED AND SEVEN**, are returned to your Honourable House, not by the collective voice of those whom they appear to represent, but by the recommendation of 70 powerful individuals, added to the 84 above-mentioned, and making the total number of patrons altogether only 154, who return a **DECIDED MAJORITY** of your Honourable House.*

" Your

* This account makes 154 return 307; whereas Mr. *Holcroft* from the same authority makes 162 return 309. The difference arises from my quoting the words of the petition, and his quoting a Table given in the state of the Representation. The truth is, the Petitioners saw reason, in framing their *Indictment* of the

Borough-

" Your Petitioners inform your Honourable House, and are ready to prove it at your Bar, that they have the most reasonable grounds to suspect that no less than **ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY** of your Honourable Members owe their elections entirely to the interference of **PEERS**; and your Petitioners are prepared to shew by legal evidence, that **FORTY PEERS**, in defiance of your resolutions, have possessed themselves of so many Burgage Tenures, and obtained such an absolute and uncontroled command in very many small boroughs in the kingdom, as to be enabled by their own positive authority to return **EIGHTY-ONE** of your Honourable Members."

Here, then, are charges of that "first and highest treason," of that "greatest of all treasons," described by Lord *Somers* and Lord Chief Justice *Eyre*; although not comprehended in the statute: here are also alledged conspiracies by which these treasons are said to be carried into execution; and here are offers to prove the overt-acts:—but alas! the Tribunal to whom these Borough-mongers, to set forth the overt-acts of conspiracy and treason, in still stronger terms than had been exhibited in their state of the Representation.

Well might Mr. *Holcroft* exclaim, "Beware of the hundred and sixty-two! Beware of the oligarchy! Beware of iron-handed Despotism! Beware of gore-streaming Civil War!"—*Narrative*, p. 52.

serious

serious accusations and these solemn offers of proof were tendered, must be swayed by its majority; and that majority, it seems, are the creatures of the 154 accused persons !!! !!!—The Indictment was read: the Indictment was put upon the Records of the Tribunal; but the cause was not tried: justice was not done.* And was not such a proceeding sufficient to shock the People of England! Must that House, under *the same influence*, instead of adhering to its legislative character, instead even of fulfilling its duty as a self-constituted Tribunal, and instead of confining its accusatory functions to the single case of impeachment; must that House, I say, endeavour to divert the public attention from the conspiracy and treason charged

* "The ground we have gained by the *reception* of our petition, appears to us to be important, and the station it gives us impregnable. It is not a circumstance of little moment to the cause of reform; that a Petition stating to the House of Commons itself, such facts and such arguments, with a direct offer on the part of the petitioners, to establish every one of their allegations by sufficient evidence, should be received without dispute, and recorded for ever on the votes and Journals of the House. No objection was made to the form or terms of the Petition. NO PART OF ITS CONTENTS WERE DENIED, OR EVEN QUESTIONED. The motion to bring up the Petition was not opposed by any man. The House heard it distinctly read. They ordered it to lie on their table; and after a debate of two days, REFUSED TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO TAKE IT INTO CONSIDERATION."—See the *disobedient Copy of the Petition*, &c. printed for D. Stewart, Friar-Street, &c.

upon

upon its own members in this indictment, involving the very existence of the constitution and of British freedom; by be-coming, through the medium of a Secret Committee, a general accuser of whole bodies of men for treasonable practices; and boldly asserting the criminality of those whom they had not tried; but whose innocence has since been manifested to the world by the integrity of English Juries, and by the most laborious trials upon the judicial records of this country !!! !!!

And on whom was this vengeance of the law intended to have fallen? On the members of societies instituted for the very purpose of exposing to public view the daring iniquity of those Borough-mongers, and to snatch from their corrupt and polluted hands and destroy that *imperium in imperio*, that dictatorial authority which they have usurped in order to pilage with impunity an injured people* !!! !!!

Must

* It is impossible that the nation can have duly considered the nature, or the views, of the Borough-monger Faction. Those views ought to be brought to light; to be exposed to every eye; and impressed upon every mind. They involve that with which no national freedom can exist. They are in direct opposition to every thing that has been laid down as *rights* in the science of civil government. They tend to unite in the same hands powers that ought for ever to be distinct and totally separate.

1. The *Hundred and Fifty-four* Borough-mongers have in their own hands an absolute monopoly of *Legislative* power; in consequence

Must not the public, after such an attempt, recur with double force and interest to the original *Judgment of the Borough-mongers themselves*, the indictment of the 6th of May, 1793, and expect that the Tribunal to which it was presented, shall no longer delay an inquiry into its merits! When that inquiry shall

quantity of appointing a decided majority of the House of Commons. 2. They have also in effect the whole executive authority; because their monopoly of legislative power renders the crown dependent upon them, instead of national representatives, for its revenue. Hence they, in effect, and not the crown, appoint every succeeding ministry; the great offices of power and emolument are ingrossed by themselves and their immediate creatures; and parliamentary interest, that is, their own influence, disposes of all other places and employments, down to the meanest workman.

3. They arrogate to themselves judicial power, in all questions respecting elections; which power they exercise through a House of which they appoint the decided majority. [This claim to judicial power, I have shewn to be a dangerous usurpation of the House; and contrary to ancient law. See Legislative Rights of the Commonwealth vindicated.] And while this private property in boroughs is suffered to remain, even your judges may in their own persons unite the legislative and judicial functions.

4. And, lastly, the accusatory power, which, by the constitution belongs to the Representatives of the people in one case only, viz. that of impeachment, is also swallowed up by the *buried and stifled*; and, not submitting to that restraint, we have seen them, as stated in the text, assuming by wholesale and to an indefinite extent, this accusatory power; and—hear it, O Englishmen, to your astonishment,—not accusing THOSE, who, with the four-fold powers above mentioned, have monopolized also to themselves

shall have been solemnly made, perhaps the *Solicitor General* will have no cause to complain of a defect of proof: Perhaps he may even have the goodnews, in order to prevent unjust decisions, to reveal to the tribunal all that he knows on the subject: and it is to be hoped the event would not again call forth the lamentations of Mr. *Wynburn*, on acquitted felons being again let loose on society.

When the cases of these contracted Indictments, the Indictment of the Borough-mongers in 1793, and the Indictment of the Patriots in 1794, with all their accompanying and collateral circumstances, shall have been duly considered, an indignant Public will, I conceive, draw very important conclusions from the whole. It is not the least remarkable circumstance attending their contrait, that the *Attorney* themselves the crimes of *usurpation* and *treason* against the constitution; but accusing the very men who have been amongst the foremost in exposing those iniquities!—A more perfect compendium of despotism can scarcely be imagined, than for 154 men, in a capacity utterly unknown and abhorrent to our law and constitution, to engross to themselves all these powers, which the preservation of freedom requires to be for ever kept separate in every state.

Were Mr. *Young* to open my book at this page, he might think I was speaking of the French Convention, which he describes as follows—“As the revolution matures, the hope lessens of a better system establishing itself. Confusion dicens; tyranny dispense its colours; the legislative assumes every day more and more the executive and judiciary powers, which is, of all circumstances, THE MOST DEFINITIVE OF DESPOTISM.” P. 70.

General,

General, the *Solicitor General*, and *Serjeant Adair*, who each opened a prosecution on the occasion, aimed at the life of an innocent man falsely accused, as well as *Mr. Bearecroft*, and *Mr. Anstruther*, assistant counsel in these prosecutions, are every man of them seated in the House of Commons by the patronage and power of Borough-mongers; whose criminality, excepting only in one of the instances, in thus usurping the most sacred power of the people, has the highest aggravation; inasmuch as the parties are *Peers of the Realm*.*

And this daring usurpation is in the teeth of an act of parliament, (3 Ed. I. Westm. I. Ca. 5) as well as of two resolutions, regularly voted by the House of Commons, at the commencement of every session of parliament; 1st, "That no Peer of this realm hath any right to give his vote in the election of any member to serve in parliament;" and 2dly, "That it is a high infringement upon the liberties and privileges of the Commons of Great Britain, for any Lord of Parliament, or any

* By the State of the Representation, referred to in the Indictment, or Petition of the 6th of May 1793.

The Marquis of Bath nominates Sir J. Scott, Attorney General to represent his Lordship in the House of Commons.

Lord Beverley nominates Sir J. Mitford, Solicitor General to represent him.

Earl Fitzwilliam nominates Serjeant Adair ditto.

The Earl of Londsdale nominates Mr. Anstruther ditto.

And Mr. Buller nominates Mr. Bearecroft ditto.

" Lord

" Lord Lieutenant of any country, to concern themselves in the elections of members to serve for the Commons in Parliament."

If to be a Borough-monger resisting a reform in the representation, and promoting a system of terror and proscription, to defend the rotten-borough usurpation, is to *conspire against the state*; then it should seem that the doctrine of *constructive treason*, had the attempt to establish it on the late trials succeeded, might perhaps have recoiled upon its authors, and sent them to Tyburn; in which case even these gentlemen, these managers of the accusations against *Hardy*, *Tooke* and *Thelwall*, for the reason already assigned, might have found themselves somewhat *implicated* in the charge. It were an imputation which, I must say, would not fit quite so easy on myself, as that which the *Attorney General* was pleased to lay upon me, of having a share in the proceedings of the society for Constitutional Information in the spring of the year 1792. That the learned gentleman may have an opportunity of implicating me still farther with the Reformers, I refer him to the Appendix, No. 3, for a letter in behalf of one of them, condemned to transportation for fourteen years,* which I wrote to a member of the Cabinet in December 1793; and I refer him also to the *Duke of Portland*, for the reasons I assigned to his Grace in July last for requesting leave to

* Mr. Muir.

vifit

visit Mr. *Tooke* in the Tower. They were reasons not very flattering to the corporation of Borough-mongers.

But, before I take leave of this Roberstperian fraternity and their friend the *Attorney General*, I must remind the learned gentleman of certain words which in the fervour of his zeal in their cause, on the trial of Mr. *Tooke*, and with peculiar enthusiasm, he emphatically pronounced. After a trial of many days, during which not a particle of the guilt charged in the Indictment had been proved by a single witness, the *Attorney General*, in a reply of some hours, exerted his strong talents, and all his bitter eloquence, against the confessedly innocent prisoner, in the extraordinary hope of prevailing with an English Jury—TO CONDEMN AGAINST EVIDENCE!!! With what sympathy the learned gentleman entered into the feelings of the proscribing Borough-mongers; how anxious he was to sacrifice the man whom they hate and dread; how eager to spill the blood which warms the undaunted and patriot breast of their determined opposer; all present must have indignantly felt; and all England, to her remotest shores, now feels. But when the darling *Boroughs* are uppermost in his mind, when that all-inspiring theme fires his imagination, he takes a bolder flight; he soars to an higher pitch; and even royal blood—the blood of his king and offensive matter it seems may be shed, if his Majesty

to

to touch the sacred system with the little finger of reform. His words were these;—“*If the king should consent to act with any representation otherwise than as it is now constituted, HE OUGHT TO DIE; AND I TRUST IN GOD HE WOULD DIE.*”⁸ Yes; yes; Mr. *Attorney General*; we know the temper of an Oligarchy, that have once stolen from the People their Representation, and from the King his Independence. He must thenceforth be the passive pageant of their fraudulent government—the organ of their despotism—and *move* obsequious to their nod, or unpitied he falls at the shrine of their desperate ambition! If these memorable words from the lips of one largely sharing in the power, the honours and emoluments of our joint sovereigns the Borough-mongers, from the lips of the commander in chief of their legal forces, employed to exterminate all who rebel against their sovereignty, shall not, like a trumpet in the ears of this sleepy

⁸ Upon hearing these words Mr. *Tooke* jumped up and said—“*My Lord! What is that?—Have I misheard?—Don't let me afterwards be told, that this was not said.*—Does the *Attorney General* say, that if the king consents to act with any other representation but that as it is at present constituted, he ought to die, and he trusts in God he would die?” [A murmur about the irregularity of interruption] “*I am not likely to interrupt the *Attorney General* upon any other occasion. Suffer this interruption, which will be the only one; for I must know, whether in a prosecution of me for High Treason, the *Attorney General* himself says something worse than any thing which he has charged me.*”

G

nation,

nation, awaken it to its true *internal* danger, 'tis the sleep of death that is upon it; 'tis palt the efficacy of stimulants; and nought but a resurrection can renew its political life!

But mark the contradictions, in which a support of this monstrous system involves the Attorney General. Either his present Majesty *may* assent to laws for altering the state of representation; or William III. and George I. *sought to have died* for assenting to the triennial and septennial acts: either acts of parliament now made *might* restore rights; or those acts which invaded them are nullities, and the Attorney General is not at this moment a member of Parliament. But in the present critical and alarming situation of this country, what tremendous doctrines to go forth from such high authority!—that the legislature has not power to redress the greatest of all wrongs which the people can suffer!—that the life of the king stands between them and that redress!—Must not the Attorney General see to what consequences such doctrines lead!—And how he can guard against their fatal effects, but by immediately acknowledging his error, and bringing into parliament a bill for giving the people *legislative* redress, I confess that I am not able to discover.

As

As Mr. *Young's* mode of fixing on the number of men to be now armed is merely arbitrary, we ought to seek a better rule. And as a failure on the part of the Powers of *Europe* to form that unexampled union he points out, and to attack *France* with more energy than ever, would, as he thinks, put us in a situation to demand “double attention to the means of providing for the defence of this island,” so we certainly ought not to limit the number of armed men to any thing less than our population and our property will supply. I know of no line so unexceptionable, so constitutional, and so easily drawn, as that of arming every taxed householder.*

G 2

If

* “In the various accounts of these antient free-boroughs, or *Tithings*, they are sometimes mentioned as consisting only of *ten men*; at other times as consisting of *ten men* and their families; and therefore, as all males, from 15 to 65 years of age, are required by law to *have arms* and be *duly exercised thereto*, (which is a former tract I have already proved) the number of males in a *tithing* of the latter description would amount to about thirty, (the proper number for a platoon) if the average rate of 3 males to a family might be supposed a just estimation, including sons, lodgers, apprentices, journeymen, porters, and servants, &c.” *Sharpe's Congregational Courts*. P. 15. Whether the immortal *Alfred* was, or was not, the first to introduce in *England* the arming and organizing of the whole community on a regular system, in which the smallest division was a *tithing*, consisting of ten *households*, is not agreed: but it is certain, that he brought his system to such perfection, that, although the country had recently swarmed with thieves and robbers, property at

D 2

If this were adopted, and if Mr. *Young* be right in supposing three millions of men in the island capable of bearing arms, this rule would probably give us a militia of about one million of men. Out of those from 18 to 30 years of age, as recommended by *Harrington*, might be formed the marching armies; and the remainder might act as garrisons, as armies of reserve, and as conservators of the public peace; especially in the metropolis and great cities. The horse, of course, would be composed of those who were best able to support the expence of that equipment.*

I mean

no period, either before or since, was ever so secure in this country, as under his administration. And had his law been strictly adhered to, and his example followed by his successors, the same causes must have produced similar effects, in other reigns; making only some allowance for less enlightened and less vigorous minds. The system itself, in its military part, may be found in the Roman armies; which were most admirably constituted; but it had yet an higher original, and an original which *Macedon* seems to have had most in his eye—the commonwealth of *Greece*, in which every man, the Levites only excepted, as set apart to the priesthood, was both a citizen and a soldier.—Upon both these models, *Macedon* improved; so that his militia, besides being an effective army, were the best conservators of the peace that any country ever knew.

* As particular persons, from infirmity, may be incapable of bearing arms, some commutation of service might be allowed: But in a point of so high importance, it ought not to be in the power of any man to divert himself of his military character for

flight

I mean not to enter into any detail, nor to explain any part of the system of military defence, when serious invasion may call the militia into the field; but I must say a few words. As that system is of some extent; as a great multitude of labourers and artizans might be wanting, to act as pioneers and in a variety of capacities, so that no armed man should be lost to the ranks; as such arrangement would be required for supplying the armies with

light reasons, or without being taxed. A person of the lowest degree in the scale of fortune, if incapable of personal duty, might provide one substitute, a degree higher, two, higher still, three, four or five, or else, in all cases find one substitute, and the remaining contribution go towards providing ammunition, &c. &c. And it seems on every account advisable, that men in situations to keep domestic servants; as well as those who keep several servants in agriculture, manufacture or trade; should, according to some certain scale, be required to arm some of these servants, as securities to the peace. But in all cases, where a master, or a principal, armed servants or substitutes, such master or principal to be securities for the good behaviour of those they arm; under a penalty that would not be trifled with. This regulation would come within the principle of the ancient Frank-Pledge, and ought to be strictly attended to.

Many, no doubt, have been surprized to hear of the good discipline of the French armies in Brabant, and the different character given, by many accounts, of the British troops. Supposing these reports founded in fact—a point on which I pretend not to decide—there could be little reason to doubt the real cause. The French armies are a militia, formed as I conceive on the principle now recommended, supplied by draughts taken by lot: the others are men collected by the same modes as are in use for raising all the standing armies of Europe.

G 3

every

every requisite, and for depriving the enemy of all support or relief; as regular modes of intelligence ought to be previously settled; and rules laid down for draughting from the two millions of unarmed men all necessary assistants for every species of service; and as a newly formed militia of one million must be very deficient in the routine of field duty, and in a sufficient corps of experienced officers to prevent a thousand inconveniences, and to keep so vast a machine from disorder, as well as to direct its movements with effect; so there doubtless ought to be prepared by government, under the authority of a special act of parliament, a general plan of military defence in case of invasion; having reference to all the necessary objects, and instructing every principal officer, every civil magistrate, every commissary, &c. &c. in the outline of his duty; and copies of such plan should be in the hands of all necessary persons. A General, then, might have some dependance on his orders being duly executed in the main, even in the infancy of experience; confusion might be prevented; much blood might be saved; and all concerned would act with regularity and confidence; than which, nothing could more contribute to success.

But there is another view in which I must consider this *new*, or, I should rather say this *true* militia—for none other deserves the name. It has been

been already intimated that, in a national view, when a people turn out to defend themselves, ARMS and LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION are inseparable. It follows, that an armed nation would smile at Mr. *Young's* conceit, of an House of Commons which is *not* to speak the voice of the Commons. The same imperious necessity, therefore, which compels us to resort to our inherent energies for national salvation, gives us at one and the same time, a truly constitutional militia and a truly constitutional House of Commons. An unanswerable argument to shew the excellence of our constitution; in the safe harbour of which we find perfect security, when driven thither by the tempest of adversity. And here another important constitutional truth, from the reception of which timid minds are terrified by idle fancies and false alarms, becomes manifested, and appears in its native beauty. The so-much-reprobated principal of *universal suffrage*, or *personal representation*, which, according to the reveries of Mr. *Young*, leads to nothing but to the destruction of property, to anarchy and blood, when viewed in its proper connection, will be seen to be no more than the political application of that divine precept which says, *do unto others as you would that others should do unto you*; and equally peaceable and harmless. Suppose for an instant that, together with the arming of the people as already described, universal suffrage was to be established. Suppose further, that the people

without property should with to dispossess those who had it. Must it not be recollected, that those people of property would also be the very persons who would have the arms, and that their adversaries would have none? In case of a contest, would those who had once a year a *vote*, or those who had all the year round *balls and bayonets*, be most likely to come off victorious? To imagine that the unconnected, unarmed, unorganized and unprovided cottagers and mechanics of this country, could despoil of their lands and goods a million of armed nobles, gentlemen, merchants, traders, and farmers compacted, organized, and completely provided with every requisite for war, were a chimera fit only for the brain of a madman.

But in every view, the notion of danger from the principle of universal suffrage appears to me perfectly ridiculous. A vote is neither a pike nor a pitch-fork; nor does it qualify a man to commit personal violence or robbery. If therefore it give no aid in this respect, the poor who are without votes are *even now* just as well prepared to take away our property as if they had votes; and the rich, moreover (generally speaking) are *not* armed. And it should seem as if the injustice, the unkindness, the contempts, or what else you please to call it, of denying the poor man his vote, were much more likely to provoke him to make free with your property,

property, than if you allowed him that vote. As it is POLITICAL LIBERTY, being the *effect* of which PERSONAL REPRESENTATION is the *cause*, that makes a man in political society a *person* and not a *thing*; that consoles him in poverty with the rich idea that, by his nature, he is the *equal* of every other son of man, while he knows that in his moral capacity he is equally the object of his heavenly Father's regard; I can see nothing in the denial of the right of suffrage, but an unnecessary degradation of a fellow-creature, below that order of beings in which God has thought fit to place him; tending to depress his mind, and debase his heart; for which essential injury to *society*, it receives not the shadow of a compensation by the poor man's exclusion from voting. Judge *Blackstone*, relative to the lawfulness of punishing criminals, observes that "the law by which they suffer, was made by their own consent; it is a part of the original contract into which they have entered, when they first engaged in society; it is calculated for, and has long contributed to their own safety."^{*} Hence it follows by undeniable consequence, that if you put men out of a condition to give assent to the laws, you ought not to punish their non-obedience of them.

What would be the condition of political society if the husbandman and the artizan were not mem-

* Commentaries iv. 8.



bers of it? Where would be the wealth, the strength, or grandeur of the state, if these persons were abstracted? Would not grass grow in our streets, and the country be a desert? Strip things of their outside show, and men of external advantages, and then tell me whether he who weaves, or he who wears, the broad-cloth, is the most useful member of political society; or whether those whose productive labour actually *create* the wealth of the state, and all the means of revenue, or those whose only merit, like that of the hog in the *stie*, is to *consume*, and to live on the labour of others, most deserve the title of citizens.

Seeing then, that the vote of the poor man cannot harm the rich, let us consider if it will not be our wisdom to allow him the exercise of it. As enjoyment is in the mind, and as happiness so much depends on imagination, how can we give the poor man such an attachment to the constitution, such a respect for the law, and such a love of his country; such a desire of public peace, and such a satisfaction in his own personal condition, as by leaving him the proud and pleasing consciousness that even HE has a voice in electing the rulers of the land! With him who feels not the force of this argument, it were in vain to reason. Such solid benefits to a country never surely were so cheaply purchased!

But

But this reconciliation, this attachment of two millions of men to the government were not all the benefit.* Mixed at our elections with the armed citizens, we should then have *three millions* of electors instead of *one million*: consequently under a plan of equal representation, every elective body appointed to return one representative, would be thrice as numerous as if the poor were excluded. Now, there are but three principles in nature by which we can practically keep elections incorrupt: 1st, the numerosity of the elective body; 2^d, the shortness of the period for which power is to be conferred on the person chosen; and 3^d, the ballot:† and if we are very strong in the *first* of these principles, some think we may dispense with the *third*. How immensely important, then, are the votes of the poor!

* I keep to Mr. Young's calculation of persons able to bear arms, merely for the sake of brevity.

† So far, in the opinion of many, is the ballot from being considered as a principle of security to liberty, that they condemn it as utterly inconsistent with the very character of freedom. It is a question which lies, as I think, somewhat deep in the well of truth. I wish that some one, fraught with historical information and a profound knowledge of man, would give the subject that ample discussion which, from its importance, it seems to deserve. From very high authority now in England, I understand that the Ballot is generally, if not universally, adopted in the elections of Representatives to serve in the Assemblies of America, within the limits of the *United States*.

I have

I have nothing to say to the *sixty-five* statutes in our books, for preventing bribery, &c. at elections; which, if things continue in the present impure channels, may in another reign, for ought that I see to the contrary, grow up to six hundred; knowing that, besides, the three principles above mentioned, all the arrangements and regulations that can be necessary to give them such effect, as to set either bribery or improper influence at complete defiance, might be compressed into a single statute of a few pages. When the reader attends to what I have urged in favour of universal suffrage; when he considers how the hearts of men are formed for its reception; when he adverts to the broad fact, that it has made twenty times more reformers, and reformers twenty times more determined, than all the other fancies about parliamentary amendment put together; he will not be surprized that such a principle should meet with peculiar reprobation, or that its advocates should be objects of persecution.

But I would not be misunderstood. I would not wish to be considered as an obstinate bigot to an useless abstract doctrine. No: it is for its *practical* utility that I approve the principle; and I give my reasons. The reasons of those who take the other side of the question I have duly considered. It is a subject on which I think it probable, that I
have

have read most of what has been ably published; and I have also conversed and corresponded on it with men of learning and first rate talents; but without altering my opinion. If, however, the poor shall be content to remain unrepresented; if our adversaries shall concede to us annual elections and the extension of suffrage to the one million of taxed householders, to be *equally* divided; and if that one million instead of the three millions, under fair and honest regulations, shall prove sufficient to keep our elections incorrupt; so far as my individual opinions and wishes go, it will be a reform that will have my sincere concurrence and approbation: But nothing short of this can, in my judgment, be either proposed or acceded to, by honest men truly comprehending the nature and ends of representation.

Although I can see perfection in a first principle, and can comprehend the importance to mankind of such principles, as goals of excellence, as standards of conduct; I can also see, that men may be saved either morally or politically, without acting up to the full perfection of those standards. Lamentable indeed would be the case of every christian, if all were to be damned who equalled not Christ in purity and holiness! And as a christian may be saved by good inclinations and a certain approximation towards that standard of excellence; so may a state
be



be saved, without carrying every principle of freedom to its utmost extent. But woe to that christian, and to that state, whose departure from principle is not the mere effect of frailty and want of firmness, but of a corrupt heart and intentional depravity!

Let us now return, once more, to a consideration of the means, whereby we may cope with *France*, until we can adjust our differences by a lasting peace. *She must be opposed*, says Mr. *Young*, *on principles as energetic as her own*, and I agree with him. But where, in England, in any thing springing from the filth of rotten-boroughs, are those principles to be found? They are purely and absolutely republican. Whether we take the idea of Sir *James Stewart*, or of *Harrington*, as both are quoted by Mr. *Young*, we find that in a republic only such energies are found to dwell: and the cause is in nature. The present astonishing power of the infant republic of *France*, not only confirms the doctrine; but it affords a striking proof, how well *Harrington* understood the subject on which he wrote. 'Tis now much more than an hundred years ago since he tendered to *Cromwell* his *Oceana*, as a plan of republican government worthy his adoption. And, as if it were to stimulate the supposed patriotism of the Protector, to give his country the foremost rank amongst the nations, he

touches

touches in a masterly manner on the case of *France*; in which, even in her then wretched condition, he sees the latest seeds of renovation; and illumined by his genius, he unfolds her future day of greatness.

But he goes farther: for such was his insight into the different effects of different forms, and such his knowledge of the extreme inferiority of arbitrary to free governments, that he confidently pronounces what will happen to the nations around, whenever the government of *France* shall become free. "If *France*, *Italy*, and *Spain*," says he, "were not all sick, all corrupted together, there would be none of them so; for the sick would not be able to withstand the sound, nor the found to preserve their health without curing of the sick. The first of these nations (which, if you stay her leisure, will in my mind be *France*) that recovers the health of ancient prudence, shall certainly govern the world; for what did *Italy* when she had it? And as you were in that, so shall you in the like case be reduced to a province; I do not speak at random. *Italy*, in the consulship of *Lucius Emilius Papus*, and *Caius Atilius Regulus*, armed, upon the *Gallie* tumult that then happened, of herself, and without the aid of foreign auxiliaries, 70,000 horse, and 700,000 foot: But as *Italy* is the least of those three countries

"countries in extent, for is *France* now the most "populous."*

Now he must be a superficial observer who does not see, that this prophetic idea is in a manner realizing very fast; and that republican principles, which, while they render the government of *France*, that is built upon them, irresistible in war; are at the same time to all the governments of an arbitrary, that is, of an anti-republican form, with which she has to contend, the very means of weakness and decay. Thus it is, that the sick cannot withstand the sound; nor could the sound preserve their health without curing of the sick. Is the republic of *France* then to govern the world; and *Britain* to be reduced to a province of that republic? This last, in my serious judgment, may depend upon the temper and fidelity of a few men in this country, and upon the earliest measures of parliament when next it assembles.†—That *France*, if she do not by the sword directly subdue the other considerable states of *Europe*, and rule them immediately by her own power and authority; may yet have vast influence in bringing to ruin their present governments, and in modelling new ones congenial with her own, is highly probable. And though *Harrington* seems to have entertained the

* *Harrington's Works*, p. 203.

† Written in December, 1794.

idea

idea of military conquest, yet, as it could only be by republican principles that the sick could be made sound, so that state which overturns other states by her principles rather than by the sword, may, without much of a figure, be said to govern them.

But, happy is it for *Britain*, that the cure of her sickness does not imply a dissolution of her government;—that she may be made sound, by merely acting upon the genuine principles of her own constitution;—and, in short, that in case we may depend on right conduct being the consequence of just conception, she may provide for her safety, and may attain to republican energy and greatness, by simply shaking off a single pernicious error insidiously inculcated upon her, and recovering a clear knowledge and conviction of this fundamental and important truth;—that her government is in fact no other than a REPUBLIC or COMMONWEALTH, nor will admit of any other earthly definition. Although our Commonwealth be not balanced, nor regulated according to the rules of *Harrington*, yet, speaking of the "three orders of "a Commonwealth," viz. monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, or, to use his own words, "partaking of the aristocracy as in the senate; of the "democracy, as in the people; and of monarchy, as "in the magistracy, it is complete. He says, "Now there being no other Commonwealth but

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this

"this in art or nature, it is no wonder if *Machia-vel* has shewed us that the antients held this only "to be good."*

Muddy-headed men talk of *limited* monarchy, and *mixed* monarchy; which are as absolute contradictions in terms, as if they were to call the word, *monarchy*, a monosyllable. As referring to our constitution, there might be sense in calling it a *mixed* democracy; because the democratic *power* is mixed with *power* both regal and aristocratic; but in the rule of *one*, there can be no *mixture*: to the rule of *one*, there can be no limitation. But if, as I conceive, a commonwealth means a government, of which the common weal of the whole people is the object; and *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness* are the attributes; as having for its component parts democracy, aristocracy and regality; it must be admitted that I have rightly denominated the British government. Nor is it for the sake of words, but of things, I wish this distinction to be seriously attended to. It is a distinction which, if properly regarded, may not only preserve our existence as a people against a foreign foe, by giving us a true republican energy; but ultimately it may save both aristocracy and regality from being swept away by that strong and increasing current of opinion, which already begins to threaten them

* *Oceano*, p. 48.

with

with utter extinction throughout *Europe*, except where they may find safety under the wings of a real commonwealth. It is a distinction also, which may be the speedy means of healing all our political wounds, and reconciling our domestic differences before they take too serious a complexion. Thus it may even prevent that most dreadful state of society, wherein the liberties of a people can only be preserved by that last of resources, a civil war.

It is not possible,—it is not in nature, that the democracy of this country, the millions who possess the bulk of landed and of all other property, can recede from their just and constitutional claim, that their branch of the legislature be reformed and purified, so as to sympathize with their feelings, and to speak their voice. If, then, the royal ear is to be poisoned with definitions of our government, misleading and teaching the king that it is a MONARCHY; and if the FEW—the BOROUGH-MONGERS, who, in fact, constitute a hateful OLIGARCHY, that holds both king and people in chains, are to flatter themselves with hopes of sheltering their usurpation, by passing it off as that sort of influence which aristocracy ought to possess; and if this OLIGARCHY, this beast with the great belly, that has got both aristocracy and regality in its maw, shall be so rash as to push its daring pretensions to keep the House of Commons there

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also,

also, what in the end must be the dreadful consequence!

Oligarchy is defined by *Harrington* to be the government of a few against the natural balance of a state; and he instances the Roman *Decemvirs*. Now these *Decemvirs* were invested with their power by law; yet that power being unnatural, or contrary to the nature and balance of the Roman constitution, it was first abused, and then taken from them. But our oligarchy is as unknown to the law, as it is abhorrent to the constitution. It is a thief that has stolen in unseen, and seized the reins of government in the dark. It is a deadly faction, ruling by the worst of all engines, an elective Dictatorship; and while it cajoles the king by infamous adulations about his divinity, his sacredness, and his imaginary power, and terrifies him with tales about that raw-head-and-bloody-bones, the people; it at the same time filches from him his real authority, to arm and grace its own tool; and tramples his independence and honour in the dirt. It is, in short, that with which no government ever did or can subsist; it is an *imperium in imperio*, over-ruling King, Lords and Commons, and reducing this once-glorious fabric to an empty name, a bye-word, a shadow!

From

From the election of Dictator *Bute* to that of Dictator *Pitt*, when has his Majesty had the free, full, and independent choice of his various representatives for exercising the royal functions? When has he been able to select men for the respective offices of his government, on account of their peculiar fitness for the intended stations, without regard to their family or factional connections? And where is the wisdom or virtue that even the nation, through application to the crown, can call into its service, without permission of this omnipotent! In proportion to the ability and spirit of the Dictator, he himself shares in patronage with his electors; and he tells his nominal master, brother John must preside at this board; brother William at that; brother Richard at the third; and brother James at a fourth; then cousin Samuel must command in the fourth; cousin Alexander in the west; and as many cousins more as are to be found in a Welsh pedigree, must all share in the good things: then again friend Harry must govern here; friend Tom there; and another, and another must each have his department; or *his Majesty's government cannot be supported, nor his service carried on*. His Majesty, good easy man, feeling the full force of what Mr. *Burke* so beautifully calls *aristocratic connection*; not knowing which way to turn, nor how to help himself, nor, as that impudent fellow *Paine* would exprets it, being up to this impudent

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humbug,

humbly, smiles assent, ratifies the appointments, and then mounts his horse for the chase;—and there alone does he seem to meet with those who render him honest service, and who never deceive him—his horses and his hounds.*

In an early part of this Essay, it is said, that adversity is a good school, and necessity an eloquent teacher. This teacher, by instructing the nation to arm, averts all danger from within as well as from without. "Wherever the balance of a government lies, there naturally is the militia of the same; and against him or them wherein the militia is naturally lodged, there can be no negative voice."† Now that necessity, I say, at length compels us to make those the militia in whom resides the natural balance‡ of the Commonwealth, all will go well; the constitution will

* — "at such moments the leaders of that House [the House of Commons] have contented themselves with seizing the administration of the executive power, without attacking the power itself."—*Young's Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 251.

† *Harrington*, p. 388.

‡ By this language, I must not be understood to confound natural with just. If one man, as *Pharaoh* or a *Grand Seigneur*, be lord of the whole land; this, in the sense of *Harrington*, naturally produces monarchy, however unjust, and hateful such a government may be. But when a people are become the great proprietors of the soil, liberty, always just, is then also natural to the state. Nothing, indeed; but some political monster, equally abhorrent to nature and to justice, can prevent it.

return

return to its old foundations; and the oligarchy will soon be heard of no more. The people, in whom resides the strength, the solidity and power of the state, will form the broad base and the substantial body of the constitutional pyramid: from them it will ascend and contract into the elective aristocracy, their representatives; then again, still ascending and lessening into the hereditary aristocracy the peerage, in these two we shall behold the wisdom that is to balance between the people and the executive magistrate; and finally we find the crown forming the apex of the pyramid, and recognize that goodness which is the attribute of him who executes what power and wisdom, combining for the public good, have prescribed.

The adversaries of freedom may object, that when the House of Commons shall truly represent all the power of the people, and possess amongst themselves more than a moiety of the wisdom of the aristocracy, the peerage and the crown will be in danger. Why so? If the Commons shall have power to obtain good laws, a faithful execution of those laws, and an impartial administration of justice, what more can they want? 'Tis not honours well bestowed; 'tis not a civil list rightly applied; with which they are likely to find fault. No: such honours and such an establishment will then reflect lustre on themselves. Bestowing grandeur on that govern-

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ment

ment which is constituted by and for themselves, it will be their own grandeur, and an object of their guardianship. Their House of Representatives, if rightly constituted, cannot be corrupted. The maintenance, therefore, of the royal dignity, will be no object of their jealousy. To insinuate that, because possessed of liberty and all that good government can secure to man, they would therefore, through mere wantonness and folly, violate forms sanctioned by antiquity, and to which they and their ancestors have ever been attached, were to betray an ignorance of man; who is the child of prejudice and habit, as much as of reason and nature. To pull down regal magistracy under one denomination, for the mere pleasure of building it up again under another, were silly work; and the like may be said of the aristocratic order.

Let those orders, then, make common cause with the democracy, in annihilating that odious, infamous oligarchy of Borough-mongers, so hostile, so disgraceful to them all; that oligarchy who in fact, *bind their king in chains, their nobles in fetters of iron, and the people in shackles of brass*. But supposing for a moment the hereditary orders should entertain fears, that the people once made free, and acting through an independent House of Commons, might think some of their privileges might be disputed with. What then? Laying such fears in

one scale, and the rights and liberties of millions in the other, which ought to preponderate. But when the salvation of *Britain* is at stake, is it honourable to the king and three hundred nobles, to talk of their fears! When *Lacedæmon* was to be saved, *Lacedæmon* heard not of the fears of her king *Leonidas*, and the three hundred noble Spartans who took post at *Thermopylæ*.

But fear of a free and happy people is out of the question. Should they find the king and the nobles put a willing hand to the works of reform, so that the only fundamental grievance of which the people complain should be smoothly and pleasantly redressed, he who should undertake to make them contend for more, must know little of mankind: nor would our privileged orders, it may safely be affirmed, ever more give the people cause of dissatisfaction.

It is now near twenty years since an equal representation in annual parliaments was proposed with some earnestness to the public; and notwithstanding the magnitude, the enormity, the atrocity of the evil for which such an alteration is the proper remedy, and the infinite number of publications which since that period have recommended parliamentary reform; as well as the numerous associations and societies that have exerted themselves in the cause; and with extraordinary ef-

fect in producing conviction; yet so slow have the people been in acting upon this conviction, that, notwithstanding the present appearances, and the strong necessity that is pressing upon the nation, nothing is yet actually done. How extravagant, then, the hope, of moving the people to pull in pieces a government, from which they cannot receive injury, which reason does not condemn, and to which they are attached by habit and partiality!

At the present juncture, when the science of politics, producing *republican*, which is only another word for *free* government, is rapidly putting down political ignorance, bigotry and impotence; and consequently laying the axe to the root of all monarchy and aristocracy, as *distinct governments*, or as the *preponderating ingredients in compound ones*, the example of the wise and high-minded *Elizabeth* may deserve the consideration of his Majesty, who, from the advantage of more light on the subject than had been collected in the days of that princess, may be able so far to improve upon her example, as to transmit his throne with security and peace to his posterity; at the same time that he secures and satisfies his people.

When I define our government to be a *Commonwealth*, as doubtless it had been in the time of that best of kings, whose maxim it was, that an *Englishman*

man ought to be as free as his own thoughts, I am not ignorant, that in the hands of the Norman conqueror and tyrant, it became a *monarchy*. It soon, however, changed to a turbulent compound of monarchy and aristocracy. Then on a reformation, or as some will have it, a creation of popular representation, it required a portion of democracy; and by the court, which was alternately paid to the people by tyrant kings and tyrant barons, as well as from a commercial acquisition of property, the principle of democracy gained strength. But it was not until the reign of *Hen. VII.* the foundations were laid of real free government; enabling the people afterwards to make head against the divine right of the *Stewarts*, and finally at the revolution, to give the government a republican *form and body*; in which democracy, aristocracy and regality had their several parts and places assigned them, and an attempt (though but a lame one) was made to *balance* them one against the other.

This attempt at a balance, inasmuch as making all the people of property a militia, and the House of Commons a true representation of the people, were both neglected, has failed of its effects, and if uncorrected, must shortly, I fear, ruin the fabric; yet it is beyond all question, that, notwithstanding the ancient phrases and stile of "kingdom"—"monarchy"—"his Majesty's dominions," and so forth, were

were most unwisely suffered still to pass current, the government in its composition, form, frame and substance, was truly a commonwealth. But indeed, from its Saxon ancestry, and from the popular blood in its veins, it had in many seasons and at very early periods, been so stiled in acts of parliament, as may be seen by consulting the statute book.*

Now

* See 6 Richard II. Stat. 1. "To the praise and honour of Almighty God, the profit of the realm of England, and the service of the Republic," &c.

31 Hen. VIII. c. 10. "Forasmuch as in all great councils and congregations of men, having sundry degrees and offices in the COMMONWEALTH, it is very requisite," &c.

1 Ed. VI. c. 1.—"To the intent that his loving subjects, provoked by clemency and goodness of their prince and king, shall study rather for love than for fear, to do their duties; first to Almighty God, and then to his Highness and the COMMONWEALTH," &c.

Queen Elizabeth, in her speech to the Deputies of the Commons, Anno 1561, see *Rapin*. "I know that the COMMONWEALTH is to be governed for the good and advantage of those that are committed to me; not of myself," &c. And again; "I think myself most happy that, by God's assistance, I have hitherto so prosperously governed the COMMONWEALTH in all respects."

James I. Anno 1621, says, "The king makes laws, and ye are to advise to make such as will be best for the Commonwealth!" *Rapin*.

Sir Thomas Smith, privy-counsellor of Elizabeth, wrote a treatise, entitled, "of the COMMONWEALTH of England." It concludes

Now the wise conduct of *Elizabeth*, which I most sincerely recommend to the imitation of his Majesty, may be found recorded in *Harrington*; than whom I know of no counsellor, dead or living, more capable of giving sound advice to kings and nobles at this period; a period peculiarly awful to them; and calling on them to exercise all their wisdom and all their virtue. If they will listen only to the counsels offered them by such friends as Mr. Barke Mr. *Wynham*, Mr. *Jenkinson*, Mr. *Canning*, and Mr. *Young*, I fear their downfall is sealed. But if they will faithfully consult the sage, to whose venerable page I shall direct their eye, their names and honours may remain to future generations, and the exotic laurel of exclusive privilege, entwined

concludes thus; "Since, therefore, this is the true image of our COMMONWEALTHS I have described it, let us compare it with the other forms of COMMONWEALTHS now existing, and see its difference," &c.

Sir *John Doves* also, Attorney General to the same queen, in the preface to his Reports, speaks thus; "And here I may observe, for the honour of our nation and of our ancestors, who have founded this COMMONWEALTH," &c.

And Lord *Coke*, in the preface to the third part of his Reports, likewise says,—"For which labours, if the COMMONWEALTH shall have derived any benefit," &c.

And *Blackstone* says—"Every member of the British parliament, though chosen by one particular district when elected and returned, serves for the whole nation. For the end of his coming is neither in particular, but general; not barely to advantage his constituents, but the COMMONWEALTH," &c.

with

with the democratic oak, may adorn the brows of their posterity.

Harrington has a short chapter on the principles or balance of national governments, with the different kinds of the same. He then, in the succeeding chapter, proceeds to consider the variation of the English Balance.* This chapter being full of instruction, I shall transcribe the greater part of it; and that I may not disturb the attention of the reader, I shall not interrupt him by marginal notes, but merely number the passages I mean to notice, and at the end of the quotation offer my remarks in numerical order.

“ The lands,” says he, “ in possession of the nobility and clergy of England, till *Henry VII.* cannot be esteemed to have overbalanced those held by the people less than four to one. Whereas in our days, the clergy being destroyed, the lands in possession of the people overbalance those held by the nobility, at least nine in ten.” (1.) “ The court was yet at *Bridewell*, nor reached *London* any farther than *Temple Bar*. The latter growth of this city, and in that the declining of the balance to popularity, derives from the decay of the nobility and of the clergy. (2.) In the reign

* Page 387.

“ of

“ of the succeeding king were Abbies (than which nothing more dwarfs a people) demolished. I did not, I do not attribute the effects of these things thus far to my own particular observation; but always did, and do attribute a sense thereof to the reign of queen *Elizabeth*, and the wisdom of her council. There is yet living testimony, that the ruin of the English monarchy, (3.) through the causes mentioned, was frequently attributed to *Henry VII.* by Sir *Henry Watton*; which tradition is not unlike to have descended to him from the queen’s council.

“ But there is a difference between having the sense of a thing, and making a right use of that sense. Let a man read *Plutarch* in the lives of *Agis*, and of the *Gracchi*, there can be no plainer demonstration of the *Lacedemonian* or *Roman* balance; yet read his discourse of government in his morals, and he has forgot it: he makes no use, no mention at all of any such thing. Who could have been plainer upon this point than Sir *Walter Raleigh*, where, to prove that the kings of *Egypt* were not elective but hereditary, he alleges that if the kings of *Egypt* had been elective, the children of *Pharaob* must have been more mighty than the king, as landlords of all *Egypt*; and the king himself their tenant. Yet when he comes to speak of government, he has no regard to, no remembrance of any such principle. In Mr. *Selden*’s

“ *Selden's* titles of honour, he has demonstrated the English balance of the peerage, without making any application of it, or indeed perceiving it there or in times where the defect of the fame came to give fo full a fenfe of it. The like might be made apparent in *Aristotle*, in *Machiavel*, and in my lord *Verulam*, in all, in any politician: there is not one of them in whom may not be found as right a fenfe of this principle as in this present narrative; or in whom may be found a righter use of it than was made by any of the parties thus concerned in this story, or by queen *Elizabeth* and her council.

“ If a prince, says a great author, to reform a government were obliged to *depose himself*, he might, in neglecting it, be capable of some excuse; but reformation of government being that with which a *principality*, [government of a prince or king] “ may stand, he deserves no excuse at all. It is not indeed observed by this author, that where by reason of the declination of the balance to popularity, the state requires reformation in the superstructures, there the prince cannot rightly reform, unless from sovereign power,” [meaning absolute monarchy] “ he descends to a *principality*” [princely or kingly power] “ in a Commonwealth: nevertheless, upon the like occasions, this fails not to be found so in nature and experience.” “ The growth of the people
“ of

“ *England*, since the ruins mentioned of the nobility and the clergy, came in the reign of queen *Elizabeth* to more than stood with the interest, or indeed the nature or possibility of a well founded or durable monarchy; as was prudently perceived, but withal temporized by her council, who (if the truth of her government be rightly weighed) seemed rather to have put her upon the exercise of *principality*” [princely or kingly government] “ in a commonwealth, than of *sovereignty*” [absolute power in a monarchy. (5.) Certain it is that she courted not her nobility, nor gave her mind (as do monarchs seated upon the like foundation) to balance her great men, or reflect upon their power, now inconsiderable, but ruled wholly, with an art she had to high perfection, by hushing and blessing her people. (6.)

“ For this mere shadow of a commonwealth is the yet famous, and shall ever be so; though had she introduced the full perfection of the orders requisite to popular government, her fame had been greater. First, she had established such a principality to her successors, as they might have retained. Secondly, this principality (the commonwealth, as *Rome of Romulus*, being born of such a parent) might have retained the royal dignity and revenue to the full, both improved and discharged of all envy.” “ Thirdly, it had saved all the blood and confusion, which through this neg-

" left in her and her successors, has since issued,
 " Fourthly, it had bequeathed to the people a
 " light not so naturally by them to be discovered,
 " which is a great pity. For even as the many,
 " through the difference of opinions that must needs
 " abound among them, are not apt to introduce a
 " government, as not understanding the good of
 " it: so the many, having by trial or experience
 " once attained to this understanding, *agree not to*
 " *quit such a government.* And lastly, it had placed
 " this nation in that *perfect felicity*, which, so far as
 " concerns mere prudence, is in the power of hu-
 " man nature to enjoy. (7.)

" To this queen succeeded king *James*, who like-
 " wise, regardless of this point (into which never-
 " theless he saw so far as not seldom to prophecy
 " sad things to his successors) neither his new
 " peerage, which in **ABUNDANCE HE CREATED**,
 " nor the old availed him any thing against that
 " dread wherein, more freely than prudently, he
 " discovered himself to stand of parliaments, as now
 " mere popular councils, and running to popularity
 " of government like a bowl down hills,—not so
 " much, I may say, of malice prepened, as by na-
 " tural inclin^t, whereof the petition of right, well
 " considered, is a sufficient testimony. All per-
 " suasion of court eloquence, all patience for such
 " as but looked that way, was now lost. There re-
 " mained

" mained nothing to the destruction of a *monarchy*,
 " retaining but the name, more than a prince,
 " who by contending, should make the people to
 " feel those advantages which they could not see.

" And this happened in the next king, who, too
 " secure in that undoubted right whereby he was
 " advanced to a throne which had no foundation,
 " dared to put this to an unseasonable trial; on
 " whom therefore fell the tower in Silo. Nor
 " may we think that they upon whom this tower
 " fell, were sinners above all men; *but that we,*
 " *unless we repent, and look better to the true founda-*
 " *tions, must likewise perish.* We have had latter
 " princes, latter parliaments. In what have they
 " excelled? or where are they?—The balance not
 " considered, no effectual work can be made as to
 " settlement; and considered as it now stands in
 " *England*; requires to settlement no less than *the*
 " *superstructures natural to popular government.*" (8)

Under the general head of the *balance*, *Harrington*
 lays it down as a fundamental principle, which he
 illustrates from history, that the overbalance of
 landed property* to any considerable degree, in-

* But not wholly to the exclusion of personal property and
 money; which indeed in small states must give great weight;
 and in this commercial country must weigh very heavy indeed in
 the scale.

vitably carries with it the dominion. If that overbalance be in the hands of *one* it produces *monarchy*; if in the hands of *the few*, or the nobility, it produces *aristocracy*; and if in the hands of the people *popular government*. But where the overbalance is not decisive and “down weight” there is generated an imperfect government, *turbulent and bloody*, because of the struggles that will take place for the pre-eminence. And where also, by any accidental cause there is produced a government *against* the natural balance, either tyranny, oligarchy or anarchy is the necessary consequence. I come now to offer some remarks upon what he says on the variation of the English balance, and on the conduct of *Elizabeth*; in the way of notes upon the passages which I have numbered.*

1st. The overbalance at this time in Great Britain being “*down weight*” in the hands of the People, whose aggregate property in lands and personalty is to that of the nobles as a mountain to a mole-hill, it follows that if the government be not popular, it cannot be natural or quiet.

2d. The decay of the nobility here spoken of, was their having been reduced from petty sovereigns

* If some of these notes should appear to the learned to be very superfluous; I wish to be understood, that they are written for the unlearned.

and

and tyrants, to mere men of ancient blood, title, and exclusive privileges, with wealth enough to support their rank with splendour: and the decay of the clergy, was that of their having fallen from the bloated wealth, power and magnificence of a popish priesthood; to become the ministers of a protestant church.

3d. By the words, *ruin of the monarchy*, taken with the context, it is plain *Harrington* does not even include the idea of the abolition of *royalty* by *Cromwell*; but simply means to make the necessary distinction between a *monarch* and a *king*. *Elizabeth*, who had sagacity enough to discern that she was not a *monarch*, and wisdom enough to be content with *royalty*, was crowned with prosperity and glory; whereas *Charles*, on the contrary, wanting this discernment and this wisdom, was, as a prince, contemptible and inglorious; and struggling against nature and liberty for *monarchical* power, lost his crown and his life.

4th. If *Harrington's* principles be just, then the government of Great Britain must henceforth be either popular, that is, natural and agreeable to the balance of property; or else it must be something against nature, factious, and convulsed. If the House of Commons truly represented the people, the government would be **POPULAR**, as it ought to

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be;

be; not only on account of the balance of property making it *natural*; but on account also of its flowing from the whole nation, making it just. We have done with those sublime mysteries, whereby the will and wisdom of one man, or of three hundred men, are made equivalent to the will and wisdom of the millions. Unreflecting persons may imagine that the king and the lords, as independent branches of the legislature, ought to have *equal* power with the House of Commons. But in the present state of things, this were naturally impossible; and to think them entitled to such equality, were a pernicious error. The negative of the crown is, it is true, a shadowy, but not intirely an useles form.

The duke of Richmond, in his letter to colonel Sharman, indeed, says,—“I admit that I am not “ for restoring the negative of the crown. My reason is, that it appears to me preposterous, that “ the will of one man should for ever obstruct “ every regulation which all the rest of the “ nation may think necessary.” And so long as the power of the purse is wholly in the House of Commons, while the millions to be represented there possess the solid wealth and property of the state, as well as its physical strength, there can be no doubt but that *there* is the true seat and foundation of government, the real fold sovereignty of the state;

state; uniting with itself by the will of the people, and for purposes the most salutary, the dignity and wisdom of a nobility; the splendour and goodness of royalty. And a negative in the crown might possibly be a beneficial prerogative, if only to be exercised to cause a reconsideration of a bill before it passed into a law.

At present, the nobles are nobles, and his majesty is king; and so they may remain, with the full and free consent of the people: but a detpicable OLIGARCHY of borough-mongers, having in effect elbowed all the three estates of the Commonwealth out of their independence, discontent has long been brewing, and now agitates the public mind in no small degree. Reformation is therefore necessary; and our author says, that “ reformation of government, being that with which a principality” [princely or kingly government] “ may stand,” the prince who neglects it is not excusable. What, then, are we to say of those apostates, and those men of *Old Sarum* and *Midhurst*, where the *houseless turf*, and the *very stones in the wall* appoint our legislators? what shall we say of the whole Rotten-borough faction, who dare to make war upon Reform, by all the arts of corruption and intrigue, by the perversion of law, the infamies of espionage, and a system of terror!—May the insatiation of the day, in contending against nature and nature’s rights,

rights, not lead to consequences similar to those which followed a similar infatuation in the last century!

5th. When Alfred, by his fruitful invention, his consummate wisdom, and his heroism, had triumphed over his enemies and was adored by his people, what mortal had ever such temptations to make himself a monarch! Free to choose his future relation to his country, he disclaimed the title of monarch, as incompatible with popular liberty; preferring to retain only the situation in which he then stood, that of "a principality in a commonwealth." He armed and organized the people on the principles of a true militia; established trial by jury; carried the administration of justice to a perfection never known either before or since; he protected and cherished commerce; he patronized and diffused learning; with piety and sincerity he practiced and promoted religion; and "in an assembly of parliament enacted this for a perpetual custom, that a parliament should be called together at London twice every year, or oftener, in time of peace, to keep the people of God from sin, that they might live in peace, and receive right, by certain usages and holy judgments."⁶

⁶ Mirrour, c. 1. §. 3.—In those days and for many centuries afterwards, as often as a parliament was assembled, so often was it elected.

6th. To

6th. To the end of "humouring and blessing her people," the first care of Elizabeth was to form her council of wise and great men;* and her next, to hold them to the straight line of their duty, by the exertions of her high spirit and the strictness of her discipline; but very sparing was she of titles of honour or pecuniary rewards. The balance of property, although to Harrington it appeared in her time to have changed; yet, compared with the extent of present times, was only changing; so that her wisdom was the greater in so early discerning the alteration, and in making such a practical use of the observation, as he shews had escaped all writers on the subject both ancient and modern.

But there is another important balance of a state, besides the balance of property. It is the balance of opinion. This balance, composed for many centuries of ignorance, stupidity, fear, superstition, and impollure; has given throughout the greater part of the continent of Europe "down weight" to monarchy and aristocracy: but now, by a new creation, which is rapidly forming a balance of intelligence, truth, freedom of thought and manly spirit, republicanism goes down, liberty is overbalancing,

* There was no Rotten-borough oligarchy in those days, to choose ministers for the queen and representatives for the nation. That happy expedient for humouring and blessing the people was not then invented.

and

and *monarchy* and *aristocracy* kicking the beam! And has not this balance of *opinion* prevailed, even while the balance of *property*, almost exclusively, was in the contrary scale? Has it not, as it were by enchantment, blown the massive monarchy of *France* into the air, and given her rich nobility and priesthood to the fowls of heaven? After such an example, will princes and nobles, in an age of light and thought, disregard the power of *opinion*? Will they not accommodate their pretensions to the rights and reason of mankind? Will they not part with *words*, that they may retain *things*;—sacrifice the shadows of unsubstantial forms, to bold solid enjoyments;—and exchange invidious and offensive customs, for the esteem, the reverence, and the affections of the people?—May they, therefore, take council of the wise *Elizabeth*, and regulate their conduct by the change in this balance of *opinion*, as well as by the change in that of *property*. Let kings recollect, that although the vulgar confound *royalty* with *monarchy*, as one and the same, they are in fact only mere relations; although of one family, they are different branches. *Monarchy*, the elder, the obnoxious branch, may, and ought to become extinct; while *royalty*, the younger, adopting new principles, and acting with wisdom, justice, temper, and frankness, has nothing to fear; but may survive the change of balance, and flourish.

7th. From

7th. From the internal evidence of the work now under consideration, *The Art of Law-giving*, published in 1659, I incline to an opinion, that *Harrington* at that time wished he had given his great work, the *Oceana*, a less learned garb; that he had adapted his offices and titles more to the customs and habits of Englishmen; and that, as a matter of expediency, in drawing up that system of government for the adoption of *Cromwell*, he had proposed for the chief magistrate an hereditary king: and I also incline to imagine, that, had this been part of the plan, *Harrington's* Commonwealth had at this day been the Constitution of *England*, and the house of *Cromwell* on the throne.

'Tis certainly remarkable, that after having so carefully guarded, in his original work, against an hereditary throne, he should here make all these acknowledgments in its favour; that, had *Elizabeth* seen deep enough into the science of legislation, to have framed a well-ordered commonwealth, hereditary *royalty* "might have remained," consistently "with the full perfection of the orders requisite to "popular government;" and not only so, but "with "dignity and revenue to the full, both improved and "discharged of all envy;" that the people, once seeing and experiencing its blessings, would not agree "to quit such a government," calculated to bestow on them as "perfect felicity" as it is in the power of "human

"human nature to enjoy." And he that, at this fearful moment of prejudice and passion between royalty and republicanism, can calm the opponents, by shewing both parties the unreasonableness of their mutual fears, and can persuade them to embrace with kindness and cordiality, will surely deserve the title of a friend to his country.

8th. This last remark, that *without a due consideration of the balance as it now stands in England, no effectual settlement can be made; and that a settlement requires the superfluities NATURAL to popular government*, appears so clear in itself, and so fraught with wisdom, that, were they not the words of so great a man as *Harrington*, they must yet command our assent. Now, in order to comprehend their full scope, we must not only imbibe the author's elevated sentiments, respecting the effects of republican government, and the dignity of mind produced in a Commonwealth; but we ought to ponder on his prophetic declaration, that in our day "*the sick would not be able to withstand the sound, nor the sound to preserve their health, without curing of the sick;*" and to mark its extraordinary progress towards fulfilment, by means of that mighty engine, *opinion*, which now threatens with early extinction all royalty and all nobility, not interwoven with the consent of the people, into truly popular governments. It seems, therefore,

therefore, time, while we talk about repairing the foundations of our liberties in the House of Commons, to consider also how to place and secure the superstructures of royalty and nobility, as orders in our Commonwealth both ornamental and useful.

Monarchy and aristocracy have been described as *vipers already writhing under the grasp of infant democracy*. In my mind, there is more happiness in this figure, than the author of it was probably aware of. In the viper, there are other distinguishing properties besides *poison*. When monarchy and aristocracy have so much overbearing preponderancy, that they can play the tyrant, then deadly is their *poison* to the life of freedom; but so restrained as to prevent this effect, they may afford it *nourishment and medicine*. "It will be convenient in this place," to use the words of the sage and amiable *Harrington*, "to speak a word to such as go about to insinuate to the nobility or gentry a fear of the people, or to the people a fear of the nobility or gentry, as if their interests were destructive to each other; when indeed an army may as well consist of soldiers without officers, or of officers without soldiers, as a Commonwealth (especially such a one as is capable of greatness) of a people without a gentry, or a gentry without a people."

How,

How, then, are we to guard the Commonwealth against the *passion*, and to secure to it the *neurishment* and *medicine*, that is, the *wisdom* and *goodness*, of monarchy and aristocracy?—The means are obvious.—Arm the people to the full extent of property, that is, down to every taxed householder: cause them to be equally, fully, and effectively represented in annual parliaments: exchange the word *kingdom*, for that of *commonwealth*; and accommodate to that wise and salutary exchange, *the whole language and law of the state*. By these simple means, *royalty*, with its appendage *nobility*, being discharged of “envy,” will remain in safety; and *liberty*, without abolishing ranks, violating rights, disturbing the public tranquillity, or even shaking any more respectable prejudice, than that of a herald, an antiquary, or an old woman, will be fixed on foundations as durable as the race of man.

It is not on slight grounds I propose an attention to *words*. Words govern public opinion; as both the wise and the wicked know full well. It is for this reason that knaves are perpetually misleading mankind, by an artful misuse and perversion of words; while such men as *Aristotle*, *Bacon*, *Locke*, and *Tooke* have laboured, (nor has it been the slightest of their labours) to guard society against the mischief. “I am apt to imagine,” says *Locke*,
 “that

“that were the imperfections of language, as the instrument of knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, a great many of the controversies that make such a noise in the world would themselves cease, and the way to knowledge, and perhaps peace too, lie a great deal opener than it does.” See *Tooke's Diversions of Purley*, for this subject at large.

Having thus finished my observations on this chapter of *Harrington*, so applicable to the healing measure I recommend; of calling our government by name, what we know it to be in *fact*, a COMMONWEALTH, let me explain the propriety of accommodating our language and our law to this just, this necessary, this important distinction; a want of attention to which has too long caused much inconsistency, much confusion of ideas, and much mischief. Our present *legal* language, as well as what may be called our *language of state*, seems almost wholly derived from the idea of living under a *monarchy*, and were fit only for such an arbitrary system. Towards the king, it is a language of falsehood and servile adulation, disgraceful to a free nation: towards the people, it is humiliating and degrading. It is a language which, if a king be not more than mortal, must poison his mind with despotic ideas; and implant in it prejudices against the liberties of the people, which no information,

mation, no advice, no experience, can ever eradicate. All the lawyers and all their books, by monstrous fictions grounded on the pretensions of feudal tyrants, suppose the king to be sole proprietor of all our lands, the sole source of all our laws, and sovereign lord of all things and all persons, in *his Majesty's* dominions.

Hence all writs run in the king's name; no man kills a hare on his own manor, but under an authority supposed to flow from the grace and favour of the *monarch*, as Lord Paramount of all manors; and if, while his Majesty is botanizing at *Kew*, or amusing himself with cards at *Windsor*, two fist-wives pull caps at *Billingsgate*, and cause a fray in the street, it is "against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, his crown and dignity."—Nay; the *State*, forsooth has no "collected will," the millions do not even make our legislative acts;—it is the king only who *enacts*, in and to which, indeed, the lords and commons *advise and assent*; and in the tail of the paragraph, I suppose by way of a little flattery, there is a bare admission of their having some *joint authority* in the proceeding.*

Would

* In the reign of Charles II. it was enacted, that a former Act for preventing inconveniences, happening by the long continuance of parliaments, is in derogation of his Majesty's just rights and prerogative, inherent to the imperial crown of this realm,

Would it not run full as well to say, 'Be it therefore enacted by the people of this Commonwealth in Parliament assembled, with the consent and assent of the Lords of Parliament and his Majesty, and by the sovereign authority of the same.'—If a people are to make their own laws by their *power*, counselled by the *wisdom* of their nobles, and those laws to be assented † to and executed

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executed

"*realm*, for the calling and assembling of parliaments," &c. the whole of the said act repealed, "annulled and utterly made void,"—and because, by the ancient laws and statutes of this realm, made in the reign of king Edward III. parliaments are to be held *every* octave, your Majesty's humble and loyal subjects *must humbly do beseech your most excellent Majesty*," [a secret professor to Louis XIV. and a profligate betrayer of the interest of his country] "that, hereafter, the sitting and holding of parliaments shall not be intermitted or discontinued above three years at the most," &c.

It being at this time by 4 Ed. III. c. 14. *the law of the land*, "that a parliament shall be holden *every* year once, and more often if need be;" where was this "prerogative inherent in the imperial crown," to call and assemble parliaments at its own good pleasure, but in the lying assertion of these base and infamous men!

† This form need not prevent bills originating in the great council of the Lords.

‡ In the Constitution of Pennsylvania, the chief magistrate who executes the laws, has no participation whatever in making them; which seems to arise from a correct idea of free government. But having in our constitution a king, accustomed to have a voice, it would be an illiberal insult to exclude him in future.

ecuted by the *goodness* of the first magistrate, this, surely, is the language of propriety and reason; and the only language becoming the dignity of a free nation.

The writer, in thus labouring to get rid of *swords*, and *phrases*, and *absurd forms of proceeding*, relative to the constitutional *connexion* between the people of *England* and their king, which have not only widely propagated the most pernicious errors respecting our constitution, but have produced practical evil of great magnitude, and of the most fatal consequences; has but too much reason to fear that he shall experience the same inattention of a thoughtless public to what he *now* says, as he experienced in 1775, as heretofore mentioned,* when he laboured on exactly the same kind of ground, to expose the erroneous notions which then prevailed, respecting the *connexion* between this country and her colonies; and when he recommended, as now he does, A MEASURE OF RECONCILIATION, sanctioned by every principle of our

future. Nay, I should even approve of his being able to say of the first presentation of a Bill, 'The king recommends a reconsideration;'—and on a second presentation, 'The king is advised to withhold his assent.'—But in this last case, his Majesty in council should state his objections, and send them to the *House of Commons*. If those objections should not cause the House to alter the Bill, then, on being again presented, the royal assent should be given.

* P. 53.

constitution,

constitution, every motive of policy and humanity, and every precept of religion and morality; which in times of civil dissention and party violence must prompt every good man to prevent, if possible, the effusion of human blood and national calamity. Foreseeing, and foretelling, that the dispute with the colonies must terminate in their independence, and perceiving on examination of the question that such independence was their *right*, and our *interest*, he, regardless of public prejudice when supported by truth, reasoned with his insatuated countrymen, and recommended, on all the motives of that important case, an admission of legislative independence; on terms that *would not have lost Britain the seamen of America in time of war*. His country listened not: she spilt her blood: she annihilated a property of *two hundred and fifty millions sterling*;* she lost the seamen for ever; and after a civil war of seven years she was glad to court peace at the hands of *Independent America*.

Was prejudice stronger in that day than in this? The antipathy between *American* and *Englishmen* was faint to that between *Republican* and *Royalist*: and *unconditional submission* was mild, compared with *extermination*. Where, then, is the hope that

* See p. 53. The present loss of seamen by the total separation is supposed to be 35 or 40,000; an object of immense consideration.

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the calm, impartial voice of constitutional truth, to which then none would listen, should now obtain a candid hearing! That, however, is the concern of those to whom it is addressed. The writer has discharged the duty of a citizen watchful of his country's good. If he deceive not himself, he has shewn the king, the noble, and the republican, means the most constitutional, simple and easy, by which all their separate fears may be dissipated, all their jealousies dismissed, all their differences reconciled, all their interests united; and the common peace, prosperity, glory and happiness, on grounds of reconciliation, promoted and secured.

Less than what he has done, he could not reconcile to his own mind, when he contemplated the awful situation of his country and of *Europe*; and the stupendous dispensations of Providence which are so evidently operating a great change in the condition of the human race; preparing them by means of political reformation for the great moral reformation which is to follow. At such a period, — a period when all court policy is baffled by the ground it stands on sinking under it; — a period when all arbitrary governments, by the insatiation of exhausting themselves in a contest which is the very means of enlightening their miserable subjects, are opening the eyes of the people to their own condition, of sheep led to the slaughter for the profit of their lords; — a period when the subalterns also of

despotism are provoking their own downfall, by the rancour of their spirit and the egregious folly of their conduct; a period when the triumphs and the energies of republicanism on both sides the *Atlantic*, proclaim it to be the species of government for every one who prefers the dignity of being a citizen to the debasement of being a subject; — and a period to which the finger of divine prophecy more than seventeen hundred years ago distinctly pointed, as to a time of awful events; and, in countries of *great political depravity*, but two probably, of a *new chaos* and a *new creation*, as, in one instance, we have already seen.

At a period of such impressions as these, it becomes a thinking man, who believes a moral government of the world, to look into his own bosom, and to ask himself if in such a season he will venture on any political step, of the moral rectitude of which he shall not be satisfied; if he can meet with fortitude those public calamities which seem impending; and if he be prepared to render an account of his share in transactions, upon which the future fate of his country shall depend.

To his Majesty and the nobles of the land, the writer particularly and most earnestly recommends a dispassionate consideration of what he has offered. In advising them for their welfare, they have this

ground for confiding in his sincerity, that he has not been in the habit of courting their smiles, nor of flattering their passions. Under their own roofs, he wishes them advisers equally faithful; and equally solicitous to point out to them the things that belong to their peace, their interest and their honour.

Should the tri-coloured flag once fly on the Tower of *London*, from that moment, whatever might be the fate of the people, the privileges of nobility and the regal office must be annihilated. But consequences still more serious might be found in the train of such an event. By a conquest of this island, not only the British navy would be added to the marine of *France*; but *Ireland* also must fall; and the British empire in *Asia* and the *West Indies* be transferred to the conquerors; then truly possessing the dominion of the sea from pole to pole. Tell me not, that, with such prizes to contend for,—prizes which the conquest of this island gives at once,—*France* will attack you at a distance and in detail!—No: If you put not instantly on the complete armour of representation, and wield not the potent sword of a Saxon militia; you are a subdued people! Success in this enterprize would satisfy the great ambition of *France*. By making and occupying such conquests, she would be disburthened of armies too numerous to be received

back

back into her bosom: and the Convention, crowned with glory, and enjoying the full confidence of their constituents, would then have an opportunity of closing their revolutionary labours, by giving a lasting constitution and repose to their country.

When we see temptations so irresistible set before a fiery, ambitious, ardent people, who are not only embittered towards *England*, by a rankling collection of successive mortifications, from the days of *Edward III.* to those of *George III.*; but are stung with a sleepless revenge for *England's* striking at their new-born liberty, and attempting to replant the tree of despotism in devastation and blood;—when, I say, we contemplate these mighty motives to such minds as now direct the councils of *France*, are we, by suffering ourselves to be over-run, to expect such terms of fraternity and freedom, as the Savoyards, the Spaniards, the Flenings, the Brabanters, and the Dutch!—No: no: no! By fraternizing with those nations, *France* aims at a complete ascendancy in dominion. By fraternizing with *Britain*, that ascendancy would not be decisive; and we might still eclipse her 'glory in the east and in the west.—What have we, then, to expect, from being unable to resist the armies of *Pichegru*?—Not fraternity; but subjugation: not a participation with Frenchmen in freedom and prosperity;

K 4

prosperity; but to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to unforgiving conquerors; and, in a groaning servitude, to expiate the crime of having yielded up our country to the pillage, and our liberties to the despotism of base Borough-holders. And is it at such a moment as this, that men demand—'Would things be better if Parliament were a real representation of the people?'—That matters never will be bettered by such men—if men they deserve to be called—as ask the question, is most unquestionable. NATIONAL ENERGY being the thing wanted, from THE NATION it must be drawn.—It cannot be drawn from things in human form, that conceive not what the word *nation* means: it cannot be drawn from the leeches, the gorged and swollen blood-suckers, who are the immediate cause of national weakness and lassitude; and whose deleterious influence threatens a speedy death.—Order a muster of the HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOUR: Call them into your presence: Set the reptiles before your eyes: Take dimensions of their capacity: Estimate their worth in the day of trial: Ask them, if the maggots of corruption can conquer armies; or the worms of the dunghill defend a nation!!!—It were a muster and a scrutiny, from which you must turn with the deepest disgust; and contempe unutterable!—Good God! that Britain should be in such a state of debility and degradation, when she has to contend for her all! That she should

should be doomed to have her counsels poisoned, her arm unnerved, her very heart alienated from her head, to cherish serpents and nourish corruption!—And is it at a moment so awful, and without one grievance respecting representation redressed, that Patriots proclaim to their astonished country, that they suspend, for the present, all proceedings on the subject of Parliamentary Reform!—Tell me, O Patriotism, have I not followed thee too far!—Art thou, indeed, ought that I can comprehend!

In hopes of having on the 14th of this month (February), reason to strike my pen through the foregoing allusion, this sheet was detained in the press; but to my great concern the passage must stand. As the society in question has not, like another assembly, its motions, debates and divisions reported to the public, its individual members have not those means of exculpation, when they may apprehend blame is likely to fall on the society. Being on the present occasion in this predicament, I feel it necessary to the justification of my own conduct, and to that place in public estimation which I wish to hold, to declare that the suspension appears to me, in every view of it, to be founded in error, and, at the present juncture, peculiarly wrong. I not only voted against it, but very early afterwards, assisted by Mr. Lolls, Mr.

Mr. Clifford, Mr. Gurney, Mr. Maxwell, and Mr. Holt White, I drew up an Address to the Public, to be offered for the adoption of the society, assigning reasons why it was time to resume our proceedings; which address was so far approved by the Committee, that, together with a motion for reconsidering the measure of suspension, it was recommended to the society to adopt an address of the same purport; and for the purpose of discussing these questions, the Committee called an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society. At that meeting, held on the 14th, a motion to resume our proceedings was made by myself, and seconded by Mr. Rutt; and in my judgment, the arguments of that gentleman, of Mr. Gurney, and Mr. Clifford, who supported the motion, were unanswerable. But we lost the question by a division of 39 against 16; after which the society adjourned for **THREE MONTHS**.

Those three months ought, surely, to have been otherwise employed. Instead of so adjourning, the society in my opinion ought to have redoubled its zeal and activity; and to have employed the tranquil interval, during which we may expect to be secure from invasion, in such declarations, resolutions, and other proceedings, as should most effectually tend towards getting the state, at that awful period of the approaching storm, when our
only

only alternative may be, a Reform or a Revolution, into the safe port of the Constitution. The following arguments for redoubling our efforts in the cause of Reform, are not, surely to be disregarded.

First, That nothing can so effectually dispose the people of Great Britain, to exert themselves in defence of their country against invasion, as to give them such a stake and interest in the constitution, as a free people ought to possess.

That to extend the Elective Franchise to all Householders paying taxes; to equalize the representation; and to establish annual elections are necessary.

That, as a substantial Reform of the House of Commons might be effected by the provisions of a single statute, so neither an actual invasion, nor other cause of public alarm, or confusion, which should not necessarily prevent the sitting of Parliament, and the execution of the laws, can at any time furnish a just pretence, for postponing a measure so essential to the preservation of the constitution, as giving the people that representation in the legislature which is their right.

That

That in case the calamitous situation of the country should render a permanent sitting of Parliament necessary or expedient, it might be provided in the Act for effecting the proposed Reform, that the new Representatives, to be first chosen under that Act, should be elected during the continuance and sitting of the present parliament; and that the present parliament should not be dissolved until such new Representatives were ready to enter upon their functions.

That the disinclination of the people of the Netherlands and Holland to defend their respective countries against the French, must be attributed to the want of an identity of interest, and community of feeling, with those in whose hands the legislative and executive functions of their governments were placed,—to that certain, though perhaps secret, hostility, which must ever subsist between oppressors and the oppressed.

That the impression made upon the people of Brabant, by the offer of the *joyeuse entrée* on the part of the Emperor's government, when obliged to retire before the approaching armies of France, is an instructive example to our Borough-holders, that reform may be effected too late.

That

That the same may also be true of arms, has been shewn by the conduct of the Dutch. When called upon without any offer to them of true political liberty, to rise in a mass; and when offered those arms of which they had before denied the use; in silent and sullen disdain, they refused even to fight for their country.

That a substantial Reform in the House of Commons, and a revival of the Saxon Militia, including every Householder, are the best, and apparently the only means, of obtaining an honourable and secure peace.

That supposing the ministry of this country to consist of honest men who saw the necessity of a substantial Reform in the House of Commons; who stood pledged to contend for it; and who should accordingly exert themselves to the utmost, as men and as ministers, in an effort to obtain it; but should find the corrupt interests of the Borough-mongers, too powerful for their united strength; there cannot, as I must think, be a proposition more plain, than that such ministers must instantly resign their situations; assigning to the king and to the people, in the manly language of patriotism, their reasons for so doing: for it would be impossible that such men could consent passively to administer the government, under the indirect and dark,

dark, but absolute controul, of an infamous, plundering faction; the very existence of which faction, would be a proof that an odious tyranny had overturned the constitution; and to continue in office under such a faction, would be voluntarily to partake of its criminality, and to co-operate with it, in rendering a recovery of the constitution impracticable. That to fall into the fatal error of compromising with the Borough-mongers, for leaving them a portion of their present patronage, or corrupt influence; would be in effect to conspire with them against the rights of the people; and to leave a leaven in the dough of representation, by which the whole mass might again be infected, to the utter subversion of our liberties.

That for the reasons last assigned, every possible effort, previous to a change of ministry, ought to be exerted, to weaken the faction of Borough-mongers; by exposing them, in repeated petitions to parliament, in resolutions of patriotic societies, in writing and in conversation, to the contempt and detestation of mankind, as the real authors of all national calamity, and as the most deadly enemies to their country.

That by thus actively labouring to the last moment of tranquillity, to tear away the veil of influence from before the Borough-mongers, and
to

to inform the people of the *true cause* of all national misfortunes, their exertions, when once called forth, might be successfully directed to the *true remedy*, a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament; for if the people have not already the necessary conviction to this end, it is plain that more instruction is wanting; and to what the distraction of their uninstructed minds may lead them, when the day of invasion and confusion may come, is an awful consideration for those who *might have led them into the paths of the constitution*.

T H E E N D.

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

*For the great Constitutional Right and Duty, as well as the Wisdom and the Necessity of being ARMED for Defence of the Peace, the Laws and the Liberties of our Country, see the following Authorities and Arguments.**

“ YOU that be Lieutenants and Gentlemen of Command in your counties, I require you to take care *that the people be well ARMED,* and in readines upon all occasions.” [Q. Elizabeth to both Houses of Parliament.]

“ It is the duty of all free men to have arms ;” [De Laud. Leg. Angl. c. 44.] “ Arms of defence and peace ;” [Bracton, lib. iv. c. 4.] “ Under Peril of *Fine* ;” [N. Bacon, p. 64. 33 Hen. viii. c. 9.] “ And not only to be *armed,* but to be *expert in arms.*” [33 Hen.

* Copied from the Copper-plate Declaration of Rights, now sold by W. Sharp, Engraver, Charles-Street, Middlesex hospital.

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viii.

viii. c. 9. Free Militia, p. 14, 18. Legal Mode of suppressing Riots, p. 13.]

“The common and statute laws of the realm, *in force at this day*, give the *civil* state in every county a power, which, if it were perfectly understood, and continually prepared, would effectually quell any riot or insurrection, without assistance from the *military*, and even without the modern riot-act.”—“Since the *musket* and *bayonet* are found by experience to be the most effectual arms, all persons, who constitute the power of a county, are bound to be competently skilled in the use of them.”—“And since the only safe and certain mode of using them with effect is by acting *in a body*, it is the duty of the whole civil State to know the platoon exercise, and to learn it in companies.” [Legal Mode of suppressing Riots, p. 5, 13.]

“The defence of the Constitution was in the *People* at large.” [Dobbs on Volunteers, p. 8.]

“The custom of the nation has been to train up the freeholders to discipline.” [Aland’s De Laud. Leg. Angl. c. 4.]

“No nation ever kept up an *army* in times of peace, which did not *lose its liberties*.” [Polit. Disq. Vol. II. 349.]

“No

“No kingdom can be secured, otherwise than by arming the *People*. The possession of *ARMS* is the distinction between a *freeman* and a *slave*.” [Fletcher, 307. Pol. Disq. Vol. II. 390.]

Had the Londoners but uniformly acted upon the above principles of constitutional defence, their property and habitations, in June 1780, instead of being at the mercy of an abandoned and contemptible mob, had been in perfect quiet and security; that mob had not spread terror and dismay wherever it bent its licentious course, nor wrapt in flames whatever became the object of its capricious fury.

And had the inhabitants in general on that occasion assembled in *armed Companies* and defended their city, as their duty required, the just sentence of offended law had not since levied on them its *FINES*, in punishment of their disgraceful negligence for suffering individuals to be pillaged and their houses to be burnt at noon day, chapels to be violated, and prisons to be broken down, and the residence and property of millions to be threatened with one common and instant ruin; as though it were a city without laws, without magistrates, without citizens; where every thing was deserted and given up as a spoil to the most brutish and senseless destroyers that ever trampled order, justice,

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tice, and humanity under foot. Good God! Can the inhabitants of London recel this scene of horror and anarchy to their minds, and yet neglect to form armed Associations in every ward, in every parish, in every street!

Nor is the *property* of the unarmed less insecure than their domestic government and civil liberties. For, if a people, through an unaccountable supineness and insatiation, will altogether abandon the possession and use of arms to a mercenary army, that army in time of war will be subject to a defeat, which, *if none else be armed*, may in one instant transfer the government to a foreign invader; as actually happened to our ancestors, when King Harold was defeated at Hastings, and William the Norman, *by a single battle*, became at once the conqueror and the tyrant of England.

With this instructive event before our eyes, at a time when we know not how soon it may be the turn of England herself to be the theatre of a war, originating in pride, injustice, and want of wisdom;—with the horrors of a burning capital still fresh in every mind, while no resort has yet been had to effectual measures of future prevention;—with the recollection how insidiously designing ministers suffered every ancient law for arming the inhabitants at large to fall into disuse and forget-

fulness,

fulness, while a military power, abhorrent to our laws and constitution, was constantly kept to awe us, and made on too many occasions a shocking instrument for enforcing the civil authority;—and with the evidence also of a seven years bloody contest for establishing in America *taxation without representation*, to convince us that there is no principle of the constitution, however sacred, which a mere army will ever regard;—with all these awful warnings before our eyes, it is to be hoped we shall no longer neglect the indispensable duty of arming in defence of all that is dear to us, or that can be dear to our posterity; that our representatives will no longer neglect to adapt the ancient arming laws to the weapons now in use: that men of rank, fortune, and public spirit, will no longer delay to promote armed associations, at a time when those constitutional Statesmen who now preside over our affairs, like the wise ministers of the immortal Elizabeth, encourage a system of national defence most agreeable to the genius of our free government; a system which, while it should give internal security to our island, would hereafter enable those ministers to retrench from the present expence of internal defence, in order to augment our external bulwark the NAVY.

June, 1782.

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No. II.

To the HOLLAND FEN Farmers.

*Plain Truths for Plain Men.**

IF a quicker increase of tillage than of population in these parts oblige you to give extra wages, you must allow the strangers who come to reap your harvest, in addition to the fair wages of adjoining counties, enough to defray their expences out and home, besides something for risk of not getting work, or of not being fully employed. *If the market for wages be kept fairly open*, this probably would not ever exceed 70 per cent. upon the wages of adjoining counties; but that alone is a great burthen; in general it would be less, and yet content the labourers who resort to you. Wages, it is true, like any other marketable commodity, will fluctuate. A deficiency of hands in the market, or a sudden ripening of your harvests, would raise them; a medium supply of hands and a gradual ripening would keep them stationary; and a superfluity of hands at any time would lower them. Thus, both to master and servant, one year's loss would balance another year's gain. At

* Published and distributed in 1791, in consequence of an insurrection.

present,

present, an harvest day's labour in *Nottinghamshire*, (an adjoining county and a county of *manufacture*.) including *allowance*, does not exceed 1s. and 6d. or 2s. You are paying *four times* as much. Your lands upon an average so far from producing four times as much corn, do not yield more than an additional *fourth part*; while your *grain is inferior* and your *markets are lower*; not to observe, that rents are more regulated by the quality of land than the price of labour.

For this grievance you are indebted to a very few lawless men. Although the late disorders were timely repressed by the vigilance of your magistrates, yet the effects of these disorders you yet feel. The apprehension of purchasing employment at the hazard of their lives, has driven numbers of the *Irish* out of the country; and the rioters themselves have been obliged to leave unthorn those harvests they meant to have monopolized. Hence the present scarcity of hands, and most extravagant wages, when it is a notorious fact, that at the commencement of the season there were labourers in abundance.

Hence also certain Ale-house resolutions "Not to work more than three days a week, and not to work under twelve shillings a day." The unthinking combiners did not, however, find it practicable to

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carry the latter part of their plan into execution—, how they proceeded upon the first, I am not informed. In the present state of things, I do not see any adequate means of preventing such abuses in future, which can only be effected by keeping strangers perfectly free from apprehensions of violence, and a market for labour fairly open. Do you expect that those, who have this year been driven away for fear of their lives, will come next season to cut your harvest? The danger of so doing comes first, when they are without defence. The magistrate's warrant, which comes lagging after the offender has escaped, will not cure their broken arms, their ripped bellies, or their fractured skulls. In such a state of things you will not, my friends, find the evil temporary: It will be the constant appendage to a Fen Farm. When neighbouring fens may be brought into tillage, it will not be lessened. In short, it will continue as long as you continue in your present helpless condition: a condition in which designing men will always be able to raise alarms, that will raise wages, without exposing themselves to the lash of the law.

But why, you may ask, do I give you this uncomfortable information, unless I have a remedy to propose? I am ready to answer your question. I will tell you the remedy. It is cheap, it is simple, it is in the performance of a duty absolutely

lutely required by the law of the land, and it is infallible. Put yourselves in a condition to preserve the peace, to give constant efficacy to those laws which without your assistance no magistrates can duly, fully, and completely enforce. Provide arms for yourselves and families. If the magistrate should then have occasion for your assistance, you are prepared to attend him and support him as the law requires. One musket and a bayonet in defence of peace and law, is a match for scores of scythes in the hands of men conscious of criminality. When each Farmer is known to have arms for himself, and for two or three or more trusty persons, and all are ready on the least alarm to defend themselves and neighbours, there will be no bullying any one out of the profits of his harvest, and the idea of mob-law will become ridiculous.

Riots, my friends, are a disgrace to any country inhabited by civilized men. Originating in the folly and wickedness of a few lawless persons, their beginnings are small; but who can tell where they will end? And who can restore to the community, property once destroyed, or lives once lost?

I have told you that it is your duty to provide arms. It is to be found not only in our law books, but in our acts of parliament, which unhappily for the peace of the kingdom are suffered to lie unread and

and forgotten. But the reason of the thing, and your own knowledge of facts, will convince you that I am right. You know that it is the duty of the magistrates to support the laws, and, when necessity requires, to appear personally for suppressing riots. You know that every man is bound to obey their summons, and aid them in the execution of that duty. But how, if resistance be made, are you to repel rioters provided with clubs, scythes, and pitch-forks, if not provided with suitable arms? Muskets and bayonets being the *best* arms, it would be folly to provide any other. These same muskets will not be useless in other respects. They will defend your houses from the nightly robber, and your corn from the vermin that devour it.

You remember the mischiefs done by rioters when this Fen was first inclosed. Don't you recollect that the sufferers sued the *Hundred*, and recovered their damages? The laws of *England* do not punish where there is no crime. But the *Hundred*, convicted of the crime of not defending the peace and the common property of its inhabitants, for which in such cases it is answerable, was punished by a fine equal to the damages sustained, and that fine was levied upon it accordingly. Can you imagine that when your property is endangered, the Magistrate only is to risk his life in defending it? or do you suppose that it is the business of the army, and that you are not at all concerned

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in the matter? Before the property of the nation can by an army be effectually preserved in security, (by which I mean insured against the possibility of riotous depredation) there must be an army sufficient to eat that property up. An army, when the mischief is done, can quell riots, but an armed Yeomanry only can prevent them. While soldiers are quartered at *York*, rioters raze to the ground the houses of Magistrates at *Sheffield*. While soldiers are stationed at *Nottingham*, rioters set *Birmingham* in flames.* This is the sort of security afforded to the

* The following is an extract from Mr. Younck's *Tour through Warwickshire, &c.*

"Seeing, as I passed, a house in ruins, on enquiry I found it was Dr. Priestley's; I alighted from my horse, and walked over the ruins of that laboratory, which I had left some with the expectation of reaping instruction in—of that laboratory, the labours of which have not only illuminated mankind, but enlarged the sphere of science itself; which has carried its matter's fame to the remotest corners of the civilised world; and will now, with equal celerity, convey the infamy of its destruction to the disgrace of the age, and the scandal of the British name. The close of the eighteenth century, the period for giving lectures of high church and Sacheverel, passive obedience, non-resistance, and the sovereign efficacy to the hardware of Birmingham, of mitred fronts in courts and parliaments! These are the pulpit principles that have scrawled *Church and King* on all the barns and stables that I pass. These are the principles that infligated a mob of miscreants—I beg

the property and peace of those who rely upon others to defend them, while they shamefully desert that great law of nature, self-defence; and that fundamental law of the land, *the support of the civil Magistrate in defence of the peace*. This, my friends, is plain common sense, and is at least as old as the gospel; where we read, that, "When a strong man armed keepeth his house, his goods are in peace."—If you wish to follow my advice, don't defer it till next harvest. A good resolution deferred, is in great danger of being forgotten. The way to have Irish labourers next year, is to carry this plan into immediate execution; that those now in the country may carry home the intelligence, and know that they may return to your assistance in security. It is therefore recommended to you to consult together *this very day*, and each man to subscribe for the purchase of as many muskets as he shall choose for himself and family. The larger your order, the cheaper will be your arms. Circu-

parlon—of Friends and Fellow Churchmen, attached to Church and King,* to act so well for the reputation of this country:"

* "Called so in an address to the mob, while engaged in their plunderings and burnings, in the fame hand-bill that speaks of the King's laws. May not that address be translated into plainer English!—You are a set of honest fellows, engaged in a good cause—which, however, you have pushed a little too far! What a miracle after that the whole town was not plundered and burnt!"

late

late this paper from neighbour to neighbour, and from market to market. The more general, the greater will be the security; and that is a good reason for meetings and common consultations on the business. But in a duty which every man owes to himself, to the community and to the laws, no one needs wait to know what his neighbour means to do. I conclude with proposing a first meeting *this afternoon* at four o'clock, at the *White Hart Inn*.*

YOUR FRIEND,
A FARMER.

BOSTON,
31st of August, 1791.

No. III.

Letter to his Grace the Duke of Richmond.

MY LORD,

IT is long since I have offered your Grace any of my thoughts. Of late, I have some times inclined so to do; but have been refrained from an apprehension that they might not be acceptable. But a letter from on board the Hulks to the Editor of the Cambridge Chronicle, dated the 3^d instant, which I have this instant read, bears down all re-

* A meeting was held and an association formed; which co-operating with active magistrates, the best effects have been experienced.

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fulfance. Could I perufe that letter without the moft poignant emotions, and without attempting to move thofe who have power to wipe out fuch a ftain to humanity and to manhood as that letter affixes on my country, I fhould merit deteftation. Read the letter, my Lord, I befeech you; and read alfo the trial of the writer. If he merit the treatment he has received, I alfo, and your Grace, ought to be caft into dungeons amongft felons. But if he be the virtuous victim of that corrupt and arbitrary fyftem which your Grace and I have laboured to reform——It is needlefs to fay more.

I am,

Your Grace's well-wifher,

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

Brothertoft Farm,
Dec. 11, 1795.

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