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APPEAL

TO THE

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PEOPLE,

ON THE

TWO DESPOTIC BILLS,

NOW

DEPENDING IN PARLIAMENT.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN any other circumstances than the present, the author would feel it incumbent upon him to apologize for so hasty a composition as the following, written in a few hours, wrested from his necessary avocations. But in this time of urgency, the man who can consume his minutes in polishing his language, or rounding his periods, is not calculated to render any essential service to his country. Copies of the two bills, in the shape in which they were originally introduced into Parliament by the Ministers, are presized, that the author may be detected if he should unintentionly have misrepresented either. The alterations that have been made while the samplified has been in the spress, do not affect the argument; indeed they have scarcely softened a single shade of their deformits.

LORD GRENVILLE'S BILL,

INTITULED

AN ACT FOR THE SAFETY AND PRESERVATION OF
HIS MAJESTY'S PERSON AND GOVERNMENT AGAINST
TREASONABLE AND SEDITIOUS PRACTICES AND
ATTEMPTS.

Commons of Great Britain, duly confidering the damage Outrages offered to His Majesty's most Sacred Person, in his passage to and from Parliament, at the opening of this present Session, and also the continued attempts of wicked and evil-disposed Persons to disturb the tranquility of His Majesty's Kingdom, particularly by the multitude of Seditious Pamphlets and Speeches daily printed, published, and dispersed, with unremitting industry, and with a transcendent boldness, in contempt of His Majesty's Royal Person and Dignity, and tending to the overthrow of the Laws, Government, and happy Constitution of these Realms, have judged, that it is become necessary to provide a further remedy against all such treasonable and seditious Practices and Attempts: They therefore, calling to mind the provisions, which have at different times been made by the wisdom of Parliament, for averting such dangers, and more especially for the security and preservation of the Persons of

the Sovereigns of these Realms, befeech His Majesty, that it may be enacted, That if any Person or Persons whatsoever, after a date to be hereafter settled, during the natural life of His Majesty, and until the end of the next Session of Parliament after a demise of the Crown, shall, within the Realm or without, compass, imagine, invent, devise, or intend death or destruction, or any b dily harm tending to death or destruction, maim or wounding, imprisonment, or restraint of the Person of the King, his Heirs and Successors, or to deprive or depose him or them from the Style, Honour, or Kingly Name of the Imperial Crown of this Realm, or of any other of His Majesty's Dominions or Countries; or to levy War against His Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, within this Realm or without; or to move or stir any Foreigner or Stranger with force to invade this Realm, or any other His Majesty's Dominions or Countries, being under the obeisance of His Majesty, his Heirs and Successors; and such compassings, imaginations, inventions, devices, or intentions, or any of them, shall express, utter, or declare, by any printing, writing, preaching, or malicious and advised speaking, being legally convicted thereof, upon the oaths of two lawful and crediole Witnesses, upon trial, or otherwise convicted or attainted by due course of law, then every such Person and Persons so as aforesaid offending, shall be deemed, declared, and adjudged, to be a Traitor or Traitors, shall suffer pains of Death, and also lose and forfeit as in cases of High Treason.

It is further enacted, that if any person or persons within that part of Great Britain called England, during His Majesty's life, and until the end of the next Session of Parliament after a demise of the Crown, shall maliciously and advisedly, by writing, printing, preaching, or other speaking, express, publish, utter, or declare, any words, sentences, or other thing or things, to ineite or stir up the People to hatred or dislike of the person of his Majesty, his Heirs or Successors, or the established Government and Constitution of this Realm, then every such person and persons, being thereof legally convicted, shall be liable to such punishment as may by law be instituted in cases of high Misdemeanors; and if any person or persons shall, after being so convicted, offend a second time, and be thereupon convicted, such person or persons shall, on such second conviction, be adjudged to be transported for seven years.

It is provided, That no person be prosecuted by virtue of this Act, for any of the offences mentioned (other than such as are made and declared to be High Treason) unless it be by order of the King's Majesty, his Heirs or Successors, under his or their sign manual, or by order of Council Table of his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, directed unto the Attorney-General for the time being; or to some other of the Counsel learned, to his Majesty, his Heirs

and Successors, for the time being; nor shall any person or persons, by virtue of this present act, incur any the penalties herein before mentioned, unless he or they be prosecuted within months next after the offence committed, and the prosecution brought to trial within the same Term, Assize or Sessions, or that which shall next ensue after filing the information, or the indistment being found, unless the Court in which the same is depending shall, on special ground stated by motion in open Court, think sit to enlarge the time for the trial thereof, or unless the defendant shall

be profecuted to an outlawry.

It is further provided, That no person or persons shall be indicted, arraigned, condemned, convicted, or attainted, for any of the treasons or offences aforesaid, unless the same offender or offenders be therefore accused by the testimony of two lawful and credible witnesses, upon oath; which witnesses, at the time of the said offender or offenders arraignment, shall be brought in person before him or them, sace to sace, and shall openly avow and maintain, upon oath, what they have to say against him or them concerning the treason or offences contained in the said indictment, unless the party or parties arraigned shall willingly, and without violence, confess the same.

It is likewise enacted, That this Act, or any thing therein contained, shall not extend to deprive either of the Houses of Parliament, or any of their Members, of their just antient freedom and privilege of debating any matters of business which shall be propounded and debated in either of the said Houses, or at any conferences or committees at both or either of the said Houses of Parliament, or touching the repeal or alteration of any old, or preparing any new Laws, or the redressing any public grievance; but that the said Members of either of the said Houses, and the Assistants of the House of Peers, and every of them, shall have the same freedom of speech, and all other privileges whatsoever, as they had before the making of this Act; any thing in this Act to the contrary thereof in anywise not withstanding.

It is further enacted, That all and every person or persons, that small at any since be accused, or indicted, or prosecuted, for any offence made or declared to be Treason by this Act, shall be entitled to the benefit of the Act of Parliament, made in the seventh year of his late Majesty King William the Third, intituled, "An Act for regulating of Trials in Cases of Treason, and misprission of Treason;" and also to the provisions made by another Act of Parliament, passed in the seventh year of Her late Majesty Queen Anne, intituled, "An Act for improving the Union of the two Kingdoms."

And it is lastly enacted, that nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent or affect any prosecution by information or indictment at the Common Law, for any offence within the provisions of this Act, other than the offences hereby declared to be High Treason, unless the party shall have been first prosecuted under this Act.



MR. PITT's

MR. PITT's

B I L L

FOR THE MORE EFFECTUALLY PREEVNTING

SEDITIOUS MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES.

HEREAS Affemblies of divers persons, collected for the purpose, or under the pretext, of deliberating on public grievances, and on agreeing on petitions, complaints, remonstrances, declarations, or other addresses, to the King, or to both Houses, or either House of Parliament, have of late been made use of to serve the ends of factions and seditious persons, to the great danger of the public peace, and may become the means of producing consusion and calamities in the Nation.

Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the autho-

rity of the same, That from and after the no Meeting, of any description of persons, exceeding the number of

persons (other than and except any meeting of any county, riding or division, called by the Lord Lieutenant, Custos Ro-tulorum, or Sheriff of such county, or any meeting called by or more justices of the peace of the county or place where such meeting shall be holden, or any meeting of any corporate body) shall be holden, for the purpose or on the pretext of considering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, or declaration, or rather address to the King, or to both Houses, or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in Church and State, or for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating upon any grievance in Church or State, unless notice of the intention to hold fuch meeting, and of the time and place when and where the same shall be proposed to be holden, and of the purpose for which the same shall be proposed to be holden, and of the matter or matters to be propounded and deliberated upon in such meeting, shall be given by public advertisement in days at least be-fore such meeting shall be holden, and unless the authority to inpersons at the least, fert fuch notice shall be signed by being householders resident within the county, city, or place where fuch meeting shall be proposed to be holden, and unless such authority, so signed, shall be written at the foot of a true copy of such notice, and shall be delivered to the person required to insert the as aforefaid; which person shall same in any such cause such notice and authority to be carefully preserved, and shall produce the same whenever thereto required by any one or more Justice or Justices of the Peace for the county, city, town, or place, where such person shall reside, or where such shall be printed; and shall also, if required, cause a true copy of such notice and authority, so signed, to be delivered to any such justice who shall require the same.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all

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meetings, of any description of persons, exceeding the number of persons (other than and except as aforesaid) which after the said finall be holden without such previous notice as aforesaid, for the purpose or on the pretext of considering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration, of other address, to the King, or both Houses, or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in Church or State on for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating on any grievance in Church or State, shall be deemed and taken to be unlawful affemblies.

And be it marked by the authority aforefaid, That if any perfons to the number of or more, being affembled contrary to the provisions hereinbefore contained, at any time after the and being required or commanded by any one or more Justice of Justices of the Peace, or by the Sheriff of the County, or his Under Sheriff, or by the Mayor or other Head Officer or Justice of the Peace of any City or Town Corporate where such Assembly shall be, by proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form hereinaster directed, to disperfe themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, shall, to the number of or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of after such command or request made by proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of or more, after such command or request made by proclamation shall be adjudged and the offenders therein shall be adjudged,

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the order and form of the proclamation to be made as aforesaid shall be as hereafter followeth (that is to say) the Justice of the Peace, or other person authorized by this Act to make the said proclamation, shall, among the said persons assembled, or as near to them as he can safely come, with a loud voice command, or cause to be commanded, silence to be while proclamation is making, and after that shall openly, and with loud voice make, or cause to be made,

proclamation in these words, or like in Effect:

Our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all
 Perfons being affembled immediately to disperse themselves,

and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the Act made in

the Thirty-fixth Year of King George the Third, for

And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That in case any meeting shall be holden, in pursuance of any such notice as aforesaid, and the purpose for which the same shall in such notice have been declared to be holden, or any matter which shall be in such notice proposed to be propounded or deliberated upon at such meeting, shall purport that any matter or thing by law established may be altered otherwise than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament assembled, or shall tend to incite or stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the Person of his Majesty, his Heirs, or Successors, or of the established Government and Constitution of this Realm; or in case any such meeting shall be holden, and any of the persons present at such meeting shall

proceed to propound, deliberate upon, or discuss any proposition for altering any thing by law established, otherwise than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembly bled; or shall wilfully and advisedly make any proposition, or hold any discourse, for the purpose of inciting and stirring up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his Heirs, or Successors, or the established Government and Constitution of this Realm; or in case such meeting shall, by reason of any special circumfances, become dangerous to the public peace, in the judgment of two or more Justices of the Peace, or of the Sheriff or his Under Sheriff and one Justice of the Peace, of the county where such assembly shall be, or of the Mayor or other Head Officer and one Justice of the Peace. of the City or Town Corporate where such assembly shall be, or of the Mayor or other Head Officer of such City or Town Corporate, together with one Justice of the Peace of the County within which fuch City or Town Corporate shall be, or, in case such City or Town Corporate shall be a County of itself, then with one Justice of the Peace of any adjoining County; it shall be lawful for such Justices, Sheriff or Under Sheriff, Mayor or other Head Officer as aforesaid, as the case shall require, to declare such Assembly an unlawful Affembly, and thereupon it shall be lawful for one or more of such Justices or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, by proclamation, to require or command the persons there assembled to disperse themselves; and if any persons, to the number of or more, being so required or commanded; by proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form hereinafter directed, to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, shall, to the number of or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain, or continue toafter fuch command or request made gether by the space of by Proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number or more, after fuch command or request made by Proclamation, shall be adjudged

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the order and form of the declaration, and proclamation to be made thereupon, as last aforesaid, shall be as hereafter follows (that is to say) one of the Justices of the Peace, or other persons authorized by this act to make such declaration and proclamation, shall, among the said persons assembled, or as near to them as he can safely come, with a loud voice command, or cause to be commanded, silence to be while proclamation is making, and after that shall openly, and with loud voice make, or cause to be made, the declaration of the Justices or other persons authorized to make such declaration as aforesaid, also make, or cause to be made, proclamation thereupon as aforesaid; which declaration and proclamation

shall be in these words, or like in effect:

We two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for [or as the case may be] having adjudged this present Assembly to be an unlawful assembly; do declare the same to be an unlawful assembly; and our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all persons

being affembled immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, and to their lawful

' business, upon the pains contained in the act, made in the

' Thirty-fixth year of King George the Third, for

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That if the Justices, or other persons authorized to make fuch declaration as aforefaid, and proclamation thereupon, or any one of them, shall think fit to order any person or persons who shall at such meeting proceed to propound, deliberate upon, or discuss any proposition for altering any thing by law established, otherwise than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament affembled, or shall willfully and advisedly make any proposition, or hold any discourse, for the purpose of inciting and stirring up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of His Majesty, His Heirs or Successors, or the established Government and Constitution of this Realm, to be taken into custody, to be dealt with according to law, it shall be lawful for the faid Justices, or persons so authorized as aforesaid, or any one of them, so to do, whether fuch declaration and proclamation as aforefaid shall be made or not; and in case the said Justices, or other persons so authorized as aforefaid, or any of them, or any Peace Officer acting under their or any of their orders, shall be obstructed in taking into custody any person or persons so ordered to be taken into custody, then and in fuch case it shall be lawful for the said Justices, or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, thereupon to make, or cause to be made, fuch declaration and proclamation as aforefaid, in manner aforesaid; and if any persons, to the number of being required or commanded by fuch Proclamation to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart as aforesaid, shall, to the number or more, notwithstanding such Proclamation made, reafter fuch main or continue together by the space of command or request made by Proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of or more, after such command or request made by Proclamation, shall be adjudged.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every Justice and Justices of the Peace, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, and other Head Officer aforesaid, is and are hereby authorized and impowered, on notice or knowledge of any fuch meeting or affembly as is herein before mentioned, to refort to the place where fuch meeting or affembly shall be, or shall be intended to be holden, and there to do, or order or cause to be done, all such acts, matters, and things, as the case may require, which they are hereby enabled to do, or order to be done: and it shall be lawful for all and every Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, and other Head Officer as aforesaid, to take and require the affiftance of any number of Constables, or other Officers of the Peace, within their respective districts, or within the district or place wherein every such meeting as herein before mentioned shall be holden, which constables and other officers of the peace are hereby required to attend accordingly fuch justices, sheriff, undersheriff, mayor, or other head officer respectively, and to give such assistance as shall be necessary, for the due execution of this act.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if such persons so assembled as aforesaid, or or more of them. after any proclamation made in manner aforefaid, shall continue

together, and not disperse themselves within that then it shall and may be lawful to and for every justice of the peace, sheriff, or under sheriff of the county where such assembly shall be, and also to and for every high or petty constable, and other peace officer within such county, and also to and for every Mayor, Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, and other Head Officer, High or Petty Constable, and other Peace Officer of any City or Town Corporate where such Assembly shall be, and to and for such other person and persons as shall be commanded to be affishing unto any fuch Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, or Under Sheriff, Mayor, or other Head Officer aforesaid, who are hereby authorised and impowered to command all his Majesty's subjects of age and ability, to be affifting to them therein, to feize and apprehend, and they are hereby required to seize and apprehend such persons so assembled, and continuing together after Proclamation made as aforefaid, and forthwith to carry the persons so apprehended, before one or more of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the county or place where fuch persons shall be so apprehended, in order to their being proceeded against for such offences according to law; and that if the persons so assembled, or any of them, shall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt, in the dispersing, seizing, or apprehending, or endeavouring to disperse, seize, or apprehend them, that then every fuch Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, Head Officer, High or Petty Conftable, or other Peace Officer, and all and fingular persons, being aiding and affisting to them, or any of them, shall be free, discharged, and indemnified, as well against the King's Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, as against all and every other person and persons, of, for, or concerning the killing, maiming, or hurting of any fuch person or persons so assembled,

Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons do or shall, with sorce and arms, wilfully and knowingly oppose, obstruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder, or hurt, any Justice of the Peace, or other person authorized as aforesaid, who shall attend any fuch meeting as aforesaid, or who shall be going to attend any fuch meeting, or any person or persons who shall begin to proclaim, or go to proclaim, according to any proclamation hereby directed to be made, whereby fuch proclamation shall not be made, that then every fuch opposing, obstructing, letting, hindering, or hurting such justices or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, and so attending, or going to attend any such meeting, or any such person or persons so beginning or going to make any such proclamation as aforesaid, shall be adjuged and the offenders therein shall and that also every such person or persons he adjudged so being affembled as aforefaid, to the number of as aforesaid to whom any such Proclamation as aforesaid should or ought to have been made, if the fame had not been hindered aforefaid, shall likewise, in case they, or any of them, to the number or more, shall continue together, and not disperse themfelves within after fuch let or hindrance fo made, having knowledge of fuch let or hindrance fo made, shall be adjudged and that also, if any person or persons, so being at any

that shall happen to be so killed, maimed, or hurt as aforesaid.

fuch affembly as aforefaid, shall with force and arms wisfully and knowingly oppose, obstruct, or in any manner wilfully, and knowingly let, hinder, or hurt any Justice of the Peace, or other Magistrate, or any Peace Officer, in apprehending or taking into custody, in execution of any of the provisions of this Act herein before contained, any person or persons, or endeavouring so to do, that then every such opposing, obstructing letting, hindering, or hurting, shall be adjudged and the offenders therein shall

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid. That the Sheriffs and their Deputies, Stewards, and their Deputies, Magistrates of Royal Boroughs, and all other inferior Judges and Magistrates, and also all High and Petty Constables, or other Peace Officers of any County, Stewartry, City, or Town, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, shall have such and the same powers and authorities, for putting this present Act in execution within Scotland, as the Justices of the Peace and other Magistrates aforesaid respectively have, by virtue of this Act, within and for the other parts of this kindom; and that all and every person and persons who shall at any time be convicted of any of the offences afore-mentioned, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, shall for every such offence incur and suffer the pain of

And whereas certain houses, rooms, or places within the Cities of London and Westminster, and in the Neighbourhood thereof, and in other places, have of late been frequently used for the purpose of delivering lectures and discourses on and concerning supposed public grievances, and matters relating to the Laws, Constitution, and Government and Policy of these Kingdoms, and treating and debating on and concerning the same; and under pretence thereof lectures or discourses have been delivered, and debates held, tending to stir up hatred and contempt of his Majesty's Royal Person, and of the established Government and Constitution of this realm: Be it therefore enacted by the authority

aforesaid, That from and after the

every house, room, field, or other place, which shall be opened or used for the purpose of delivering lectures or discourses on any subject whatfoever, or for publicly debating on any subject whatfoever, whether fuch house, room, field or place, shall be opened or used for any fuch purpose alone, or for any such purpose, together with any other purpose, or under whatever pretence the same shall be opened or used, to which any person shall be admitted by the payment of money, or by tickets sold for money, or in consequence of his paying or giving, or having paid or given, or agreeing thereafter to pay or give, in any manner, any money or other thing, for or in respect of his admission into such house, room, field or place, unless the opening or using of such house, room, field or place, shall have been previously licensed in manner hereinaster mentioned, shall be deemed a diforderly house or place, and the person by whom such a house, room, field or place, shall be so opened or used, shall forfeit the fum of for every day or time that such house, room, field or place, shall be opened or used as aforesaid, to such person as will sue for the same, and be otherwise punished as the law directs in cases of disorderly houses; and every person managing or

onducting the proceedings, or acting as moderator, prefident or chairman, at such house, room, field or place, or therein debating, or delivering any discourse or lecture, and also every person who shall pay, give, collect or receive, or agree to pay, give, collect, or receive any money or other thing, for or in respect of the admission of any person into any such house, room, field or place, or shall deliver out, distribute, or receive any such ticket or tickets as aforesaid, shall for every such offence forseit the sum of

to fuch person as will sue for the same.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That any person who shall at any time hereaster appear, act, or behave him or herself as master or mistress, or as the person having the command, government, or management, of any such house, room, sield, or place as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken to be a person by whom the same is opened or used as aforesaid, and shall be liable to be sucd or prosecuted, and punished as such, notwithstanding he or she be

not in fact the real owner or occupier thereof.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be lawful for any Justice or Justices of the Peace, or Chief Magistrate respectively, of any County, City, Borough, or Place, who shall, by information upon oath, have reason to suspect that any house, room, field, or place, or any parts or part thereof, are or is opened or used for the purpose of delivering lectures or discourses, or for public debate, contrary to the provisions of this act, to go to fuch house, room, or place, and demand to be admitted therein; and in case such Justice or Justices, or other Magistrates, shall be refused admittance to such house, room, field, or place, or any part thereof, the same shall be deemed a disorderly house or place, within the intent and meaning of this Act; and all and every the provisions hereinbefore contained respecting any house, room, field, or place, hereinbefore declared to be a disorderly house or place, shall be applied to such house, room, field, or place, where such admittance shall have been refused as aforesaid, and every person therein at the time of fuch refufal shall forfeit the sum of person who shall sue for the same.

Provided nevertheless, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that nothing in this Act contained respecting any such house, room, field or place, which may be deemed a disorderly house or place within the intent and meaning of this Act, shall extend, or be construed to extend, to any house, room, or other building, which shall have been previously licensed, by writing under the hands and seals of or more Justices of the peace of the county, city, town or place, where such house, room, or other building shall be, as a house, room or building to be opened or used for such purposes as in the said licence shall be expressed, whilst such licence shall remain in force, and which licence it shall be lawful for such Justices to grant, and the same shall be in force for the space of and no longer, or for any less space of time, therein to be specified; and which licence it shall be lawful for the same Justices, or any

Justices of the fame county, city, town, or place, to revoke and declare void, and no longer in force, by any other writing under the hands and feals of

a duplicate whereof shall be delivered to or served upon the person to whom the said licence so revoked shall have been granted, or shall be left at the house,

room, or building, for which such licence shall have been granted.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That any person entitled to any of the forseitures aforesaid, may sue by action of debt in any of his Majesty's Courts of Record at Westminster, in which it shall be sufficient to declare that the Defendant is indebted to the Plaintiff in the sum of (being the sum demanded by the said action) being forseited by an Act made in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third, intituled

and the Plaintiff, if he shall recover in any such action, shall have his sull costs: Provided also, That if any action or suit shall be brought against any person, for any thing done in pursuance and in execution of this Act, the Defendant may plead the general issue; and if a verdict pass for the Defendant, or the Plaintiff discontinue his or her action, or be non-suited, or judgment be given against the Plaintiff, then such Defendant shall have costs.

Provided also, That the Ecclesiaftical Jurisdiction within this Realm shall not by this Act be altered or abridged, but that the Ecclesiastical Courts may punish the said offences, as if this Act had

not been made.

Provided also, That nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to extend to take away or abridge any of the Liberties or Immunities to which the Protestant subjects of this kingdom are entitled by an Act, made in the first year of King William and Queen Mary, intituled, "An Act for exempting their Majesty's Protestant subjects, " dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of cerse tain laws," or to which Papists, or persons professing the Popish Religion are entitled by an Act, made in the thirty-first year of his Majesty's Reign, intituled, "An Act to relieve, upon conditions and " under restrictions, the persons therein described, from certain pe-" nalties and disabilities to which Papists, or persons professing the " Popish Religion, are by law subject;" or to extend to any lectures or discourses to be delivered in any of the Universities of these Kingdoms, by any Member thereof, or any person authorized by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, or other proper officers of fuch univerfities respectively.

Provided always, That nothing in this Act contained shall be deemed or taken to alter, abridge, or otherwise affect any provision already made by the law of this Realm, or of any part thereof, for the suppression or punishment of any offence whatsoever described

in this Act.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this Act shall be openly read at every Quarter Sessions of the Peace, and at every Leet or Law day.

Provided always, That no person shall be prosecuted by virtue of

this Act, unless such prosecution shall be commenced within

after the offence committed; and no action shall be brought, for any of the penalties by this Act imposed, unless the same shall be brought within calendar months next after the offence committed.

Provided also, That this A& shall be and continue in force for from the

and until the end of the then next Session of Parliament.

APPEAL

APPEAL, &c.

IN the present momentous crisis of political affairs, it is the duty of every man to contribute his mite to the information of his fellow citizens.

This is a position which will be disputed by no one, unless he has a design to keep them in the darkest ignorance, and consequently to plunge them into the most abject slavery.

Influenced by this confideration, I would take the liberty, while a corrupt Minister permits me, to call the attention of my Countrymen to a few curfory observations on the bills now depending in Parliament, which are at present intitled—the first, "An act for the preservation of his Majesty's person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts;" the second, "An act for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies." But which will, I am confident in future acquire titles better suited to their nature and to their object, and be handed down to posterity, as "ACTS FOR THE EXTINCTION OF BRITISH LIBERTY."

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The point now at iffue, is whether the PEOPLE shall tamely fubmit to the infringement of their dearest rights, to the dissolution of the facred compact between the crown and themselves, to the utter subversion of the constitution of their country, or whether they shall rise "like a giant refreshed with wine" and break, upon their proud oppressor's heads, the chains with which they are endeavouring to enslave them.

The law of treason was in ancient times extremely vague and uncertain: almost every thing was construed into treason by servile Judges, which it suited the convenience of the Monarch or his minions to have so construed. This grievance had become intolerable; to remedy it the house of commons extorted* from Edward the 3d. a law defining the crime with the utmost accuracy, securing the person of the King with the greatest care, yet leaving the just rights of the people untouched, and guarding against the strained constructions of corrupt Judges by an express provision.

Notwithstanding this the succeeding reign, that of the weak and wicked Richard the 2d. proved fruitful both in strained constructions, by the Judges, of the act of Edward the III. and in new treasons which Parliament were found base enough to enact. The consequence was such as might have been expected. The Chief Justice of England was hanged and the King was desired, and shortly afterwards murdered.

^{*} I fay exterted from Edward the III. for upon a review of the history of his reign, it will appear that that was the fact. In truth his frequent necessity for money, to carry on his wars against France, compelled him to comply with many of the demands of the Parliament, which he would not otherwise have some.

One of the first statutes passed in the reign of Henry the 4th. repealed the treason laws of Richard the 2d. the tyranny which had rendered them obnoxious, and the reason assigned for the repeal of these laws, is worthy of notice, "inasmuch that there was no man which did know how he ought to behave himself, to do, speak, or say, for doubt of such pains."

In the despotic reign of Henry the 8th. treason again multiplied; the King was a capricious and lustful tyrant, and his Parliament were the supple instruments of his caprice, his lust, and his tyranny. But so odious was the departure from the plain letter of the act of Edward the 3d. that the first act passed when his daughter Mary came to the throne, as a fort of earnest of suture benefits, repealed all the treason laws of her father, and reduced the crime within the bounds of 25 Edward III. The 25 of Edward III. remains the standard of high treason to this day.

It is difficult to adduce stronger evidence in favour of the wisdom of any law whatever, than by proving that however its principle has been for saken or violated by wicked men, in bad times, for corrupt purposes, that whenever those men have been no more, and those times have been past, the good sense of the nation has returned to it.

The offence of fedition has never been defined by positive law as treason has been, and therefore Judges have with less difficulty suited their judgments to the exigency of the "existing circumstances;" but it is well worth remarking, that in good times prosecutions for fedition have been extremely ture, in bad times they have been very frequent.

D 2

In the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II. * most enormous bail had been required, outrageous fines imposed, and cruel punishments inflicted; which occasioned the introduction of that article into the Bill of Rights, "that excessive" bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

At no period fince the Revolution has there been such a deluge of prosecutions for sedition as within the last three years. While the alarm lasted, which Mr. Reeves and his worthy associates so successfully prepagated, the Ministers did obtain several convictions, and many of the unfortunate objects of those convictions are now languishing in goal. But when the alarm subsided, juries recovered their simmess, and a few verdicts of 'not guilty,' for a time, suspended the exercise of the inquisitorial powers of the Attorney General.

The spirit of the societies affociated to obtain a parliamentary reform remaining yet unbroken, a during attempt was made to crush at one blow all further attempts to attain that great and indispensible object. A traiterous plot was substicated, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, several persons were apprehended and committed to the Tower, to take their trials for High Treason. The most infamous lies were circulated by the hirelings of admininistration, to preposses the public mind against the prisoners. Yet notwithstanding all these base practices, the prisoners were acquitted; the independent juries, by whom they were tried, disbelieved the whole pretence of conspiracy with which they were charged.

These are the " good times" to which Lord Grenville reserred for precedents to justify the present measures.

Thus, foiled in a court of justice, the Ministers exerted themselves in a place where they found persons of more compliant dispositions than the honest jurymen at the Old Bailey; and they prevailed on the legislature again to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. That suspension having expired, the London Corresponding Society refumed its public meetings, which were conducted with unexceptionable order and decorum: their zeal was tempered with prudence, experience had taught them wifdom, and they became doubly formidable. That the Ministers thought them so is evident, from the two Bills now depending in Parliament, which were both framed before the commencement of the session, although an event that took place on the first day of the session, is the false pretence upon which the Ministers principally ground the necessity for the Bills in question.

To what cause the event to which I allude, the outrage offered to the person of the King, was to be attributed, I had at the time but little difficulty to decide. The unexampled distress to which the war has reduced the People, by enhancing the price of every article of subsistence, might easily urge some starving wretch to so desperate an act as throwing a stone into the King's coach while he was in it.*

But though this mode of accounting for it was that which presented itself to my mind at the time, yet the absolute necessity of such an event to create the alarm requisite to obtaining the laws now proposed, and which were resolved on long before, joined to the extraordinary promptitude of the Ministers to avail themselves of it, have raised a suspicion in

^{*} The flory of the air-gun is too abfurd to be credited by any one who is not very far advanced in dotage.

my mind, that Treason may be nearer the Throne than is generally supposed.

Upon the proceedings of the Corresponding Society, peaceable and orderly as they had been, upon this outrage to the person of the King, joined to three other circumstances, viz. certain seditious lectures faid to have been delivered by Mr. Thelwall; certain seditious speeches, faid to have been delivered, and certain seditious libels, faid to have been published; have the Ministers ventured on an audacious attempt to enslave the country at once.

Secure in triumphant majorities, in the two houses of Parliament, for whatever measures they should chuse to propose, they brought forward the Bills in question, with a thorough contempt of the opinion of the public: sentiments which it must be consessed, their experience of its acquiescence in their former measures had made not very unreasonable. They now find however that they have roused a sleeping lion. The people have taken the alarm: they have slocked to the meetings that have been called to petition against these Bills, and they have almost every where shewn that they are the worthy descendants of their brave and illustrious ancestors.

The first of these Bills is entitled "An Act for the Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government." Undoubtedly its authors would have deserved the imputation of folly as enormous as their wickedness, if they had not given this offspring of their evil councils a seducing name.—It was well said by the Duke of Norfolk, at the meeting of the Freeholders of the County of Middlesex, that if a fanatical priesthood were to propose a law for the introduction of the Spanish

Spanish Inquisition, they would call it " An Act for the Preservation of our Holy Religion."

As far as regards the person of the King, that is amply secured by the 25th of Edw. III. which denounces the punishment of High Treason against any one who shall compass his death, and manisost such compassing by any open deed. That act had been found sufficient to protect the life of William III. who was constantly surrounded with plots which threatened assassing. It had been found sufficient to protect the lives of George the First and George the Second, when actual rebellion raged in the heart of the country, and when the centest was in some degree personal, as there was a pretender to the throne, whose hereditary claims were admitted by a large proportion of the people of this country.

Is it the intention of the Minister to libel the King so grossly as to say that he is so peculiarly obnoxious to his subjects, that he is so much hated and detested, that it is necessary to place round his person, like that of his prime Minister, guards, for which his predecessors had no occa-fior?

It is worthy of remark, that there is an extraordinary omiffion in the preambles to these Bills.—I do not remember that I ever before saw an oct, increasing the punishment provided by existing laws, in the preamble to which it was not stated that the eximing laws had been found intusticient to the prevention of the offence. Although the Ministers have not the front to say that is their speeches, they have not dared to intert so notorious a fallehood in the preambles to these Bills.

Every writer on the law and conflitution of this country, whose authority deserves any respect, concurs in the lossiest panegyrics on the wisdom of the common law and general customs of the realm, and the simplicity and perspicuity of the ancient statutes; and reprobates with unqualified severity the departure from the line marked out and pursued by the wisdom of centuries, to answer a temporary if not a wicked purpose; and the multiplication of statutes, which bewilder those who read them.

It is by these practices that the simple grandeur of the ancient laws of England has been so much defaced.

I have already touched upon the existing law against treason.

A person totally ignorant of law might be led to imagine from these Bills, that there does not exist any law whatever for the punishment of seditious libels, seditious speeches, or seditious and unlawful assemblies; yet all these offences are punishable by fine, imprisonment, and pillory, and with security for good behaviour in suture, at the discretion of the Judges. But fine, imprisonment, and pillory (although that sine may be more than the unfortunate delinquent can pay, and that imprisonment, although it may extend to two, three, or four, or five years; and that security for good behaviour, although it may extend seven years surther) are not sufficient to expiate the resentment of Ministers who, conscious of their own evil deserts, are cruel in proportion to their sears.

A new definition of fedition is given, and that definition the most vague and uncertain that can be conceived; and the fecond offence makes the culprit liable to a fentence of transportation to Botany Bay. In the other act provisions are heaped on provisions, to restrain and setter the public meetings called on political subjects, and it is in the power of any hired magistrate to disperse any meeting which he may think by reason of any " special circumstances" likely to become dangerous to the public peace, and if the meeting does not disperse in a certain time he may let loose the soldiery upon them, and both he and the soldiery are discharged from all the consequences that may sollow: that is, they are acquitted of murder by anticipation let them commit what butchery they please.

I will not go further into the difgusting particulars of this Bill, it is a painful task to enter into the detail of so execrable a measure.

Let us examine a little into the pretences that are fet up to justify the necessity of these unprecedented measures! Why, it is first of all said, that there are in this country many persons disaffected to the King and Constitution—Admirable politicians!!—To conciliate these people to the person of the King, you surround him with terrors, and to reconcile them to the Constitution you destroy it. Are there many persons disaffected—then do not adopt measures which will at once justify their disaffection and increase their numbers a thousand fold.

But it is faid there exists a desperate faction which has conspired the destruction of the Constitution. In my conscience I do believe that such a faction does exist, but I do not look for it at Copenhagen House; I look for it at the Treasury, and the two Bills now depending in Parliament are damning proofs of the existence of that faction at that place. That saction must have conspired the destruction of

the Constitution, for it is pursuing those very measures, nay stronger and more detestable measures, than those, which brought one King to the scaffold, and drove another from the throne. I deal not in vague affertions, I appeal to the history of our country, by that will I stand or fall.

It is alledged that tumultuous, diforderly, and feditious meetings have been held, that feditious libels have been published, and seditious lectures and speeches have been delivered by various persons under pretext of promoting the cause of Parliamentary Reform, and that the necessity of these bills is Suppose a member of the House of Commons were to state to that house that the offence of picking pockets had of late encreased to an alarming degree, and he proposed therefore to enact a law punishing it with greater rigour, would it not be enquired into, whether the existing laws had been inforced before new laws were enacted? Unquestionably it would: when it was accertained that the existing laws -had not been enforced, the next question would be, is it possible to discover the offenders? oh yes, says the member, they committed these offences in the sace of day, and in the presence of thousands: I can name all the offenders-can you so? would the house say then get you gone, and profecute them on the laws that now exift, and if you find thefe profecutions ineffectual, then it will be time enough to provide a further remedy.

Such would be the conduct of the House of Commons were they suffered to exercise their own understanding. Such would be the conduct of the House of Commons, not-withstanding the arbitrary mandate of any minister, were they in sact the representatives of the people. But are these allegations

allegations of the prevalence of fedition true? I affert that they are false and false to the knowledge of those who make them. Mr. Sheridan has challenged them to the proof; they have declined the challenge; he has moved for a committee of enquiry, they have over-ruled his motion. Can any conduct be more profligate than this, to accuse a specific body of men of heinious offences, to shrink from the proof when challenged to produce it, to bear down by numbers an attempt to enter on the enquiry, and yet to proceed upon these charges, thus reprobated by themselves, to break down the great bulwarks of the liberties of the people.

The argument in 'favour of the bills for preventing sediditious assemblies' which has been mainly relied on is, it is better to prevent offences than to punish offenders, and this is only a measure of prevention.

I will venture to fay that a more delusive proposition than this, was neverstated. To prevent the commission of a wrong, this act would forbid the exercise of a right. It would be a just in order to prevent the commission of forgery, to forbid men in general the use of pen ink and paper.

But I ask, is the principle of law in any free country, or can it be, prevention rather than punishment? Is it not the characteristic of freedom to leave the actions of men as unrestrained as the peace of society will allow, holding them responsible for the abuse of the liberty they enjoy? THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS exists upon these terms; formerly no man could print without an imprimatur, and the object of this act is to prevent any man speaking, upon political subjects, at a public meeting, without a dicatur.

The licenfing the press proceeded upon this very principle of prevention, but it involved in it the injustice I have mentioned of forbid ing the exercise of a right to prevent the commission of a wrong.

I cannot refort to a more unquestionable authority upon this subject, than Mr. Justice Blackstone, and though he speaks of the liberty of the press only, yet what he says is equally applicable; nay, more strongly applicable, to liberty of speech.

"The liberty of the press is indeed essential to the nature of a free state, but this consists in laying no previous restraints upon publications, and not in freedom from censure for criminal matter when published, every freeman has an undoubled right to lay what sentiments he pleases before the public, to forbid is to destroy the freedom of the press, but if he publishes what is improper, mischievous or illegal, he must take the consequence of his own temerity. To subject the press to the restrictive power of a licencer as was formerly done, both before and since the revolution, is to subject all freedom of sentiments to the prejudices of one man, and to make him the arbitrary and infallible judge of all controverted points in learning, religion, and government."

If this bill should pass, every justice of the peace is immediately elevated to the dignity of a professor of the noble sciences of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, as well as law (I take for granted his patent will qualify him for the situation, otherwise an act of Parliament must be passed for the purpose) and the freedom of sentiment and of speech, is to be subject to his dread controul.

I will now confider what effect these bills are intended to produce. It is intended to raise some offences which have hitherto ranked only as misdemeanors into high treason. It is intended to make the very proposal of a reform, in the representation of the house of commons, whether by speech or writing, a misdemeanor, punishable the first offence by fine imprisonment and pillory, and the second by transportation to Botany Bay.

It is intended to prevent any man addressing a public meeting on political subjects, without permission of the magistrates, for the moment he says any thing which displeases them, the "circumstances" will in their opinion become special" and then the meeting must disperse at their command, or be liable to undescribeable horror. It is intended also to subject private families to inquisitorial visits.

It is not long fince the prime minister betrayed a lamentable deficiency of memory on oath in a court of justice, and he seems to be as forgetful of his past life, as he may wish the public to be. There was a time when the minister himself, this English Robespierre, who now endeavours to establish a system of terror, was himself an advocate for a Parliamentary Resorm, and was of opinion that that was absolutely essential to the salvation of the country. There was a time when he met and spoke in debating clubs and popular societies, both of which he now proscribes. It was the character he established by these steps, which raised him to his present elevated station, where he has forgotten or forsaken all his patriotic principles, and he now desires to punish all those whose virtuous consistency reproaches his base apostacy.

I have

I have no doubt from the terms in the Bill, intitled a Bill for the Protection of his Majesty's Person, that the main object that Ministers have in view, is to stifle all discussions on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. That the representation of the people in parliament needs reform there is scarcely even an hireling of the Minister, however low and degraded his situation, and however hardened his front, that will attempt to deny; and yet if these Bills pass, be it known to the people of England that any "malicious or advised writing, printing, or other speaking" in favour of Reform in Parliament is punishable the first offence with fine, imprisonment and pillory, and the second with transportation; provided juries can be packed which shall be base enough to convict any man whom the Minister may chuse to prosecute upon these Bills.

The Bill for the prevention of feditious affemblies completely repeals that part of the Bill of Rights which declares the right of petitioning to be the ancient and indubitable right of the people.

The Bill of Rights, let it be remembered; is no ordinary statute. It is a solemn compact between the Crown and the People; and every person who knows the meaning of the word compact knows that, to preserve it in sorce, it must be observed by both parties. The preservation of the whole, and every part of the Bill of Rights, is the condition by which the King holds his Crown; the moment he breaks the one, he forseits the other.

Lest it should be suspected that I am rating the Bill of Rights above its merits, I will resort to the authority of t e learned Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, when Attorney General, and exercifing of the powers of that office, in the profecution of Mr. Paine, for writing the fecond part of the Rights of Man.

Mr. Paine had spoke of the Bill of Rights with great contempt, "What is it" (faid he) "but a bargain which the parts of the government made with each other to divide powers, profits, and privileges? and you shall have so much and I will have the rest; and with respect to the nation it said, for your share you shall have the right of petitioning. This being the case, the Bill of Rights is more properly a Bill of wrongs and of insult."

Hear the indignant manner in which Sir Archibald Macdonald repels this attack on this facred law.

"I wonder to God, gentlemen, that any British man, to use the words of our own poet, when he spoke these words a bill of wrongs, a bill of insult,' they did not 'stick in his throat,' What is that Bill of Rights? It can never be too often read; I will make no comment upon it, because your own heads and hearts will make that comment. You have a posterity to look to, ARE DESPERATE RUFFIANS, who are to be found in every country, thus to attack the unalienable rights and privileges which are to descend undiminished to that posterity?"

"Are you not to take care, that this shall be facred to your posterity? Is it not a trust in your hands? It is a trust in your hands as much as the execution of the law is a trust in the hands of the crown: each has its guar-dians in this community, but you are the guardians of the BILL OF RIGHTS."

Sir Archibald goes on with the enumeration of the pro-

visions of the Bill of Rights, and marks that which relates to the right of petitioning as a most important one—that "it is declared to be their unalterable right."

It is not three years then fince the Attorney General, appointed to that office by the present Ministers, and afterwards raised by them to an exalted station on the Bench, thought the rights declared by the Bill of Rights to be "unalterable," "unalienable," of which juries were guardians, which were to descend undiminished to posterity; and that those who attacked them were DESPERATE RUFFIANS. Yet what did Mr. Paine do in comparison with what is now attempted by the Ministers? He only spoke contemptuously of the Bill of Rights; the Ministers assume contempt of it, and are now attempting to repeal one of its most important provisions.

Shall I be told that this part of the Bill of Rights is not repealed, because the right of petitioning is not abrogated in direct terms? Such purisity must disgrace the man who can set up that pretence. The right of petitioning necessarily includes a right of meeting to petition; it is impossible for people to resolve to petition without meeting. But by this act all meetings (except county meetings, called by a Lord Lieutenant or Sheriff of a county, or meetings called by a certain number of Justices, and meetings of Corporate Bodies) for the purpose of petitioning for any alteration of matters established in Church or State, or on the pretence of deliberating on any grievance in Church or State (anxiously including a Resorm in Parliament) are liable to be dispersed by the caprice of any two hired hungry Justices. Where then is the right of petitioning? Lord Lieutenants, Sheriffs,

and Justices of the peace are appointed by the Crown; if they refuse to call a meeting, the persons assembling without their call are liable to dispersion in a moment; and from the conduct of Sheriffs and Justices now, we see what reason we shall have to expect their concurrence in calling meetings when armed with the powers which this Bill arms them The Sheriffs of Northumberland and Yorkshire have resused to call meetings, and in London, Sir John Hopkins, Mr. Alderman Anderson, and Mr. Alderman Staines, have also resused to call meetings of their respective wards.

But then we are told that we overstate the grievance, for that this is not a Bill to *suppres* public meetings, it is only a Bill for their *better regulation*. Such unquestionably is the pretended purport of the Bill, but the slightest examination will prove that in this case regulation and suppression are one and the same thing.

Why does this Bill purport to be for the better regulation and not the suppression of public meetings? Because the former is an insidious, and the latter would be an open and undisguised attack on the liberties of the people. The Ministers have flattered themselves with the vain expectation that they could delude the people with the shadow, while they robbed them of the substance.

So in the other Bill, intitled "A Bill for the Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government," it is not proposed in terms to annihilate the liberty of the sures, but it is proposed to put the press under new regulations, which by the studied ambiguity of the phrases employed may effect in a short time its compleat annihilation. That man is ust be short-sighted who does not perceive that this system of regu-

lution

lation will not stop here, every right will be regulated when its exercise shall be inconvenient to administration.

If these Bills should pass into laws, and if the Ministers should attempt to enforce them, if juries be formed of the same sirm and manly texture as those we have lately witnessed, in all probability the Ministers will shortly put trial by jury under better regulation. Perhaps, as meetings are to be held by permission of magistrates, and lectures and debating clubs to be opened only with their licence, their licence may be made a necessary qualification for a man to sit upon a jury.

Should the present Bills prove inadequate to restrain the press within the narrow and contracted bounds which the Ministers would wish to prescribe to it, I have no doubt that they will soon put the press under some further better regulation; and here I do not argue merely from their despotic inclinations, fo openly avowed as they have lately been; I ground myself on that part of the "counter petition" of the Electors of Westminster, fanctioned by Lord Hood, and which I therefore think it is not unfair to conclude to be a fort of manifesto of the Ministers themselves. The part which follows is that to which I allude " For our part we confider " what is alledged about Magna Charta and the Bill of "Rights, upon this occasion, as mere cant and imposition " to missead the ignorant. We are plain men, who deal " little in words, and judge of things by their effects; and " we are humbly of opinion that if Magna Charta and the " Bill of Rights give fanction to fuch feditious practices as " now prevail, they ought to be revised, explained and amended " so as to be rendered truly a protection to our liberty, and

- " not a cloak to licenciousness. But this we believe they
- " already are, and nothing in our opinion will more con-
- " tribute to make them continue fo, than the aid of the two
- " Bills now in question.
- " After what we have prefumed to offer to this Honour-
- " able House on the subject of seditious and inflamatory
- " publications, WE BEG PERMISSION TO ADD THAT
- " WHILE IT IS INTENDED THAT POLITICAL DEBATES
- " AND LECTURES SHALL, BE MADE SUBJECT TO A LI-
- " CENCE FROM THE MAGISTRATE, IT WOULD BE AD-
- " VISEABLE THAT PAMPHLET SHOPS, WHERE SMALL
- " PAMPHLETS ARE SOLD FOR SIX-PENCE AND UNDER,
- " SHOULD IN LIKE MANNER BE SUCJECT TO A LI-
- " CENCE."

It is to be remarked, that whenever the Ministers have intended to take any step which would naturally alarm the peoples' minds, they have always prepared the public for it by proposing it first in the publications of some of their hirelings.

From the extract, from this counter-petition, which I have inferted, the inference is fair and reasonable, that the Ministers do entertain a design of imposing a further restraint upon the press, or to express it in a gentle phrase, which will be acceptable no doubt to my adversaries, to sut the sures under better regulation.

My fellow citizens, if you do not put a ftop to these regulations at once, these Ministers will not stop till they have put all rights under the same fort of regulations, as the Empress of Russia has put the rights of the brave but unhappy Poles. When she invaded Poland to overturn a free govern-

ment established by a bloodless revolution, she alledged just the same fort of pretexts as the Ministers alledge for the passing of these Bills.—The prevalence of licenciousness and tumults and the necessity of order and subordination—and when she had massacred thousands of those who did resist and thousands of those who did not, and reduced the remainder of the people of Poland to complete and absolute slavery, she then commanded them, while yet reeking with the blood of their slaughtered fathers, mothers, husbands, wives and children, to offer up thanksgivings to the Almighty for being admitted to the privileges of Russian subjects.—The privileges of Russian subjects!!!

Gracious Heaven! what a mockery of human misery!

History affords us most instructive lessons to beware of regulations which destroy the vital spirit of institutions, while they leave their outward forms untouched.

When Cæsar established his tyranny upon the wreck of the liberties of Rome, he did not abolish the Senate, the Consuls, and the Tribunes—No—but he made Senators, Consuls, and Tribunes subservient to his will. He deluded the people by the semblance of their constitution while he exercised a solitary despotism. It was by the regulation not by the abolition of the constituted authorities of Rome, that that free and mighty republic degenerated into the most service of the rocious tyranny that ever cursed mankind.

There is not a more certain mode of ascertaining the defign of any measure than by watching the language of its authors and supporters; and if any thing could render these Bills more odious and detestable than they are in themselves, it is the language of the Ministers and their retainers.

The position of Bishop Horsley, that in all countries "the mass of the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them" was better suited to a Turkish Divan, or a Romish Inquisition than a British House of Parliament, and the only question posterity (if his name shall reach posterity) will have to decide will be whether this worthy prelate of the order of Bonner, was better fitted for the office of a Mahometan Musti, or a Romish Inquisitor.

The language of Mr. Wyndham I trust with Mr. Sheridan will never be forgiven nor forgotten by the people of this country, his threats might pass for the ravings of infanity; but when we recollect he is fecretary at war, and holds this language unreproved by his fellows in office, we cannot doubt he speaks the fentiments of the cabinet: indeed his threats have been almost re-echood by Mr. Pitt himself." Such threats before the paffing these bills, from men so totally regardless of any principles of honour, or honesty, and of freedem, are fufficient to teach the people what they have to expect when these bills are passed. An immense army is at their beck-but should the time arrive when the ministers will command them to enslave their countrymen, I trust they will answer them in the firm and manly style that becomes them. "We enrolled ourfelves as foldiers to defend, not to enflave our country.".

It is not long fince the 'friends of the people' and other focieties were urging the necessity of Parliamentary Reform, that the adherents of the Ministers raised a loud cry against innovation! Where are the persons who were loudest in that cry! Why are they filent now, when the most dangerous innovations

innovations that ever were attempted are receiving the fanction of great majorities in Parliament? Innovation it feems is only to be dreaded when it tends to fecure the liberties of the people. It is perfectly harmless, nay more, it is excremely desireable, when it makes an inroad upon the Constitution, to increase the power and influence of the crown, which influence an House of Commons within these fourteen years voted "had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished," and which instead of having been diminished, has since that time increased beyond all calculation.

It has frequently been observed with respect to the events of the French revolution, that the British Ministers after having condemned the conduct of the French revolution in various particulars, have themselves imitated that conduct; for a long time the walls of the House of Commons resounded with pathetic lamentations of the miseries produced by a system of terror, yet scarcely has that system been abrogated in France than our ministers imported it into this country.-It is congenial to the cold and relentless heart of the English Robespiere; who when he lately exhibited himself in that despicable situation, when he dared not shew his face in the principal city of the Empire on a visit to its mayor without a guard, compleated one of the last acts of resemblance to the Parisian tyrant. When these bills shall have passed, if he shall yet have the audacity to pass them, there will remain but one event to compleat the parallel, and that the parallel may speedily be compleated is "a consummation devously to be wished."

Mr. Justice Blackstone concludes his commentaries on the laws of England, with this just and forceable observation, which cannot be too deeply engraved in the memory of every Briton.

"The protection of the liberty of Britain, is a duty which they owe to themselves who enjoy it, to their ancestors who transmitted it down, and to their posterity who will claim it at their hands, this, the best birthrights and noblest inheritance of mankind."

Britons, a few days will decide whether you will or will not fuffer this your "best birthright and noblest inheritance" to be wrested from you by the "corrupt and desperate administration," with which this country is curfed. The manly and spirited opposition you have given to these tyrannical bills, will reflect upon you immortal honour. Perfevere in the fame line of conduct, disconcert the machinations of your enemies, and the enemies of liberty, by your peaceable demeanour; rally round the standard of those tried patricts in Parliament, who whatever doubts have heretofore been entertained of their integrity, have given proofs which must subdue the most inveterate prejudices, and convince incredulity itself. The manner in which they have opposed these bills entitles them to the everlashing gratitude of every man who values freedom. Your joint exertions, will, I hope, prevent this coming to an alternative; which I cannot contemplate without horror, whether you will be the flaves of an arbitrary monarch, or the citizens of a free republic-dreadful alternative! avoidit, I conjure you, for whatever may be the

event,

event, torrents of blood would inevitably flow before the contest could be decided: but I will not despair, the opinion of the public becomes every day stronger and stronger, their voice louder and louder; soon will it speak in thunder to their infamous oppressors—sure I am, that such cannot be the last efforts of expiring freedom.

Here I should conclude were it not that the circumstances of the present times force upon my mind the history of Rehoboam, which is recorded in the 12th chapter of the First Book of Kings. When the children of Israel had affembled to make him King (upon the death of Solomon his father), they faid unto him "thy father made our yoke griev-" ous: now therefore make thou the grievous fervice of " thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, " lighter, and we will ferve thee, and he faid unto them, de-" part yet for three days, then come again to me. And the " people departed. And King Rehoboam confulted with " the old men that stood before Solomon his father, while he " yet lived, and faid, how do ye advife that I may answer "this people? And they spake unto him, saying, if thou " wilt be a fervant unto this people this day, and wilt ferve. "them and answer them, and speak good words to them, " then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook " the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, " and confeited with the young men that were grown up " with him, and which frood before him: and he faid unto " taem wh too and give ye, that we may answer this people, " who have spoken to me, saying, make the yoke which " thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men " that

that were grown up with him, spake unto him, faving, thus shall thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee. faying, thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou " it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou fay unto them, my " little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And " now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, " I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you " with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. " Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the " third day, as the King had appointed, faying, come to me " again the third day; and the King answered the people " roughly, and forfook the old mens counsel that they gave " him; and spake unto them after the counsel of the young " men, faying, my father made your yoke heavy, and I will " add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with "whips; but I will chaftife you with fcorpions. " all Ifrael faw that the King hearkened not unto them, " the people answered the King, saying, what portion have " we in David? Neither have we inherritance in the fon " of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own " house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents."

The conduct of Rehoboam, and the conduct of the Ministers, furnish an exact parallel. The people have from time to time complained of various grievances; the Ministers have answered their complaints by heaping burden upon burden; at last when they have reduced them to a state of misery, in which their complaints are become louder than ever, they decide their murmurs, they intult their misery.

"Hitherto" (say they) "you have been chassissed only with whiles, henceforth you shall be chassissed with scorpions." But let them beware—the language of the people of Israel may become the language of the people of Great Britain.

"What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse—"To your tents, O Israel."

FINIS.

N. B. The Bills, when passed, will be Published by D. I. EATON, at Two-pence each, the same size as this Pamphlet, and may be bound up therewith.

