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A FAIR AND CANDID

ADDRESS

TO THE

NOBILITY AND BARONETS

OF THE UNITED KINGDOM;

ACCOMPANIED WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS AND PROOFS

OF THE ADVANTAGE OF

Hereditary Rank and Title

IN A FREE COUNTRY.

By W. PLAYFAIR, Esq.

INVENTOR OF LINEAR ARITHMETIC, AUTHOR OF AN ENQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF NATIONS; EDITOR OF THE LAST EDITION OF DR. SMITH'S ENQUIRY, WITH NOTES AND A SUPPLEMENT, &c. &c.

A House of Peers sitting, each voting in their own right, and independant of the King and the People, is the best means of preserving the rights of both, and securing liberty.

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1809.

THE READER IS REQUESTED TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THIS

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the course of publishing the Work, intitled FAMILY ANTIQUITY; I have thought it necessary to concentrate, in one small volume, the principal circumstances that give it a claim to encouragement; in doing which, I beg those royal and noble personages who have honoured me with their patronage, to accept of my most grateful thanks.

The Work itself is of the nature of those long and intricate calculations, the chief value of which consists in their result—Though I trust, that the histories of individual families give satisfaction, information, and entertainment, yet the great end of the Work is of another nature, and for another purpose. It is to prove the merit and utility of a hereditary race of nobles, by an appeal to fact, and, as the whole proofs

are before the public, I could never venture to draw any deduction from them that on inspection would not be found to be fair and true.

As the Work is voluminous and expensive, its operation on public opinion must be by concentrating the most material and important truths it contains; referring to the Work itself for their reality.

This small publication is intended for that purpose; it contains important truths, but the vouchers for those truths are contained in the large Work; without which, this small one would merely deserve the name of a Political Reverie.

The encouragers of the Work are then requested to consider, that it is by their support alone that this could have existed.—The truths lay hid, as if under the ground, and their generous support has enabled me to bring them forth in such a manner as must have the most happy influence, in protecting Hereditary Rank, from the rude ravage of modern reformers; who, though they have no respect for institutions, on account of their origin or antiquity, still profess a regard to what is PRACTICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS.

I have proved the PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES of HEREDITARY RANK AND TITLE; thereby silencing those who would persuade the public at large to think that institution either useless

or inconvenient: which is a very important point to the whole of society, but particularly to the members of that order.

I have already succeeded in making the utility of this Work understood to the greater number of the nobility, as well as to many gentlemen, who have not titles, but who, feeling the importance of the undertaking, have generously patronised it. There are still, however, some of the nobility, who, I suppose, from not having taken time to consider the nature and tendency of the Work, have not thought proper to favour it with their encouragement. I say, that I suppose it is from not taking time, for it cannot be supposed that, if they knew that I was fighting in their cause, they would refuse to imitate those Peers who feel for, and support, the Common Interest. I am persuaded there is not a person enjoying title in the kingdom, who would not exclaim with the virtuous Roman:

> **I should have blush'd, if Cato's house had stood**
> **Aloof, or flourished in a civil war.**

Thoughts are the seeds of actions, and the most formidable revolutions proceed from opinions; it is, therefore, at all times important to eradicate error before it produces unfortunate effects; it is in this warfare that I am engaged; and it is on that account, and on that only, that I call for support from those noblemen

who, from not having considered the case, have not honoured me with their protection.

What I now say is undeniable; but if, after fairly understanding this, there are noblemen who think the cause not worth pleading;* or who, thinking it worth pleading, are too selfish to join in its support. I shall consider it as a happy circumstance that the names of such men are not to be found in the honourable list of those who act on the generous principle of patrons to a publication, the object of which is to this claim—Were the claims to patronage (which I now bring forward) in any way attempted to be founded on the merit of the Work, it would be consummate and insufferable vanity; but as they are founded intirely on the beneficial tendency of the Work, and as that benefit is certain to be attained, I humbly hope that the appeal which I now make will be considered as legitimate.

* Some people imagine, that, because new nobility are rising up on the continent, the danger to the old is over—Quite the contrary.—Equality is indeed out of date, but personal distinction in opposition to hereditary distinction is now the plan encouraged, and approved by the revolutionists, and it is one to which the bulk of all mankind will assent, as it gives chance to the present race. Hereditary nobility is like a lottery, in which the prizes are already drawn.

COPY OF THE

DEDICATION

OF THE WORK TO

HIS MAJESTY,

BY PERMISSION.

TO

THE KING.

SIR,

In presuming to lay before your Majesty a Work intended to illustrate the character generally maintained by the British Nobility; to shew the high respectability of that order, and combat the prejudices and false opinions that have prevailed in latter times, I am encouraged more by the nature of the subject than by any pretensions founded on my own abilities.

The fortitude with which your Majesty has resisted innovations, that are more inimical to the happiness of the people than to the rights of kings; the protection your Majesty has granted to the victims of a misguided nation and of a false philosophy; and the assistance afforded to a who are inclined to defend their rights, will excite admiration to the latest posterity.

Your Majesty's example will shew, that firmness in maintaining what is already established,

and has been approved by experience, in opposition to what is plausible and new, however much applauded by the popular voice, is the surest way for a monarch to secure the happiness of his people.

Britain, the seat of true liberty, which has for ages afforded an asylum to the victims of despotism, has, under the reign of your Majesty, become the refuge of those who have fled from a pretended liberty, founded on the imaginary basis of equality, and established on the ruins of hereditary nobility.

During a revolution, not less fatal to the men by whom it was planned and executed, than to those whom it proscribed, nations and individuals have sought, and they have found protection from your Majesty.

It is, as an humble assistant, to the best of my power, in resisting the farther progress of a revolution (in effecting which the pen has done as much as the sword), that I venture to hope for the patronage of a Monarch, whose reign has been as highly distinguished by his firmness and virtues, as by the singularity of the contest in which he has been compelled to engage.

I am,

SIR,

Your Majesty's most faithful subject,

And most dutiful Servant,

London, 1st May, 1809.

WILLIAM PLAYFAIR.

PREFACE

TO THE

ENGLISH PEERAGE.

(COPY.)

At a time like the present, when there exists, nearly over all Europe, a very general and strong disposition to degrade whatever owes any part of its importance to Antiquity, or whoever derives honour from Illustrious Ancestors, a publication of the nature now produced must appear with peculiar propriety and advantage. It plainly proves, from undeniable facts, found in the History of the British Nobility, that there has been, with a very few exceptions, a most intimate connexion between great actions, a good and virtuous conduct, and the honours that have been distributed by the sovereigns of this country.

This work, while it is designed to render the study of that interesting subject more easy and clear, by means of the Charts, is expressly in-

ended to counteract the new doctrines that unfortunately prevail too much.

The object is, to convert the history of our ILLUSTRIOUS NOBILITY into a barrier against such unprincipled innovation; and, on this ground, *it lays claim to the patronage and encouragement of all those who wish to maintain the present happy order of things, and the incomparable government of this country*, which are so intimately connected with the preservation of the different ranks of society, and so dependant on the respect and esteem justly marked for the higher orders.

THE NOBILITY of this empire are, by the nature of their creation and the descent in which their titles run, different from those of all other countries, and that difference is highly in favour of BRITISH NOBILITY.

From the earliest ages, genealogy has occupied much of the attention of mankind; and whether we consult sacred or profane history, we shall find the extraction of the individual always considered as making an important object in his history.

When a man first enters into life, he has, indeed, no other history than the name of his father, or of the family to which he belongs. This is the only answer which can be given to that perpetual question of, "Who is that?". No sooner do we see a stranger than we wish to know from whom descended. The very impor-

tant inquiry, of what he does? is in general a secondary question.

Although the actions of a man himself are the truest proofs of his merit, yet it is impossible for the mind not to connect these with the opinion we have of his extraction; and whoever pays due attention to the natural sentiments of mankind, (while he keeps clear of the absurd prejudice which gives honour and respect to extraction alone,) will acknowledge, that the actions of men are not the only ground of respectability or estimation in the world. It is true, that a respect for ancestors seems to be founded in what (in the present times) is called prejudice and respect for actions, on what is termed reason, but this is not altogether true.

It is to be considered, that the motive of a man's actions not being always known, and even the real merit of an act being frequently uncertain, it is, in a vast variety of cases, impossible to form a very decided conclusion. On the other hand, though it is absurd to honour and esteem a man merely because he is descended from great and good men, yet, even in doing so, reason mingles with prejudice; for, personal merit or blame cannot, in almost any case, be measured so accurately as not to require all the assistance which circumstances will afford in forming an opinion on this subject; it becomes therefore necessary to take into account all the

collateral circumstances; of which extraction is one.*

In forming a judgment of great, or of very decided actions, the former conduct of the actor will produce but little effect; because men are capable of reformation, or of becoming depraved; but in judging of ordinary actions, the general character of the actor has much weight. In like manner, the race from which a man springs, is

* Mr. Pope, who is considered as having put the ideas of others into admirable versification, seems to be entirely in favour of actions, when he says,

"Honour and shame from no condition rise,
Act well your part, there all the honour lies:
Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
The rest is all but leather or prunella."

This, indeed, is a very decided sort of language; but what are we to say, when in the following essay we find the same poet express himself thus?

"Not always actions shew the man: we find
Who does a kindness is not therefore kind:" &c.

And when farther on, the same poet, who in the foregoing essay spoke so decidedly of actions, concludes with saying:

"Judge we by nature? habit can efface,
Interest o'ercome, or policy take place.
By actions? those uncertainty divides.
By passions? these dissimulation hides.
Opinions? they still take a wider range.
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change.
Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
Tenets with books, and principles with times."

What a tissue of contradictions!

a sort of guide to the judgement with respect to the man himself; until a man has begun to act, or until we know some of his actions or his manner of acting; the race he is descended from is the only circumstance that can guide our judgement. This, indeed, is by no means a sure criterion; but as a man's past conduct is not a perfectly certain pledge for his future actions, it becomes unfair altogether to reject the one, and in an unlimited manner to adopt the other mode of judging.

Lineal descent seems, from the history, both of men and of inferior animals, to be an imperfect species of identity; the same qualities are often found to descend from father to son; and, therefore, may with some reason be expected to do so; and as even where the identity is personal and undeniable,[b] the mind is capable of total change, it seems fair to consider this as a species of identity, though of an inferior degree; provided we can find, that the qualities or propensities of the man do often, as personal likeness, go by descent.

[b] The man who at the age of twenty-five was vigorous and virtuous, may at forty be depraved and debilitated; indeed it often happens so; nay, very great changes take place in a much shorter interval of time, therefore personal identity scarcely exists, except in the memory, for both the mind and matter are changed.

Without affirming that general opinion is always right, its support is a strong presumption in favour of any sentiment or doctrine. In speaking of general opinion, we do not mean *general* in one town or country, or only a temporary opinion, though ever so widely extended: but an opinion, of the truth of which all ranks and ages, the ignorant man, and the well-informed, are equally persuaded;[c] such an opinion is, for the most part, well founded.

It is, and has been common to all people in all ages, to speak of a brave race of men; an honourable; or a generous race. Thousands of instances may be drawn from history to prove that there is nothing absurd in such expressions.[d] Even whole nations have deserved and maintained

[c] There is indeed a difference between the degree of credit given by the well-informed man and the ignorant. What the former believes, is generally mixed with some degree of doubt, or attended with some species of diffidence (in himself at least); whereas the ignorant man indulges no sort of doubt, but grants a full, general, and unmixed belief to his opinion, unaccompanied by any sort of diffidence in his own judgment.

[d] It is undoubtedly a mistake to attribute to soil, climate, or government, the disposition of the people. Under the same government we find people of very different characters and conduct. The people of Cheshire are very different from those of Yorkshire. The people of Normandy are remarkable for shrewdness, and those of Champagne for silliness; so that it is not the government. Again, is it local situation? Compare the ancient Romans with the

a particular character.[e] It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, until we find it otherwise, that the individual partakes of the qualities of the line from which he is sprung.[f]

To say, that some degree of prejudice is not mixed with this position in favour of a person who is well descended, would be extravagant, but it

base populace that now incumber Italy, or the antient Greeks with the slaves who now disgrace the former habitation of arts and elegance.

[e] It does not seem to be the same with the qualities of the head, for we do not hear of a succession of painters, poets, or mathematicians. This has given some reason to think that the qualities of the heart go by the male line, and those of the head by the female, which latter being subject to perpetual interruption, there is nothing hereditary in abilities. Where it has sometimes happened, that the same male and female line have intermarried for a long series of generations, the race has generally been degraded in intellects. Of this there are several examples in some parts of this country, which, however, it would be invidious to point out.

[f] Perhaps the fair and honourable pride of emulating the virtues of ancestors, is one of the greatest recommendations of a man who is well descended. This acts strongly on youth, and therefore tends to make a man begin the world well, which is a great point; and on this account it is to be wished, that the old prejudices (if they are prejudices) in favour of men of family, should not be done away, to make room for modern philosophy.

is quite sufficient, if shewn that there is some foundation for it in nature, and in reason.

In maintaining that respect and honour are due to ancestry, we do not by any means wish to insinuate that such claims are equal to those of personal merit, and indeed it is precisely *because we do not think so*, that we have set on foot the present enquiry into the origin of honours and of wealth, thereby connecting genealogy with biography; for we do consider that there is a wide distinction between honour and rank, and that a splendid title may, in some cases, be rather a disgrace than otherwise: but in all cases, we maintain that genealogy and biography ought to be connected together, in order to separate the solid from the shining, the intrinsic from the apparent.

In the course of the following enquiry, we shall find, that though honours have in general been acquired by estimable actions, there are a few glaring exceptions. We shall also find that, though once obtained, honours have often been well supported, yet that they have occasionally been very much disgraced and degraded, by the actions of those who bore them. This will naturally lead more firmly to the conclusion, that nominal rank and real honour may be, and frequently are separated.

As a rich man becomes almost equally mi-

portant to society as if, besides his riches, he were in possession of a title, and as a degree of respect paid to him is not very much inferior, we shall inquire into the origin of wealth, and the nature of that conduct, by which it is naturally acquired, as well as into that cast of character, and course of conduct, which do most naturally, and have most commonly, led to wealth and honours.

At the same time that the historical inquirer is under an indispensable obligation to search diligently for, and strictly adhere to the truth, it is yet permitted to him, nay, it is proper, wherever the motives for any action appear to be uncertain, to incline to that detail, or that explanation, which is most favourable to the family of which he treats: and this, on the fair ground, that vanity is a more powerful incentive to virtue than shame; the former is attended with an agreeable feeling, but the latter, with a very painful sensation. Desirous to gratify, as well as serve mankind, we will, without any sacrifice of truth, take what is familiarly termed the good-natured side of the question.

It would be a curious inquiry to trace the importance in which genealogy has been held in all ages, and in all nations; as it would tend to ascertain, how much more men are governed in their actions by opinion than by realities. The province of opinion seems to be to guide men, when they are not under the immediate influence of

necessity: but opinion yields its empire, the moment that circumstances are such as to create what appears to the mind to be necessity.[g]

Inequality of rank owes its first rise to seniority; of this we have many beautiful descriptions in the Old Testament. The father of the family was the king, and his eldest son succeeded to his power, unless where the family separated, or where superior ingenuity or strength gave that power to another. It is, therefore, a fundamental error to imagine that equality is natural. Nothing in the world is so unnatural, and nothing more impracticable, than either to establish or preserve equality: though it be clear that a boundary must be set to power, and that this boundary ought to be regulated by justice, and by circumstances.[h]

The eastern nations, which have escaped many of those convulsions and changes, which war

[g] We say, what appears to be necessity: because it is very seldom that there is no alternative left: and so long as there is, the necessity is not absolute.

[h] Nimrod seems to have been the first man who overturned the Patriarchial government, and established that of conquest; which he attained by personal merit, uniting in himself all those qualities of body and mind which fit a man to lead, govern, and instruct others: and what, at first sight, surprises us is that the superiority established by conquest, is of a milder species than that which is established by family preferences; but this seems to arise from the same cause that makes civil wars more cruel than those between two different nations.

and conquest have brought on Europe and Africa, retain still much of that primæval distinction of rank, which seems to have owed its origin to the function which the father of the family assigned to his different children; for that distinction seems to have been occasioned by opinion, or unequal degrees of affection, not by force; and to have had very little connexion either with state policy, or personal interest or advantage. Superstition came in aid of what arose from paternal[1] injustice; and, accordingly, we find that in the east, one set of men is exalted above, and the other depressed below humanity.

In the western world, where revolutions, and the fiercer passions have ruled, men have sometimes been guided by justice, and when they were not so, by interest. Hence it is, that, though the distinction of master and slave existed for a long period, in Europe; yet it was a distinction

[1] The imperfections of humanity counteract and moderate each other in a wonderful degree. Avarice counteracts cruelty in the case of slaves. As to paternal authority, we have a strange instance of what that is, even in the patriarch Abraham, who sent off his beloved concubine, and her young son, into the desert, with a bottle of water, in order to please his old wife Sarah. Can we wonder at the degradation of some of the Eastern *casts*, after such an invidious distinction amongst children, made by so exemplary a man as Abraham?

founded upon a sort of social contract, though indeed a very unfair one. There was a species of reciprocal advantage, even between the master and the slave: but there is none between the different Casts in India; besides this, to be a slave was humiliating, but not accounted disgraceful: as distinction of ranks is then natural to man, it is ever to be considered as unavoidable. Hereditary title is, however, by no means very ancient, and though it may be politically wise, it is by no means necessary, it may therefore be considered as an artificial, though far from useless, division of society.

In the splendid days of Greece and Rome, many families were noble: but titles were personal, and attached only to offices. It is to the feudal system that we owe hereditary title.[k]

Things always exist before their names. Thus it is that rank and honour existed long before titles, which were only a species of alphabet, or hieroglyphical signs, by which rank is ascertained and represented. The lineal descendants of Scipio Africanus would have enjoyed the first titles in Rome, if there had been any in that great city; as it was, they enjoyed all that rank

[k] Though the nobility of Rome had three names, this was not an hereditary title, but a customary distinction. See note A, at the end of the Preface.

which opinion gives, and which a title only indicates.

There cannot be a doubt, that the invention of titles is an improvement in the social system; particularly when accompanied with the restrictions and regulations generally attended to in England, where the eldest of the family alone has been considered as noble, and enjoys the privileges attached to nobility, because it prevents that increase of nobless which takes place, where titles extend to the whole family; the evil consequences of which, to society, are very considerable.

As men live by industry, the great number ought not to be fettered with any imaginary rank that tends to interrupt those pursuits which are necessary to their existence and the maintenance of their families; and, again, as honours and titles are intended as rewards from the public to individuals, they should not become too common, or be possessed by poor or needy men, for though poverty is not in itself any reproach, and is, in some instances, very honourable, yet it does not, in any case, accord well with rank and title.

In France there were about seventeen thousand noble families, because nobility was attached to all the males of the line; but, as wealth is not divisible in the same manner, many of the nobles were extremely poor, and not capable of

maintaining their rank; so that, in many cases, it became ridiculous, and in a still greater number, very inconvenient. If it had not been, that the younger sons were many of them provided for in the church, which prevented them from marriage, it is impossible to say to what a ruinous extent nobility might have been communicated in that country.

In England, the direct line in which the title is to go, is always pointed out in the patent by which the title is granted, which prevents the increase of noble families, and extinguishes the nobility in a great number of instances, as the line pointed out ceases to exist.

Whether that equality of condition which has of late been so loudly contended for, would be more agreeable to the order of nature, or more conducive to the happiness and prosperity of mankind, was for some time doubtful, but it is no longer so now, since the French have made an experiment which has proved, that equality, in respect either to rank or fortune, is impracticable.

A state of perfect equality could subsist only amongst men possessing equal talents and equal virtues; but there are not men in any country of such a description.

Equality of condition must be founded on equality of moral and physical means; but as nature has endowed men very differently in

those respects, it follows that equality of condition cannot possibly be maintained, and is contrary to the nature and rights of things.

Were all mankind perfectly virtuous, an artificial distinction of ranks would be unnecessary: but in that case civil government itself would likewise be unnecessary, because men would have attained all that perfection which it is intended, by the regulations of society, only imperfectly to obtain; but even then there would not be equality with respect to wealth, which is the consequence of talents and exertion.

In studying the consequences that arise to men from the different situations which they are by birth destined to fill, it will at once occur to the most unthinking, that whilst honours and affluence rescue a man from the temptation to meanness or criminality, they likewise deprive him of those motives for exertion that are felt by people in an inferior situation. With equal abilities and equal inclination, the exertions of men are different when left free, and when acted upon by necessity; and it is for this reason clear, that the greatest actions must be performed by men who have either been born to encounter difficulty, or have by indiscretion created difficulties to overcome.

History is full of instances of the former. The latter are more rare, but still they are to be found in sufficient numbers to confirm the

opinion, that great exertions are never made but when called forth by great occasion.

As the charts with which this work is accompanied shew the line of succession with a distinctness hitherto unexampled in this branch of study, so it will lead the mind to reflections that have not heretofore occurred, and, in order that these reflections may be the more easily formed, we shall make some observations.

In proportion as the rank was high, in former times, the nobility were liable to be involved in political disturbances; so that of the rank of duke we have only two created before the last of the civil wars, and of marquises we have only one; whereas of barons we have nineteen, seven of whom maintained themselves during all the disturbances between the houses of York and Lancaster.

When we consider this, we cannot help searching for the cause; nor in looking for it can we fail to find it, or remain any longer astonished that the highest nobility are not the most ancient; neither can we wonder that many private gentlemen can trace their families in a respectable line longer than many of the nobility, for the former are by their situation skreened from the violence of those revolutions that overturn the latter.[m]

[m] The Earl of Arundel (by right Duke of Norfolk) said to Robert Lord Spencer in 1621, in the House of Lords,

Add to these, the failure of issue in the direct line, or in that pointed out by the patent of creation, and we shall not be surprised that there are not greater numbers of the ancient nobility now existing.

It has been considered as necessary to give a short account of heraldry, and the devices employed by it, together with the manner in which they are arranged; and that is attempted in a way different from what has yet been done, and such as, it is expected, will be found to be easily understood and recollected; for the greatest difficulty in studying heraldry, is recollecting names when there is no association of ideas to preserve the connexion between the things represented, and the signs or emblems used to represent them.

The contrivance of altering the appellation of a colour from the name of a metal, when

'When those things happened, my lord, your ancestors were keeping sheep;' 'and yours,' replied Spencer, 'were hatching treason.' This indicates, in a very plain, and natural manner, the situation of great men. No family was ever more free from hatching treason than that of Howard, yet the first duke had been attainted, even after death, for the very actions by which he acquired his rank, and his successors suffered repeatedly without a cause. The author of this work was particularly intimate with the Baron de Batz (a French gentleman who wrote a work of great merit relative to French families) who said that few noble families could be traced farther back than the tenth century.

speaking of a commoner's arms, to that of a gem when speaking of a nobleman, and to that of one of the heavenly bodies when speaking of a sovereign, produces great confusion.

This confusion we have endeavoured to remove in some degree, by explaining the thing in as simple a way as possible; and we hope in this, as in the rest, our labours will be found satisfactory and useful to those who have had the goodness to patronise and protect the work, which we trust will be found to be a fair and proper attempt to prove the advantage of nobility, and silence the clamours of those who cry out against it; clamours founded on ignorance or vanity; of a very injurious tendency, and hitherto passed over with too much indifference. (Note B, end of Preface.)

Without having the smallest intention or wish to find fault with, or condemn the books of peerage that have hitherto been published, we must be permitted to say, that throughout the whole there runs a confusion and intricacy that baffle the efforts of the most attentive, and elude the memory that is the strongest and most retentive.

Nothing renders it so difficult to retain facts as a loose arrangement. What may properly be termed the *family history* of a man; that is to say, whom he married, and who were his children, brothers, sisters, &c. has so little connexion with his transactions as a man whose history merits attention, that it seems best to keep them entirely sepa-

rate. If they are not kept so, the order of time must be broke through, or both the narratives intermixed in a very confused manner.

It is for this reason that we first give the title, then the times of creation, and, lastly, the pedigree; in all which we are confined to common routine, and can neither add with advantage to, or diminish without injury, from what is to be found in the ordinary books of peerage.

Separate from that, we give such actions, anecdotes, and facts, as mark the characters of those persons whose pedigrees we have already given with care and correctness, adding such reflections as naturally and properly arise, for this is the great use of all historical research, whether applied to the affairs of nations or of individuals.

It has been a practice approved and esteemed, and very generally adopted, ever since the days of Æsop, to invent tales from which moral reflections might arise: how inexcusable then must it be to let the opportunity pass away of grounding proper lessons on real occurrences.

We wish this thing to be understood in its true light, and not considered as arising from any desire to moralize and reason, merely from a propensity to do so; but we beg our readers, and in particular the nobility themselves, to consider that our purpose is to shew the utility of hereditary nobility, as having a happy influence on the peace and security of mankind.

Whilst we are writing, one of the strongest examples in illustration of this, that history furnishes, has occurred, to the astonishment of all Europe.

By an ephemerical and newly created nobility, the despotic ruler of France has contrived to invade, in a most unjustifiable, treacherous, and cruel manner, the liberties of Spain, and the old hereditary nobility of that once great country have been found its surest support. Let those who will talk of the energy and abilities of new men risen to a height in a time of trouble and desolation, we only see in them the scourges of mankind; but we find in the *moderation*, the attachment to *principle*, the *love* of *honour*, the idea of dignity, connected with, and naturally arising from, illustrious ancestry, that safeguard, that peace-preserver, on which the people can best depend in a time of trouble and difficulty.

In France it has become the fashion to ridicule birth and ancestry, and men are proud of having risen from the lowest situation. We have seen a prince of the blood reject the name of Bourbon, and take the ludicrous title of Equality. We have seen him deny his royal father, and claim the honour of being descended from a menial servant's criminal intercourse with an adulterous and degraded mother. But though, by a sort of sophism of a nature fit to captivate the majority, it might appear that the man who raises himself deserves the most

honour, let us consider whether encouraging that belief is most for the general advantage; for that is the purpose—that is the great end.

Endeavouring to set that in its true light, we find that whilst France respected hereditary nobility she was tolerably free and tolerably happy, probably as much so as the nature of things admits; taking into account the levity and impetuosity of the people. We find, also, that since she has enjoyed the advantage of those new and energetic chiefs who have risen from nothing, she has become at once an object of pity, a spectacle of horror, and the scourge of mankind. We find still farther, that those very upstarts, those men of yesterday, are the active and unpitying instruments of evil. Is it possible to say more against upstarts, or more in favour of an ancient and hereditary nobility?

There is a degree of moderation and equanimity to be found in persons who are born to rank and affluence, that is not to be found amongst men who in England are termed upstarts, and in France *les parvenues*; and though that moderation may sometimes be considered as apathy or indifference, yet it is of great importance that there should be one class of men in the country who have a share in the legislation, and who are so far removed from the ordinary embarrassments of life as to look on with coolness, when others are too much heated and actuated by personal interests.

The nobility of this country are to be considered in a double light; first, as individuals; and next, as constituting one of the branches of the legislature.

In the first point of view we have already spoken of them; we shall now consider them as a constitutional body, and in that light we shall see that they are not only, by the circumstances in which they are placed, calculated to render the government and constitution more perfect than it otherwise would be, but that the elective representative commons' house, without such a controul, would be dangerous.

From the history of our own country, we find that the fire and impetuosity of the commons have been resisted, repeatedly with advantage, by the house of peers, and that at all times it has been kept in check; and though it may be that in many common affairs the house of lords acts rather in a passive manner, yet in cases of importance it has done great service.

The house of lords, in money bills, has a controlling power only, and in most others acts rather as a regulator than as the original moving principle; and if on every occasion it were to display a mistrust of the house of commons, by canvassing ordinary questions with great eagerness, it would lead in time to a jealousy that would disturb and impede public business, and be attended with no practical utility whatever. By reserving itself for

important occasions, the upper house becomes that check and balance so necessary for the preservation of good government.

Both during the civil wars, and in times of tranquillity, the house of peers has been of great service, by the wisdom, the moderation, and dignity of its proceedings; and if there is any fault to be found in its composition, it is owing to the great preponderance of law lords where legal questions occur.

This imperfection in the house of peers is, however, rather to be considered as an argument in favour of the order of nobility than otherwise, for the evil does not arise from any of the members as peers, but as lawyers, who have a much greater sway than, according to their numbers, they ought to have;[n] for the very essence of every deliberative

[n] On a bill connected with any reform in the courts of justice, or in the regulation of legal affairs, two or three judges sway the whole house, and generally carry the question. This is a great evil, though, perhaps, it might be difficult to find a safe remedy: it were to be wished that peers who are not of the law would exert their own understanding on such occasions, and not conceive that law lords only are competent. Law lords no doubt understand the subject best; but when a reform of abuses is the object, they do not feel perhaps so impartially as other lords.

A body of nobility is peculiarly necessary in our mixed and compound constitution, in order to support the rights both of the crown and of the people, by forming a barrier to withstand the encroachments of either. It creates and preserves that

body is that opinions should be unbiassed. It is an imperfection attached to the nature of things, that opinions are not upon an equality like votes. A judge has but one vote; but, on a law question, his bare opinion will carry perhaps fifty without examination.

To return from this short digression (from the immediate object of this work), the history of France in the present, and of our own country in former times, prove that a house of peers is essential

gradual scale of dignity, which proceeds from the peasant to the prince; rising like a pyramid from a broad foundation, and diminishing to a point as it rises. It is the ascending and contracting proportion that adds stability to any government; for when the departure is sudden from one extreme to another, we may pronounce the durability to be precarious. The nobility are as pillars, reared from among the people, more immediately to support the throne, of which the people are the basis; and, if the pillars fall, the whole becomes a ruin. Accordingly when, in the last century, the commons had determined to extirpate monarchy, they also voted the house of lords to be useless and dangerous. And since titles of nobility are thus expedient in the state, it is also expedient that their owners should form an independent and separate branch of the legislature. If they were confounded with the mass of the people, and like them had only a vote in electing representatives, their privileges would soon be borne down and overwhelmed by the popular torrent, which would effectually level all distinctions. It is therefore highly necessary that the body of nobles should have a distinct assembly, distinct deliberations, and distinct rights.

to the perfection of a mixed, and even of a purely monarchical, government.

The unfortunate revolution of France would probably never have taken place as it did, had not a mistaken minister absorbed the influence of the nobility or peers, at the meeting of the states-general in that of the commons or tiers-etat.*

* Formerly the numbers of clergy, nobles, and tiers-etat, were equal at the states-general, and each assembly voted by itself, and could maintain its rights; but Necker, that republican minister, contrived a new arrangement, by giving the tiers-etat a double representation, or as many members as the other two orders; that is, six hundred of the former, and three hundred of each of the latter.

Necker, one of the vainest of men, seeking popularity, and at the same time a great lover of innovation, undoubtedly saw, that if each order voted by itself, the balance would still be kept up, whether the numbers were thirty or three thousand; but he also saw, that there was an incongruity in diminishing the number and preserving the importance, and therefore the question of voting (par tête et non par ordre) individually, and not according to their order, was a natural consequence. To facilitate this, the tiers-etat were assembled in a large and elegant hall, sufficient to allow a great number of spectators, so that great interest was inspired by their discussions; while the clergy and nobles were put into small apartments, where the auditors were but few, for want of space. The Duke of Orleans, and a few more factious nobles, proposed uniting all in one assembly; public enthusiasm applauded the idea, and in a moment the French nobility were no longer a class apart. In less than a year nobility was abolished by

The consequences of this measure were fatal and immediate, and though it is beyond human power to know what would have happened if this had not been done, yet the overthrow of the government as it did take place can be traced to that cause; indeed it was foreseen what would be the consequence. The minister who advised the measure can only be esteemed an honest man, on the supposition that he was ignorant of the consequences. We may all remember the violence of an assembly composed of men without any controul or check. Perhaps, between the action of mind and matter, a more fair and true comparison cannot be made, than in likening the assembly, when that check was taken away, to a time-piece, that runs down when deprived of the balance-wheel. The rapidity of the movement is fifty times that of a regular and right motion, and it goes on till the strength fails; and thus it was with the states-general.

law, and in little more than three years royalty followed!! Liberty and peace were fled, and Robespierre and his monsters hovered over the fields of France, which were stained with blood, and whitened with the bones of their victims. That miserable country has been obliged to seek a miserable repose under a very rigorous and usurped authority, which finds it necessary to re-establish religion, and divide society once more into different ranks and orders; thereby declaring the utility of those establishments which the first revolutionists were so eager to abolish, and which other nations ought to be so careful to preserve.

From the first moment that the nobility, (decoyed over by Orleans and a number more of the revolutionary chiefs), sunk themselves in a general assembly, every thing went rapidly to ruin. The assembly, that at first commanded every thing, soon run itself down like the time-piece, and became the tool of the factious, and the abject servant of the clubs, who gave it over, bound, into the hands of Robespierre and his successors of the directory, from whom it fell to the present emperor. Still it is an assembly without any sort of energy in itself, but serving as an instrument by which oppression and despotic power exert themselves with a greater degree of conveniency and advantage.

The Roman patricians were hereditary nobility, though without titles; and whilst their preponderance in the state was maintained, the people preserved their liberties; but liberty did not long outlive the controlling power of the nobles.[P]

[P] The senate continued to meet till the last days even of the decline of the empire, but it was but a mere shadow. The first shock to the liberties of Rome, was when factious men, whether patricians or not, under the favours of the people, became consuls and generals, and obtained all places of authority and power. The French did, with rapidity, what the Romans did by slow degrees: but the same thing took place in both countries.

It is an opinion not uncommon, and at least plausible, that the nobility of a well-regulated state is the best security against monarchical despotism, on the one hand; and the confusion of

It would be very easy to prove, if this were a proper place for entering upon that subject, that the house of peers is the preserver of British liberty, which could not long exist without it; and accordingly it was of no importance during the civil wars or the arbitrary government of Cromwell, and it did not rise to have its full weight till the happy revolution that placed King William on the throne.

The multiplication of books, as well as the materials that accumulate to form historical report, or assist philosophical or political inquiry, render it desirable in all cases to be as short as is consistent with accuracy, and to convey what is intended to be conveyed with the least possible labour and trouble, and the greatest attainable perspicuity; we shall not, therefore, enlarge on the subject, as we think quite enough has been said to prove the advantages, in a political view, of hereditary nobility, their respectability as to origin, and the impossibility of equality.

There is but one more observation of any import-

democratic insolence, on the other. Self-interest is the most powerful principle in the human breast; and it is obviously the interest of nobility to preserve that balance of power in society upon which the very existence of their order depends. Corrupted as the present age confessedly is, a very recent instance could be given, in which the British house of peers rescued at once the sovereign and the people from the threatened tyranny of a factious junto.

ance that occurs on the subject, although a volume might easily be written upon it (and to good purpose), which is, that titles and hereditary rank are peculiarly advantageous in a mercantile country, in so far as they go a considerable length towards counteracting that respect for wealth, which in the absence of hereditary rank by establishment, would take place, and which tends to degrade a nation.[a]

But it is in vain to have distinction, rank, and titles, if they are not supported by public opinion. Mr. Hume observes, with truth, "That government is founded only on opinion, and that this opinion is of two kinds; opinion of interest, and opinion of right. When a people are persuaded that it is their interest to support the government under which they live, that government must be very stable; but among the worthless and unthinking part of the community this persuasion has seldom place. All men however have a notion of rights, of a right to property, and a right to power; and when the majority of a nation considers a certain order of men as having a right to that eminence in which they are

[a] The Dutch republic consisted of merchants. It was short-lived, and, though respected, was always in some degree despised for a sort of groveling, mercenary character. The Venetian republic consisted of nobility amalgamated with mercantile men. It existed longer than any other government in Europe ever did, and even when it lost its power, preserved a degree of splendid dignity that rendered it respectable. It did not fall like Holland.—Venice fell clean.

placed, this opinion, call it prejudice or what we will, contributes much to the peace and happiness of civil society. There are many, however, who think otherwise, and imagine that 'the society in which the greatest equality prevails must always be secure.' These men conceive it to be the business of a good government to distribute, as equally as possible, those blessings which bounteous nature offers to all.

It may readily be allowed that this reasoning is conclusive; but the great question returns, 'How far can equality prevail in a society which is secure? and what is possible to be done in the equal distribution of the blessings of nature? Till these questions be answered, we gain nothing by declaiming on the rights and equality of men: and the answers which have sometimes been given to them suppose a degree of perfection in human nature, which, if it were real, would make all civil institutions useless. If opinion is essentially necessary to the maintenance of any human institution, it is most so for the support of nobility; for without esteem and consideration, what are rank and title? As to the few privileges attached to the peerage, they are more than counterbalanced by the disadvantages, incapacities, and inconveniences attendant on it; so that take away the support of opinion, and what is now an honour would be a burden to bear.

The express intention of this work, as has already been said, is to set public opinion right; in doing

which, we think we shall render a service to mankind at large, and most particularly to our own country.

Baronets are hereditary nobility, without the privileges of peers; for though we conceive the number of peers in this country to be great, it was proved hereafter exceedingly small, and is confined and limited by the circumstance of the great political inconvenience of having a great number of members in the house.

The creation of baronets arose naturally from the circumstance that political expediency set bounds to the number of peers; but no natural limit being set to the number of persons who might deserve distinction from the sovereign, baronets were created in 1610, who are, to all intents and purposes, nobility, enjoying rank, but without privilege; it is for that reason, that this work is extended to the baronetage of the United Kingdom.

Notes.

NOTE A. ORIGIN OF HEREDITARY NOBILITY.

The celebrated civilian, Francis Hotomon, who was one of the most learned men of his age, gives us the cause of making hereditary the order of nobility in France. In this work, entitled Franco Gallia, which is now very scarce, written in the year 1574, he says,

"'We must not omit making mention of the cunning device made use of by Hugh Capet, for establishing himself in his new dominion [of King of France, anno 987]. For, whereas all the magistracies and honours of the kingdom, such as dukedoms, earldoms, &c. had been hitherto, from ancient times, conferred upon select and deserving persons in the general conventions of the people, and were held only during good behaviour, whereof (as the lawyers express it) they were but beneficiaries. Hugh Capet, in order to secure to himself the affections of the great men, was the first that made those honours perpetual which were formerly but temporary: and ordained, that such as obtained them should have an hereditary right in them, and might leave them to their children.—Of this, see Franciscus Conanus, the civilian, Comment ii. chap. ix.'

It is singular, that this fact has escaped the notice of most of the French historians.

NOTE B.

The late Lord Chesterfield is not the only instance of a peer who, with the vanity of a coxcomb and the levity of a schoolboy, has attempted to throw ridicule on the order of nobility by mentioning the house of lords with disrespect.

Lord Chesterfield was so much of a fashionable man, that what he said had generally more weight than worth.

He often attempted to display his wit by pretending a contempt for the peerage to which he belonged, and to which it was his great pride to belong, in order to be considered a man of genius; but we shall shew, that though many peers have excelled his lordship in genius, but few surpassed him in vanity, and fewer still have been at so much pains to degrade nobility in public opinion.

That lord lived at the time when it had become fashionable for peers to laugh at nobility, and clergymen to ridicule religion, and when also some crowned heads joined the philosophers in preparing the road for the overthrow of their descendants, by degrading the established orders of society in the eyes of the multitude. As the result has been so fatal to all parties, it is to be hoped that for the future men who are exalted, will at least not take pains to degrade themselves, for it was by such things the French brought ruin on their country.

Amongst others of the French nobility who aspired at the character of men of wit and genius, and of philosophers, and who gloried in the name of simple citizen, was the Marquis de Vilette, who had espoused, maltreated, and neglected, the famous Belle et Bonne, the adopted daughter of Voltaire. This unworthy and contemptible nobleman, just as the revolution was beginning was passing an act before a notary, who had stiled him in the preamble as the High and Powerful Marquis de Vilette. The marquis read the preamble, and turning to the notary with an affected serious air, told him that he thought he would not allow falsehoods to be written in his office, that he was neither high nor powerful, but that he must stile him the Little and Feeble Charles.

Is it to be wondered, when nobles act so, that the inferiors should refuse to grant them respect, but rather unite to abolish an order which appears, even to those who belong to it, to be contemptible?

CONCLUSION

OF THE

ENGLISH PEERAGE;

Shewing, from facts, the individual merit and general utility of the orders—That the Nobles have constantly watched over the liberties of the People, the foundation of which they laid in the time of King John, and established at the accession of William and Mary. The utility of hereditary nobility, as a balance in the state, and the necessity of that order having the support of public opinion, which alone gives it stability—To which are added some remarks relating to this Publication.

HAVING now accomplished the first portion of the task which I undertook, by giving an account of the noble families of English peers, it becomes necessary to inquire into the result, and see whether the conclusion that I at first announced and expected, is fairly to be drawn from the materials that are laid before the Public.

From the beginning of the undertaking, I expected to be able to prove, that the British nobility (in proportion to their numbers and duration,)

had produced an uncommonly great number of characters eminent for talents and virtue. I expected that the result of the whole would be such, as by indisputable facts would prove the reality of what I had long wished to demonstrate; for I was fully sensible, that an opinion had gone abroad, in almost every nation in Europe, that noble families in general owed their first elevation to rank to the favour or caprice of monarchs; and that their descendants, instead of being equal, were inferior to the other classes of society, both in talents and in virtue.

If I should appear to make some repetitions in what I am about to say, I beg the reader to consider that I am summing up the evidence on a highly important subject, which is very intimately connected with the happiness and peace of mankind; and that it is much better to make myself clearly understood, even at the risk of being prolix, than to express loosely what I have to say on that important subject. I aim at accuracy, as well as at truth; and I appeal to fact, leaving opinion, in the first instance, out of the question, and meaning to establish my point without the aid of argument.

I observe again then, that it was a prevailing opinion that noble families, in general, have owed their first elevation to favouritism, the caprice of monarchs, or to court intrigue, rather than to merit; and that their descendants have been, for the most part, inferior to other ranks in society, both in talents and virtue.

Those prevailing opinions, though intimately connected with the general merits of nobility, are separate from each other, inasmuch as the one applies only to *personal nobility*, and the other to hereditary nobility (by establishment); the latter of which is the most obnoxious to those who exclaim against nobility in general. In opposition to those vague and ill-founded opinions, my business is to prove by facts;

FIRST, That very few of the British nobility have owned their elevation to favour, but to merit in the first instance; which no doubt gained them favour, as it ought to do; for men who have rendered service to the state, merit favour. That is, however, a species of favour totally different from what is generally meant by the word, which implies, as used by historians, and in common language, favourites merely because they are personally agreeable to the monarch.*

SECOND, That their descendants, that is, persons born to enjoy hereditary rank, have in this kingdom produced far more than the general, or usual proportion, of men of merit and talents; and that

* I am precluded from elucidating this point, by recent examples, owing to the impossibility of doing it, without making comparisons that would be improper and disagreeable. It is sufficient to say, that good generals and admirals, or able lawyers, naturally enjoy royal favour; but to call such *favourites*, according to the usual acceptation of the term, would be highly improper.

therefore, the opinion that is unfavourable to that class of society, is founded in error, and contradicted by fact.

Such are the two simple and plain objects of my work; and I here must observe, that the facility of proving what I have in view, is infinitely greater than I had the smallest idea of. It will not require any nice calculation; it will not be proved by any inconsiderable balance in favour of the conclusion; it will be established in the most complete manner, so as not to admit of a doubt; in one word, it will be found, that instead of producing an equal number of men of abilities, the nobility produce more than four times the general, or usual proportion.

I mean to say, expressly and explicitly, that amongst the nobility, taking the present noble families from their original rise to rank till the present day, there are more than four times the number of meritorious characters than there are amongst men in general.

It would not be fair to found this comparison on the general population of a country, but a criterion may be easily discovered, to the fairness of which, no one will be able with justice to object.

Taking the period of existence of all the noble families now extant in England, from the time of their creation to the present day, and adding them together, the whole does not amount quite to one single line of thirty thousand years. Again, taking each generation on an average at twenty years,

(which is rather under than above the time that each individual peer may be considered to enjoy his rank and title,) there have not been more than fifteen hundred individual noblemen in England from the end of the twelfth century to the present day!!*

This number is probably far under what is generally supposed, for people are very unaccustomed to numerical calculations on such subjects; and therefore their notions are very vague, and generally very far from the truth.

Not one-tenth of the lands in England are in possession of noblemen; and as they are in general the greatest proprietors, it is certain that there are fifty proprietors that are not noble for one that is noble.

Deducting one half for small proprietors, who are not supposed to be men of education, there will still remain twenty-five commoners who have estates sufficient to maintain the rank of gentlemen for one nobleman; that is to say, there are in England 6500 gentlemen of landed property, (there being 300 nobles) who having obtained good education, are personally on an equality with the nobility, so as to have the same opportunity of distinguishing themselves.

* It would be very easy to have given the exact number of noblemen that have actually enjoyed titles, but that would not be so satisfactory a mode as that I have adopted, because I could not make the same statement with regard to those ranks with whom I mean to compare the nobility. This number does not include the extinct peerages.

Going back only for three hundred years, and taking those gentlemen at twenty years, that gives ninety-seven thousand during that period.

As there are nearly 10,000 parishes in England, it will be fair to estimate the number of well-educated clergymen who enjoy leisure and affluence at 8,000; which, in the same period of three hundred years, gives 120,000 well-educated men.

The proprietors of funded and other property we shall not attempt to calculate, though their number is very great, and it would be perfectly fair to take them, and all men who have a good education, and are not constantly occupied with the routine of business, into the account. All men who have received a good education, and are above want, have an opportunity of displaying their talents, if they have any, as well as the nobility of the country, and certainly to reckon them at 20,000 is not too much; the account will then stand thus:

Proprietors of Land who are not Noble, but enjoy affluence and leisure - - - - - - - -	6500
Clergymen, professors at universities, &c. -	8000
Monied men, physicians, and professional men of all sorts, who enjoy ease and affluence -	5500
	20,000

The number, in fact, is more than double what I

have calculated it to be, but it is better not to advance any thing that is doubtful; now as there has been a succession of such persons, as well as of nobility, in 300 years the number would be 300,000; and of the nobility there have only been 1500: that is to say, for one nobleman there have been two hundred men of education, who have enjoyed ease, and the means of exerting and displaying their genius, full as well as noblemen, and in many cases with advantage; for, as has been very truly explained in the preface to this work, noblemen are greatly limited in the exertion of their talents, and not a small portion of their time and attention is employed in filling that conspicuous place in society which it has fallen to their lot to occupy.

In arts and science, as men of learning, talents, and genius, the nobility may then be expected to furnish only ONE; for every two hundred men of learning, talents, and genius, to be found amongst those men who enjoy ease, and have got good education, but who are not noble.

The proportion of two hundred to one is so unequal, that we could scarcely expect, according to the aggregate talents of this country, many men of genius or talents in the lesser number, yet we find some of the most distinguished men in every line belong to the class of the nobility; STATESMEN, WARRIORS, MEN OF LETTERS, CHEMISTS, MECHANICS, and men of INVENTIVE GENIUS in every way.

It will be seen in a note below,* that their number is considerable; which to avoid speaking personally, it is necessary to give in a general way, without producing individual examples. If there are ninety-two distinguished noblemen, there ought to be sixteen thousand, equally distinguished, from amongst the other classes of the easy and affluent to whom we have alluded; but there are not, from the days of civilization, one fourth part of the number.

But what is more remarkable still, is, that if we deduct from inventors, and men of genius, all those belonging to the nobility, the greater portion of those that remain are not found amongst men who enjoy ease and affluence, but amongst men struggling with necessity, whose genius has broken through every difficulty, and displayed itself.

The nobility have then far outstripped men of fortune and affluence, but who do not enjoy rank and title, which is all that it is necessary to prove: for they cannot properly be compared with men born under the influence of necessity, who are obliged to exert

* Military and naval officers of distinguished talents 29
Statesmen 33
Learned men, mathematicians, &c. 17
Inventors, &c. 13

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This only takes in men really distinguished above others, but if the names were given, it would lay a foundation for perpetual controversy; the very thing I wish to avoid.

industry, but who are for the most part prevented from a display of genius, which they have not the means of cultivating. The circumstances under which these two classes of persons are found, are such, that a comparison could not fairly be made. Every affluent man has means and opportunity to cultivate his genius, if he chuses to do so. The man of pain and toil has necessity to spur him on, but he generally wants opportunity. It is, however, amongst those two dissimilar and opposite classes of society, that we find the greatest talents and genius; and we find the least where there are wealth and affluence without rank.*

If a conclusion can in any case be drawn with certainty, it is to be learnt from this, that elevation of rank, by occasioning emulation or ambition, is the occasion of the exertion of talents, which, if every

* It is to be observed, I do not mean the lower order of labourers, or mechanics, but that rank of men who have been properly bred to business, got some education, and at the same time are compelled to labour for existence. Such men are very frequently employed on works for which they have no genius, or works where genius has no means of shewing itself. Though nothing will hinder genius occasionally from breaking out, yet circumstances certainly often do prevent it. Where men are prudent, where genius is very great, it breaks through all difficulties, and finds its place like a fluid. Nature made Herschel an astronomer, and he broke through all difficulties, to gratify his disposition: and the same is, in a lesser degree, the case with most men of a particular turn of genius, which they will gratify at the risk of want, and in the face of every difficulty.

circumstance but the rank were the same, would lie dormant.

This proves what was asserted in the first prospectus, and in the preface to the work, that the recollection of ancestors that have been great men, has a tendency to excite also to great actions: or to speak directly to the point;—take a number of affluent men, who have estates, WITHOUT TITLES, and an equal number who have estates, WITH TITLES, and we shall find that the latter will be the most distinguished for their abilities.

It appears then clearly, from what has been laid before the public, that individual noblemen, so far from being inferior to other men in abilities, talents, and genius, have been superior to the only persons with whom they can be assimilated or compared.

It now remains to say something of the nobility as good men, as friends to their country, and to their fellow men, and as pursuing an honourable line of conduct.

It is a more difficult task, from its nature, to examine into, and compare the virtues of individual men; genius and invention leave traces behind them at all times, virtuous conduct only on particular occasions.

In the civil commotions which have so frequently disturbed the peace of this country, the nobility have been, from their prominent situation, compelled to take a more active part than other men! and we find them, on most occasions, acting very honoura-

bly to the party that they embraced. In the long contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, there were men of great honour and bravery on both sides of the question; but it is impossible to determine as to their merit on the side they espoused, though we are acquainted with the honours they obtained, or the disgrace they incurred in supporting it. With a very few exceptions, we find the nobility acting with great honour and fidelity, and at no time do we ever find that they abandoned those principles by which the great barons were guided, when they compelled their reluctant sovereign to sign Magna Charta, and thereby laid the foundation of the liberty of the people.

It is to be hoped, that whatever may be thought or said of the nobility of other countries, it will never be forgotten, that at a time when the feudal system was in the zenith of its power, and the nobility in most parts of Europe were with one hand opposing their sovereign, and with the other rivetting the chains of their vassals, the British nobility put themselves at the head of the people, and secured their liberties; they did not revolt in order to exalt themselves, or oppress their inferiors, but in order to establish, on a firm basis, the individual liberty of the meanest subject, with a spirit of wisdom, of justice, and of generosity, that is our pride, and our admiration; to which conduct we owe our dearest possessions at the present day.

That from the nobility themselves should emanate

an order of things which deprived them of the inordinate power which they at that time possessed, is one of those strange moral phenomena that must always astonish mankind, at the same time that it excites the highest degree of admiration.

If we peruse, attentively, the history of other countries, though we see many contests between the kings and nobles, we find them always agreeing about oppressing the people; they disputed to which the right of oppression should belong; but they never disputed about its continuation; and so true is this, that the only advances that the people in other countries made towards freedom, were brought about by the efforts of the kings to humble the nobility. What a glorious contrast does this afford between the nobility of England and of other countries, at a time when the bpasted lights of philosophy had not broke forth; when men acted according to their interest, or their conscience; independent of right, and regardless of opinion!!

The brave barons of Runemede are never to be forgotten; THEY FOUGHT NOT FOR THEMSELVES BUT FOR THE PEOPLE, and their wisdom and firmness could only be exceeded by their justice and generosity!

The same spirit has at all times guided the British nobility; for, though divided in contests, where the rights of different families to the throne were the object of dispute, the great majority were at all times found fighting on the side of liberty, and for the rights of the people; nor ever did they, on any

single occasion, *attempt to set up their own rights as a separate object*, or place themselves above other subjects, in respect to the obedience either to the laws of the country, or their duty to their sovereign!

During the great rebellion the nobility, at first, resisted the over exertion of royal prerogative, and separated themselves from the throne;* but we find in almost every instance, that they afterwards quitted the standard of rebellion, when they perceived greater danger arising to liberty, from the democratic leaders, than from the mistaken views of their royal and unhappy master.†

How many glorious examples are there of individual noblemen risking life, fortune, and every thing dear to man, to support a falling throne, which they had resisted during the plenitude of its power, in its attempts to oppress the people!! There are many of those examples recorded in this work, sufficient to make a man proud of living in a country which has produced such distinguished patriots, the worthy successors of the Barons of Runemede.

After democracy had nearly annihilated the nobi-

* The remark has frequently occurred in the body of the work, that nearly all the good men who had resisted Charles at the beginning, joined him afterwards, and remained faithful to him to the last—Few of the nobles fell into the violent errors of the commons.

+ The house of peers, at all times, acted like a balance-wheel or regulator, and has answered the purpose with wonderful advantage and effect.

lity, and when they had ceased to have any existence as a political body, the spirit of the individuals restored the order, and contributed greatly to the destruction of that anarchy which had been produced; and which, had it continued, would have ruined the nation. The restoration, a measure of great advantage at the time, was chiefly effected by the nobility; and though perhaps they carried their devotion to the will of Charles II. and his brother, a little too far, yet that ill-fated and unwise, but well-beloved family, was abandoned, the moment that there was again a question of the subversion of the rights of the people.

The revolution, which placed King William III. on the throne, and which completed the national liberty that the barons had begun at Runemede, was conducted in the same patriotic spirit, and upon the same generous principles; and on the latter, as on the former occasion, the nobility always stood foremost.

It is true, that at the latter period the people at large, the commons of England, bore a great part, for they were become of great importance; but that very importance was the consequence of the noble stand made by the barons, for the signing of Magna Charta. It was the completion of their work, at which the nobles were assisted by the descendants of those vassals, whom, in the days of darkness and slavery, their ancestors had so bravely and generously emancipated. What a glorious termination

to the labours of the British nobility—labours undertaken for establishing the rights of their fellow-subjects!!

Happily, since that latter period, we have not had occasion to see examples of similar energy, and of similar virtue; but in the still and calm course which our internal affairs have since maintained, the British nobility have held a moderate and a steady hand. If they have not been called upon to restore our liberties, or to rescue them from imminent danger, they have at least laboured constantly to preserve them; and, on more than one occasion, have preserved the balance of the state.

If this eulogium, in praise of British nobility, from the earliest period of the dawn of liberty to the present time, seems written rather with some degree of enthusiasm, let the reader observe, that it is at the END of a work, in which the facts are recorded that establish its justice. At the BEGINNING, it had been badly placed; but here we may adapt the motto of the immortal hero of the Nile and Trafalgar, to the honourable order of whom we have been speaking, *Palmam qui meruit ferat.*

Having fully shewn the virtue of the British nobility, as acting in a public capacity, it is scarcely necessary to speak of their virtues as private men. That, however, is evident from their individual histories, but admits not of the same sort of elucidation. Historical records, whether on the great scale of a national register, or the more circumscribed one

of biography, are generally rather a record of the vices, follies, and misfortunes of mankind, than of their virtues or happiness. Even writers of fiction and romance have been unable to give any long continuance to ideal scenes of happiness and virtue. When vice, folly, and misfortune quit the scene, the historian, whether of transactions that are real, or imaginary, prepares to lay down his pen. This is lamented, in a very forcible and pathetic manner, by the eloquent and accurate historian Robertson; but it is, from the nature of things, unavoidable. The calm, still life of an individual, who is virtuous and happy, may afford materials for a few notes, or memorandums, but it can never furnish matter either for a long, or an interesting history. It is the same with nations; wherever there is neither external war, nor internal faction, there is a chasm in history.

That the private virtues of the British nobility were proportioned to their public, may be learned from this, that there are very few examples of their committing any actions, either criminal or disgraceful. As to foibles, those of men who hold distinguished rank, are always the subject of the ill-natured remarks of envious cotemporaries; and, as has been fully and fairly explained at the beginning of this work, individuals have been flattered at the expence of the order: and numerous and able writers, who gave to their ill nature a form of wit, and dressed it in the garb of poetry, made a practice of slandering

nobility in the gross, and flattering them in detail. Perhaps there is no error that the British nobility have committed, so great as the countenance they have given to such practices.

A nobleman ought to disregard compliments that are paid to him personally, at the expence of his order, as much as a man would spurn at praise obtained for himself, by slandering the other branches of his family. Probably, however, this sort of flattery has been accepted, without suspicion or reflection on the one hand, while it has been presented with art and ability on the other.

In holding up the nobility to public esteem, and in proving that this country has obligations to them of the most durable sort, it is not intended, by any means, to extend their praise beyond the bounds where it fairly ought to go; and therefore I shall just, with as much freedom, remark on those parts of their conduct which do not appear to deserve praise, as of those that do.

The nobility of this country, who always, on the most trying occasions, have stood forward for the rights of the people, in a bold, firm, and manly manner, have, in ordinary times, been rather at too little pains, to mark the gradual progress of those mutations that are produced by the operation of time.

Amongst the gradual changes that have taken place, in the ways of thinking in modern times, the disposition to dispense with the ancient gradation of ranks in society, is one of the most general and most

dangerous. It has occasionally been, in former times, a favourite plan;* but then it was one of a violent and evanescent nature, arising with the lower orders, which was rejected in the moment of cool reflection.

Even during the great rebellion, and the anarchy that followed it, though the house of lords was for a time abolished, and the dregs of the nation bore the sway; yet the great majority of the people disapproved of those violent proceedings, and revolted at the principles which led to them. The transactions of those times arose out of the conveniency, or interest, of the actors, and were not founded on a conviction of their justice, propriety, or general expe-

* Mr. Hume says, that in the time of Wat Tyler, two lines that had never been entirely forgotten, were in high repute,

"When Adam delv'd and Eve span,
"Where was then the gentleman?"

The meaning of these questioning lines is by no means questionable. It evidently points at future equality, by calling to mind the original state of mankind. Unfortunately, however, for those levellers, when there were but one man and a woman, there was no similarity with our present state. It would be as easy to overturn Dr. Smith's reasoning, respecting the division of labour, by an appeal to the occupations of our first father, as to draw any conclusion about distinctions of ranks when the world only contained a single family. The Trial by Jury, Universal Representation, and all those fine things, were not known to the first and only man; but the levellers, in their elegant appeal to the spade and distaff, do not attempt to overturn any thing of which they themselves approve.

diency; on the contrary, the levellers themselves knew one another to be hypocrites, who were professing principles that they did not really entertain, in order to deceive the people, for their own private purposes.

During the last century, however, the same modes of thinking that are subversive of order, were introduced, in a way far more dangerous, and likely to be far more permanent and pernicious. In former times, those ideas of levelling originated with the lower classes, were introduced with violence and precipitation, and accompanied by actions, that could not but be attended with disgust; and the consequences of which were highly to be regretted; but in latter times, they were cherished by the higher classes, assumed the form of philosophy and philanthropy, and proceeded according to a system that rendered their influence almost irresistible.

The physical, as well as moral inequality of man, are now both greatly diminished; whereas, in ancient times, personal slavery degraded a vast proportion of the population; and in early periods, when the useful arts were in their infancy, men obtained the means of existence with so much labour, that the mind remained uncultivated, and the body in a state of depression. In those times, wealth, or bodily strength, or a greater degree of knowledge, gave the possessor of either a decided superiority over the community.

During the reign of the feudal system, which was established on the ruins of the Roman empire,

the inequality took a different form, but it continued as great as ever: it is even questionable whether it was not greater than almost at any period of ancient history.

The invention of gunpowder gradually put an end to the physical superiority which men enjoyed, by mere personal strength; and the art of printing, by the multiplication of books, by their cheapness, and the facility of obtaining the means of reading and writing, put their mental faculties nearer on a level.

The abbreviations of labour, by inventions in mechanism, and the division of labour, by rendering industry more productive, had, during the same period, enabled a smaller number of persons to supply the wants of the whole; and thus a greater number were left at leisure, for the improvement of the mind.

A number of other circumstances, (that are generally known,) had raised the inferior classes to a degree of independence and importance that was without precedent, when, about the middle of the eighteenth century, a sect of men, calling themselves philosophers, originating in France, extended all over Europe, and carried on a close, but secret, correspondence, the ultimate end of which was, to undermine all distinction of rank, and substitute for it, precedence according to genius and abilities.

Those philosophers were mostly men of bad principles, and of depraved manners, but excessively vain and selfish; hating superiority, and at the same

time consummate hypocrites, though many of them were men of great learning and abilities.*

* In the month of September, 1789, before the king of France and his family were dragged to Paris, and made prisoners (but some months after the revolution had broke out), Monsieur Le Roi, lieutenant of the king's hunt, an academician, philosopher, and encyclopedist, dining at the table of the Count D'Angevilliers, the conversation turned after dinner on the evils of the revolution; (it was what was termed at that time in Paris an aristocratical dinner,) but Le Roi was a revolutionist; to whom the Count said, "Well, Sir; all this, however, is the work of PHILOSOPHY." Thunderstruck at these words, "Alas!" cried the academician, "To whom do you say so? I know it but too well; and I shall die of *grief and remorse!*" At the word remorse, the nobleman asked, why he reproached himself so bitterly. "I have contributed to it," replied Le Roi, "far more than I was aware of; I was secretary to the committee to which you are indebted for it; but I call Heaven to witness, that I never thought it would go to such a length. You have seen me in the king's service, and you know I love his person; I little thought of bringing his subjects to this pitch, and I shall die of *grief and remorse.*"

Pressed to explain what he meant by this society, intirely new to the whole company, the academician resumed:—"This society was a club which we philosophers had formed amongst us; into which we only admitted persons whom we could trust. Our sittings were regularly held at the Baron D'Holbach's. Lest our objects should be surmised, we call ourselves œconomists; we created Voltaire, though absent, our honorary and perpetual president; our principal members were D'Alembert, Turgot, Condorcet, Diderot, La Harpe, and that Lamoignon, who, on his dismission, shot himself in his park." The whole of this declaration was accompanied with tears and sighs, when the adept, deeply penitent, continued:—"The following

On the continent of Europe, they contrived to draw kings, princes, and nobles, into their way of

were our occupations: most of those works which have appeared for this long time past against religion, morals, and government, were ours, or from authors devoted to us: they were all composed by the members, or by the order of the society. Before they were delivered to the press, they were brought to our office; then we revised and corrected them, added to, or curtailed them, according as circumstances required. When our philosophy was too glaring for the time, or for the object of the work, we brought it to a lower tint; and when we thought we might be more daring, then we spoke openly. In a word, we made our authors say exactly what we pleased; then the work was published, under a title or name we had chosen, the better to hide the hand from whence it came. Many books, supposed to have been posthumous works, such as Christianity unmasked, and divers others, attributed to Freret and Boulanger, after their deaths, were issued from our society. When we had approved of these works, we began to print them on fine and ordinary paper, in sufficient numbers to pay our expences; and then in immense numbers, on the commonest paper. The latter we sent to hawkers and booksellers, free of cost, (or nearly so), who were to circulate them among the people at the lowest rate.

"These were the means used to pervert, and to bring the people to the state you now see them in. I shall not see them long: for I shall die of grief and remorse."

There is not any certainty when this society was commenced, but it was probably about the middle of last century, as Monsieur Bertin, keeper of the privy purse to Louis XV., mentions the philosophers constantly soliciting that monarch to allow them to found free-schools, under the pretence of teaching the poor at the expence of the king, but under their direction. Monsieur Bertin was at great pains to find out the real

thinking: and it was natural that the people would embrace, with enthusiasm, a system by which they would rise to importance.

By degrees the inequality of ranks, which formerly was considered as natural, became hateful; yet the nobility themselves seemed unconscious of their danger, and even assisted in opening the doors of the garrison, which it was both their interest and duty to defend.

In England, the philosophy made less progress than

meaning of all this: and at last discovered that they expended considerable sums, and took infinite trouble, by selling cheap, and even giving away books written by Voltaire, Diderot, and others, to prepare the people for a new system. It was only by convincing the king of this, that he prevented the establishment of the schools; for though Louis was a dissolute man of pleasure, and too careless to be a good king, he wished well to his subjects. He was an honest and honourable man; and could not, without proof, believe that the philosophers were deceiving him.

Frustrated in establishing schools, they contrived, by a secret connection and correspondence, to provide tutors and instructors, who could forward their schemes. D'Alembert had a regular office for tutors, to which those who wanted recommendation applied. He extended his plan to professors of colleges and public teachers, as well as private tutors; and by means of his confederates, effected his purpose.

The horrible part such of the philosophers acted, as lived to see the revolution, will never be forgot. They shewed, that the fanaticism and cruelty of system-mongers, and philosophers, are worse than those of the wildest enthusiasts in religion.

in other countries: the philosophers were less numerous, and the nobility not quite so negligent and pliant; but still in this country they were highly to blame, and had even joined in the laugh against their own order, and given a sort of credit and currency to opinions, which they should have made it their glory, as it was their duty, to resist.

The new opinions had become fashionable; and it was generally considered as a mark of want of intellect, when a man of fashion adhered to the solid principles of his ancestors, now termed prejudices. Antiquated opinions, like antiquated dress, were sneered at; and few men can bear the force of ridicule, which indeed is only to be resisted by great strength of mind, or by having adopted a line of conduct, with a determination to remain inflexible.

In matters of little importance, such as dress, to comply with custom and taste is proper; but in maxims and ways of thinking on national affairs, there ought to be no regard to taste; taste, when introduced in such matters, is as much misplaced as ornament would be in a mathematical demonstration.

Unfortunately this change of opinion on the continent of Europe became so universal, was so much disseminated amongst the higher classes, and its evil tendency and ultimate consequences either so carefully concealed, or so ill understood, that scarcely any opposition was made to its becoming a rule of

action, until it was too late to resist its farther progress.*

The nobility of this country remained in a great measure untainted, but not altogether so. The wit and sarcasms of the philosophers produced some effect; and rank and title were not held in equal estimation, by men who enjoyed them as they had formerly been, and as they still ought to be, if stability and happiness are aimed at by mankind.

Happiness depends much on opinion, and so long

* Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, whose rank, genius, and penetration, gave weight to whatever he did, was a great patron of the sect; but they never initiated him in the grand mystery, the destruction of kings, and overthrow of governments. He was very willing to assist in overturning religion and the altars; but when he discovered that the thrones also were to fall, his rage was without bounds: then it was that he quarrelled with Voltaire, and the philosophers whom he had encouraged and admired, in order to be flattered with the title of "The Philosophic King." "Those philosophers," said he, when he found them out, "are a sort of madmen, who are for governing every thing by rule and theory. They wish the whole world to be a republic; and would resolve all questions of state like a problem in mathematics, by algebra. It would be well to let them try their hand in governing, upon some rebellious province, that deserved the severest punishment, &c." Such was the opinion of that philosophic king, after he knew that they wished to overturn thrones. The philosophy, however, had got too deep root at Berlin; and dearly have the successors of Frederic and his country paid for having a king who was an atheist, a poet, a wit, and a philosopher.

as men reason, their free actions will be the result of it; and, therefore, as an order of nobility is very essential for the support of a mixed and free government, it is of great importance that public opinion should be favourable to its maintenance. The nobility themselves should resist, with their whole power and energy, every effort that is made to represent them as being an useless order in the state.

The balance of a watch, or the pendulum of a clock, though they possess no power of giving motion, are quite as essential to the construction of the machine as the spring, or the weights which constitute the moving powers; and therefore it is absurd to undervalue one part, because it is not endowed with the same properties as another. If an hereditary nobility are confined by their situation from acting a part that commoners may act, so likewise are they fitted, by their situation, to act a part which commoners cannot act; and it would be impossible to regulate national affairs, in that excellent manner in which they are regulated, without having a portion of the legislature independant both of the king and of the people. Though it is not easy to say what new plan may, in the course of time, and under a new order and organization of society, become practicable; yet, composed as the nation now is, it is not easy to conceive any regulating order in the state, so well adapted to the purpose, as a class of men, who are placed, as it were, above the situation

of all others.* They are independent in point of income or revenue (which even the sovereign himself is not, either in this or in any other country), they are also possessed of rank and political importance, independent equally of the sovereign, or of the people; therefore, as far as human combination can raise any portion of mankind above the rest, they are so elevated. They are men placed above every one of those considerations, that operate on the other two branches of the legislature, as far as it is possible for men to be.†

Many of the commoners are, in point of money,

* The nobility are represented as leaning to the side of the kings, in opposition to that of the people. This is a great mistake, for in fact we find quite the contrary to be true; and that they have generally resisted the kings in favour of the people. It is impossible, however, for any order of men to exist, in any state, that may not be liable, on particular occasions, to be biassed by their own private interest; and as no man can be possessed of every object which he might desire, this species of complete independence is merely ideal. All that can be done, is to put a man out of the reach of necessity or strong temptation. It must still remain to be decided between his honour, his conscience, and his passions, which of the three is to govern his conduct.

† The rendering of the judges independent of the king, with revenues for life, was a great improvement on the administration of justice. For the same reason, the chief justice is generally now raised to the peerage; so that the judges are, in every respect, independent men, as far as it is possible in this world to make men independent.

equally independent as peers in general are; but then they are not members of the legislature, without the voice of the people (with a few exceptions); therefore the balancing power, that is, the house of lords, is rendered independent of, and insulated as it were, from the other members of the state. To say that noblemen may still be gained over by court favour, or other means, is only saying, that after all they are men. It would be just as well to object to them because they are mortal, and subject to bodily infirmity; and therefore so far like the poorest man in the kingdom.

In point of political independence, every thing has been done for the peers that is practicable; and here it should be observed, that if nobility were not hereditary, that could not be the case. The nobility would then be few in number, in general old men, and might have bargained with the crown before they obtained their rank; so that whatever may be said in favour of acquired nobility, in opposition to hereditary titles, as a political institution it would not answer the same purpose. It might correspond better with modern ideas, respecting merit alone giving preference; but in practical utility, it would be greatly inferior.

Opinion and force govern mankind; but as from the former arise will and inclination, and from the latter necessity, the continuance of the first is of far the longest duration. Men endeavour to preserve a state of things that accords with their will and in-

clination; and they are constantly struggling against the operation of force or necessity. So much is this the case, that no tyrant has ever had so much power, as not to find it wise to endeavour to get opinion and good will in some degree in his favour; and as men become better informed, this support, derived from opinion, becomes the more necessary. What does all the veneration for ancient dynasties signify? What do the disputes about divine right signify, but to bring, as much as possible, opinion in aid of power and force?

Without the support of opinion, force soon crumbles into dust; and with it, even what is feeble may endure for ages.

During the feudal system, the barons and lords had force and power for their support; but they did not trust to those entirely. They made friends of their vassals, and the connexion was like that of the chief of a family, and the inferior branches; they were connected in interest and by affection; and support on the one hand, and protection on the other, were the consequences.

Now, however, the case is almost entirely changed with respect to the nobility of this and most other countries. They are no longer supported by force, and the ties between the landlord and his tenants, or his servants, are by no means of the same agreeable nature that they were formerly. Till within the last century, the inhabitants of the country, the farmers and labourers, looked up to the landlords with res-

pect and affection: they often partook of their hospitality, and they admired those qualities which their superiors possessed, without feeling envy; but it is not so now. The tenant seldom sees his landlord, and frequently thinks himself his equal: or, if he acknowledges inferiority, it is not unaccompanied with a feeling of envy.

During the feudal system, titles of nobility became hereditary; and the institution was then supported by every human means. The kings were dependent on their nobles in time of war; and their vassals owed to them protection, and not only obeyed willingly, but respected and loved them.

This then was the state of things all over Europe; yet, with all those circumstances in their favour, the nobility have been uninterruptedly and universally sinking, both in power and in esteem, in every country; and in France, the only country that has undergone a revolution of late times, the order has not only been abolished, but the members proscribed, persecuted, and robbed of their estates.* Although a new order of nobility is rising in France, which in time may become numerous and hereditary, yet that

* When the revolutionists in Oliver Cromwell's time abolished the house of peers, they only acted upon the levelling principle from momentary impulse, and not like the French, on a permanent plan; but now that France has set the example, such mistakes will be avoided, and those who in future want to abolish nobility, will do it in a permanent manner. The seizure and sale of estates rivetted the business in France,

only tends to shew the utility of the order, and the impracticability of conducting political affairs without holding up honour as one of the inducements to great actions.

In mentioning this part of the subject, it is to be noticed, that in our own days, we have had the example of a new dynasty, and a new race of nobility; established exactly on the old principle of conquest that gave birth to both in the dark ages and in early times. Whether the new dynasty and the new nobility will be permanent or not, is nothing to the purpose. A fortunate general has seized power, and made himself an emperor; and he has raised those who assisted him, to rank and honour, under new forms and modifications; but in all this there is nothing new; all usurpers and conquerors have ever done the same, and they always will do the same.

The support that is wanted from public opinion, is not so much in favour of personal nobility, as in favour of hereditary nobility. Wherever there are rulers, there will be a gradation of ranks; but the business is, to manage things so, that the gradation of ranks may be of general utility, and contribute to the happiness of the people, which we find, both from the history of our country, and from that of individuals, the hereditary nobility of England have done; whereas it is to be naturally conceived, that a personal nobility would be the instrument of kingly power; and that if its members could not communicate their rank to their sons by hereditary right,

they might do it by royal favour. If there are then occasions for preferring personal nobility to hereditary, there are other very strong ones for giving the preference to the hereditary establishment of the order.

Let us consider the subject as much as we please, we shall still find that there must be an order of nobility: and, that if there is to be such an order, it is most expedient and advantageous for the liberties of the people, that it should be hereditary as in this country, and have a share in the legislature. We have already seen, that in the individual line advantages are produced by hereditary honours, and that there are a far greater number of men of merit amongst the nobility, than amongst an equal number of men of fortune who have not rank. We have also found that the peers, acting politically in a body, have exerted themselves in a most disinterested manner to obtain and preserve the liberties of their country on almost every occasion: it therefore cannot remain a matter of doubt, whether or not an order of hereditary nobility, such as is established in England, is a wise and beneficial institution.

The number of the nobility admits of a few observations, as there is not any subject that is more misconceived. Because we have a greater number of peers than we had half a century ago, it is alledged that they are become too numerous. This is very like the complaints about heavy taxation in the time of Charles II., when one year's expenditure was about

equal to what we now expend in ten days ! ! This is like a boy of six years of age, thinking he is a great boy, because two years before he was less. The greatness indeed is relative, but not real; for three hundred nobility are still very few for England. The royal prerogative of creating lords is envied, and exclaimed against by many; but those persons are ignorant of the origin of that, for it does not spring from any power given the king to the prejudice of commoners, but from a power very fortunately seized by our kings, to diminish the influence and number of the feudal barons.

After the conquest, possessions in land rendered the proprietor a baron by tenure, and the creation of barons by right was an artful invention to keep the landholders in check; and as it so happened, that those haughty lords set more value upon their power individually than collectively, the baronage by tenure was allowed to fall into disuse. In other countries it was not so: there were in France above 16,000 noble families, that is fifty times the number there are in England; and if the barons by right had not taken place of the barons by tenure, we should now have had many more nobility than we have;* perhaps ten times the number. At the end of the wars between the Houses of York and Lan-

* The power of granting patents for inventions is nearly of the same nature; instead of its being a privilege vested in the king, it is a remainder only of the former unlimited power of the sovereign. After the despotic princes of the Tudor family had abused the power of granting monopoly and exclusive privi-

caster, that is, when Henry VII. mounted the throne, there were but thirty-six temporal peers in England!

It is only by comparing the number at present with the number that they were about half a century ago, that they appear many; for if compared with those of other countries, they are very few; or if compared with what they would have been, had they been by tenure, they are very few; and also they are few, when compared with the number of the nobility in Scotland before the union, and even at this day, notwithstanding the numbers extinct by death and attainder. So that in no reasonable way can we consider the nobility as being numerous, when the extent and population of the country are considered.

Those persons who suppose that all disposition to undermine the present order of things has ceased with the violent effervescence of the French revolution, are under a great mistake. Those who wish for change admit that the first experiment has

lege, King James, the first of the Stuarts, who was not quite so despotically inclined, (and who, if he had possessed the same will, had not the same power), allowed it to be restricted. The power of granting patents by an act vi of James I. appears to vest a power in the king; whereas, it in reality is an act for taking a very extensive, and nearly unlimited power from the king, and only reserving a small portion of it restricted to new inventions. The former gave a power of injuring the public, to enrich individuals! the latter only enables individuals to become rich in the event of serving the public.

failed; but, like a losing gamester, or a disappointed chemist, they would renew their trials with redoubled energy. It is not to such persons that it is necessary or useful to appeal. Their opinion is formed and fixed, and neither arguments, facts, nor experience, will alter their manner of thinking; but in this, and in every country, such persons are not the most numerous; the greater number are well-intentioned, liable indeed to be misled, but never intending to injure their country.

It is to gain over this great number to a right way of reasoning, (as they already are right in their wishes and principles,) that is the main object, and they will, no doubt, be happy to find that the prejudices excited against distinction of ranks, are very ill-founded, and contradicted by the history of the nobility of this country, whether acting as peers in a body, or as individual men.

Though it is not directly in the line of this work, to make any observations on the manner of electing members for the House of Commons; yet the subject is nearly connected in its nature with that of the nobility; we shall therefore say a few words on that subject.

One of the great objections to our present system of elections is founded on the supposed influence of peers in returning members; and the grand basis of projected reform, is the supposed equal rights of men to be represented in Parliament. On both those subjects, something ought to be said in this place; for it is a fact (which has not been to my

knowledge ever noticed, and which certainly is but little known,) that most of the men of merit who have got into Parliament, have first come into that assembly under the protection of some peer; or for some of those boroughs, the very existence of which is so much complained of, and considered as so great a grievance, and such an imperfection as not to be admitted to continue.*

If there were no members but for counties, or for large populous cities; then none but men of great fortune, or who were distinguished by some particular service, could come into Parliament. Young men of genius, but of slender fortune, never would find the means of serving their country as members of the legislature.

* Mr. Pitt, afterwards the great Lord Chatham, first came in member for Camelford. His son, whose merits and abilities have never been disputed, was brought in first by Sir James Lowther, for one of his boroughs; and Mr. Fox, when he was prevented from coming in for Westminster, took refuge in some boroughs in the northern isles of Scotland, under the controul of his friend, then Sir Thomas Dundas.

Look to which side of the House we may, we shall find this holds true. Mr. Wardle came in for Oakhampton, which, if representation were equal, would not return a member. Lord Folkstone, and many others highly esteemed by those who seek a change, have owed their entrance into the House to places of little importance. I do not deny, that when merit is once generally known, such men may come in for the most populous county or borough in the kingdom, but unless they could come in before they were generally known, they could never then come in at all.

The truth is, that one great part of the perfection of our House of Commons consists in the very unequal manner in which the representatives are chosen. This is not the only political institution, of which the fitness consists, in what appears imperfection, as the beauty of landscape consists often in irregularity.*

Reformers aim at uniformity, that is, an equal number of electors for each place, which certainly appears to be a fair and equitable mode; and, perhaps, might be expected to be an advantageous one, but we must not trust merely to appearances, but examine what would be the actual effect.

Those who talk of reforming the present abuses have never, it is true, proposed any settled plan; but they have not done that, probably, because they

* According to such theorists, the beauty of irregularity must be the most absurd thing in nature. There must be some one object that is the *most beautiful*, the *most perfect of any*. In a continual repetition of that object must then be the extreme of beauty, or the greatest possible quantity of beauty. This is a specimen of that sort of reasoning which is the effect of aiming at perfection, a thing totally incompatible with the situation of this world. In all the sophistry of the advocates of the rights for man, nothing more profound is to be discovered than this logic, which in reality is absurd and untrue. As there must be some object more beautiful than any other, by adding beauties of an inferior order, the greatest possible quantity of beauty cannot be obtained, it must necessarily consist in a repetition of the most beautiful object. The absurdity of this is pretty evident, yet it is equally unanswerable with most of the theories about perfection in the representative system.

aim at more than they think it would be prudent at first to avow; perhaps trusting that they might proceed more safely by developing their views as they proceed and gather strength, though it is evident that nothing short of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE and EQUAL REPRESENTATION would satisfy them. I say, it is evident that nothing less would satisfy them, because whatever plan falls short of that, will partake, more or less, of the present imperfect and unequal representation; and there is no reason, if we depart from the present unequal representation, (which is at least sanctioned by its antiquity,) for adopting a new and untried plan, that shall have similar imperfections.

The term radical reform shews what the lovers of innovation have in view, and to this they lay claim, as being founded on a *natural right.* No doubt, wherever our social rights can be made to correspond with our natural rights, it is a desirable thing that it should be done. The fact, however, is, that the natural right of every man to a vote, has no existence in reality, though it has the appearance of existing.

I do not know that even any of the greatest and most enthusiastic sticklers for equality* conceived

* The French carried the system pretty far, even at first, as every person, by the constitution of 1789, was to have a vote who paid three livres (2s. 6d.) a year direct taxes. The consequence was, that the majority at all elections consisted of the lower orders of people, and this was the way that such a set of miscreants obtained seats in the second assembly, that allowed the constitution to be overturned, and the king dethroned. The

the project of extending the rights of voting for representatives either to paupers or to criminals; yet, (except so far as is indispensably necessary,) neither paupers nor even criminals are divested of their natural rights. It is as lawful for a man living on charity to defend his person, as it is for the first man in the nation; and it is equally unlawful to insult, assault, or ill-treat him,*—his *natural rights* remain unalienated in every respect; but as the power of voting for a representative does not extend to such a person, it is not a natural right, but a *privilege*, or a social right, to which a condition is attached, whereas there is no condition attached to the possession of a natural right.

If, then, the power of voting is not derived from a natural right, but is a privilege, the pure theory of universal suffrage falls to the ground, and is not to be

people, however, and the leaders said, not without some justice: "Why draw a line at three livres, between those who vote, and those who cannot vote. This is an ideal, an arbitrary, and an unjust line." Let every man, who is not a mendicant or a criminal, have equal rights. On this footing they set out in electing the Convention of Regicides, when Robespierre shewed what men so elected by universal suffrage were capable of doing! This convention is the only example of the full effects of universal suffrage, and let its best friends try to hide its hideous features, if they can.

* It is out of no disrespect to paupers, that they are named with men who have offended against the laws, but that it is necessary for the sake of the argument.

considered as necessary to be established; and the PRIVILEGE, for such it becomes, is like all other privileges of men in society: it requires to be modified and regulated according to the general interest.

We must therefore not treat universal suffrage as a question of right, but of expediency; and it is of great importance that it should be so understood; for so long as it is considered as an inherent and natural right, all those reformers who have founded their projects on that basis, will remain dissatisfied; and we must not forget that men constantly aim at change, while they are dissatisfied with what they possess, nor will any reform be durable or prosper, that does not give content; for the basis of every permanent state of things, where there is any degree of freedom, is content, or being satisfied with that state of things.

As universal suffrage was a project naturally enough entertained by theorists, who wished to establish liberty on the most extensive scale possible, and was actually floating in the minds of the reformers here in England before the French revolution, (where it was tried for the first time); it becomes essential to the stability of any reform that may hereafter be effected, (and is not, upon that principle), to shew that suffrage is not a natural right, but an acquired privilege.

That universal suffrage is incompatible with the welfare of the state, is nearly certain. There are about 4,000,000 men that have attained their full

age in Great Britain and Ireland, and there are 658 representatives, which gives about 4600 voters for each member, and as the members are chosen in pairs, it would give rather more than 9000 voters for each place; of which voters, the great majority would always be poor men, labourers, mechanics, or servants. The respectable voters would always constitute only a minority; and therefore, in fact, would not be represented.

In France, at the second election in 1791, the qualification of the voters excluded all such as did not pay three livres (2s. 6d.) direct taxes annually, yet the elections were every where conducted by the lower order of people: men of respectability generally kept away, and when they attended they were pushed about, threatened, and maltreated,* and at all events were in a minority. There is not any country under the heavens where the same cause would not produce nearly the same effect, for whatever difference there may be between the people of one country and those of another, in manners, ha-

* In Scotland, where in some parishes the ministers are chosen by what they term a popular call, there is an example of the effects of popular election in the established clergy; in others, the right of presentation resides in the landholders, and in some of them the king is the patron. The parishes where the popular call prevails, are generally filled with men either of a violent and fanatical turn, or addicted to fawning and hypocrisy; that is to say, they resemble what we call in England methodists.

bits, and intellects, there is none of any essential importance between their main propensities; those, in all cases, lead such as have power, and know it, to make use of it; and therefore, if in elections the chief power is lodged in the lower orders, they will combine together, and exert it as completely as they can. We do not need to go to France, or any other nation, to prove this; we may find it proved in Westminster, and wherever the rights of election are extended to the poorer classes.

If there were in this country universal suffrage, then the number of electors in every case would be nearly equal to those of Westminster; and in very few places would there be so many proprietors and persons carrying on respectable business.

The lower order would nominate in almost every instance; and without inquiring into the advantage or disadvantage, the wisdom or policy of that, we must, in the first place, acknowledge that it would be unfair; that it would leave those most interested in the preservation of the state, in a situation the least able to protect it, or assist in its preservation.

A nation that is governed by the lower classes, or by representatives chosen by the lower classes, must be in a constant state of change, like the water in a boiling pot, which receives its constant motion from the lowest particles being the lightest, and therefore inclined to come to the top.

It would be the same with every country, where the power resided essentially in the lower orders;

for as those who rose one year by their exertions would be high the next, a new effort to displace them, would be made by such as remained below; and thus a continual state of ebullition, or of revolution, would be kept up, till anarchy would ensue; out of which anarchy would arise despotism, as it always has done and always will do.

If then we see that universal suffrage is not a natural right, and therefore not to be claimed as such, how much more ought we to avoid making an effort to obtain it, if we find that it would be in a high degree pernicious and dangerous? We must then examine how far we may with safety and advantage approach this dangerous species of suffrage; which we shall find to be both an important and an intricate question. But this question cannot be properly discussed, without taking into view the nature and consequences of EQUAL REPRESENTATION.

Without equal representation, universal suffrage is a mere chimera, in so far as it is connected with right; for though every person in every county were to have a vote, yet, unless the counties were equal, or nearly equal, there would be no sort of equality amongst the voters. If, again, we were to have equal representation, London and Middlesex would have about fifty representatives? who, being all animated with one spirit, and having constituents who had one interest, and could act in unison, would be more than equal to twice the number of members from different parts, without connection, without

uniformity of object, and acting separately as they would do.

If then we were to equalise the representation, we should greatly injure the spirit that ought to animate the members; and thus by trying to reform Parliament in its manner and formation, we should destroy it in its efficient utility, its real advantage.

In whatever manner we view universal suffrage and equal representation TOGETHER, we shall find them totally inimical to public tranquillity and national safety; and if we take them SEPARATELY, they are a mockery. They are incapable of satisfying those who seek *reform upon what is termed, by some, principle, and by others radical reform;* we must then lose sight of that, and not consider the present plan faulty, because it is unequal; neither must we in equality aim at perfection or amelioration, but rather inquire into the actual defects, and try if we can get rid of those in some degree, without launching so far out as to endanger the advantages that we at present possess.

Granting that there is an injustice in men who contribute to the expences of the state having no vote, or share in the elections, it is necessary to inquire how we are to draw the line so as to give no more extention to the privilege than will be useful to those by whom it is enjoyed; but in doing this, we must not forget that wherever we draw the line, those who are excluded will be discontented, be-

cause that line will be an arbitrary line, not founded upon such certain principles as admit of no difference of opinions with repect to the justice, or even the wisdom of the arrangement.

In despair of finding any rule to go by, that will satisfy those who cry out for radical reform, and whose plans would ruin the country, the safest and best method will probably be, to prune the present system by lopping off its excrescences, and diminishing that excessive inequality that exists, and is productive of so much discontent.

Let us not err in seeking happiness and freedom in perfection, which is not to be attained; and like the merchant of Bagdat, in searching for the talisman of Oromanes, where it was not to be found, sacrifice those blessings which we already enjoy. No political compass has yet been discovered, that will guide us in the open sea of reform. We must keep the land-marks and light-houses that are on the shore within our view, otherwise we may lose our way, and wreck our vessel. We cannot safely trace out a new mode of election, on a *tabula rasa;* we can only venture to make a few changes on what we already have.

Fortunately for this nation, the basis of a very good constitution exists. It is not so in almost any other country. There, from necessity, before they can have a good constitution, they must undo what they have got: we have no occasion to do so, and therefore if we go to work with moderation and wisdom, our work will be easy, and the danger small.

If, on the contrary, we go rashly to reform, our misfortune will be doubly great; for we shall lose what is well worth preserving, and ought to be preserved.

When the French began a reform on their government, they had no ground to work upon. The states-general was an old machine, that had never been much in use; and that for centuries had not been once employed. The feudal system was still in considerable force, when the states-general had been last assembled, and the church was then also in great power and splendour. It was not then to be expected that such an institution could in our days answer the intended purpose, and consequently it underwent a RADICAL REFORM; that is to say, it was turned topsy-turvy. The third state, which formerly looked up to the two others, as superior in rank and intelligence, now looked down upon both with contempt; and though the misery that followed was great, and the despotism that has succeeded, is beyond description; yet the overturn of the ancient form of government was no great loss to the country, for it was neither good in itself, nor could it have been very durable under the changes that had taken place amongst mankind.

Time, (which Lord Bacon says is the greatest innovator in the world), had produced such changes, as rendered not only the government of France, but all the governments on the continent, antiquated in their form, and inadequate in their effect. If the French government had been excellent in its nature,

still its ancient form was become so unsuitable to the state of society, that it could not long have existed; and therefore those who overturned it, had only shaken a leaf that was ready to fall. The injury was not at any rate great; but, as the matter stood, it was nearly nothing. The constitution, (if constitution it could be called,) scarcely deserved preservation. To have a few worthless courtiers join in decrying and misleading their sovereign, that they might trample upon, pillage, and oppress the people, was not a desirable thing; yet such was the government of France: still even that government is regretted by all who have either read of, or remember it, on account of the miseries that have arisen from the wild plan of radical reform that was adopted.

If then even in France, where the government was neither good, nor permanent in its nature, still those who overturned it had reason to repent of their rashness, how much more must we have reason to avoid a similar error, when we must begin by putting to risk an invaluable possession.

The existence of the House of Peers, and the unequal manner of chusing representatives for the Commons House of Parliament, are the two parts of our constitution that differ the most widely from those theoretical principles, to which modern reformers have looked, and to which all those who want radical reform always will look.* Those who think

* One of the most alarming circumstances that has taken place of late years, is an opinion given in the House of Com-

that the example of France will be a warning to such men, are greatly mistaken. The failure of France is attributed to every thing but to error in the system. Some attribute it to the war; others to the king; others to the intrigues of the priests and nobles, and still a greater number to the volatile nature of the French nation; so that those who originally approved of the plan, would still try the experiment, in full confidence of success; determined to avoid the errors of the French, and thereby avoid similar misfortunes.

It is then for the nobility of this country to act

mons, that the French constitution of 1789 was the most glorious work of human wisdom. This is alarming, for various reasons:

1st. Because it was made after the French constitution had been tried and failed, and after it had brought the greatest misery on that country; it shewed, therefore, that unfortunate experience had little effect in changing a deep-rooted opinion.

2d. Because that unqualified approbation implied a total dereliction of the principles of our constitution, established at the accession of William III. inasmuch as the French constitution admitted of no distinction of ranks, as it required no qualification for being elected a member of the house of representatives, which passed its votes at one sitting, without a revisal and without any controuling assembly; from which also his majesty's ministers were distinctly excluded; and which, above all, declared, that the power of changing the constitution, at pleasure, resided permanently and inalienably in the people.

3d. Every thing that has of late happened in France, has been so entirely disconnected with the principles of liberty in any possible form, that no allusion can be made to what has passed in that country for these last twelve years.

like their forefathers, and resist innovation whenever it appears in the form of theoretical perfection, or the abolition of rank, and an undistinguished equality of rights, which last is a chimera of the most dangerous sort; innovation, apparently founded on the natural rights of man, is quite contrary to the rights of men who have entered into any social compact, that is, to say of men under every possible form of government.

As the contents of these volumes prove, that the best guardians of our liberties have been the nobility, and that hereditary rank is attended with great advantages, they form a basis for what might be called a *contre projet* to the plans of equality and universal suffrage, which are the prelude to an attempt at establishing equality.

I am not ignorant that this work has, when viewed in a certain light, a great disadvantage. It is not of a popular seductive nature, like those of theorists in politics who bring in aid the passions of mankind, and who flatter the great number under the appearance of philanthropy and a liberal way of thinking. It has the farther disadvantage of not being susceptible of the support of sophistry; and, above all, instead of being a fashionable, it is an antiquated study, to which I am obliged to call the attention of men little inclined to listen, and still less inclined to alter their opinion.

In struggling against those obstacles, I have made my appeal to facts, considering argument as incon-

clusive and unequal to the purpose. I have also done what was in my power, to divest the study of Pedigree of its antiquated form, and to give it novelty and something interesting which it did not before possess, by the addition of the charts; and farther, I have endeavoured to draw a conclusion, and bring the whole to effect something practically useful.

If I have endeavoured to do what was beyond my ability, my zeal and ardour will, I hope, be received in good part; and that I may be permitted to make a few observations, addressed principally to those to whose patronage I am indebted for support in this undertaking.

I have not written to gratify individual vanity, but to do justice to the order of nobility as an hereditary establishment, and as composed of men equally estimable for virtue, talents, and political utility, in order that it may still continue to have the support of public opinion, without which, it cannot long be preserved. I am convinced, that such persons, as approve of those views, will forgive me for not inserting many particular circumstances relative to families, which could not have advanced, but must have impeded the end I proposed to effect, by not only swelling the size of the work, but by clogging it with a species of information that is not of any general interest.

To those who either disapprove of, or are indifferent with regard to the attainment of my object, I

have nothing to say. Such proprietors in this country as are indifferent or inimical to the cause of truth, or to the interests of the nation, can only be considered as being guided by interested or bad motives; and all that are not will, I am persuaded, allow that this publication tends to clear up a very important political question, by establishing, from facts, the advantages arising from hereditary nobility.

One thing may still remain necessary, to obtain for my work the approbation of those who granted me their patronage before they saw the performance; that is, a belief of my sincerity. Though that makes nothing to the facts brought forward or the fair conclusion drawn from them, yet, in every work of this sort, the real opinion of the author is of some importance, as it leads the reader to determine whether he himself feels what he appears to feel. Except in mathematical demonstration, the opinion of him who labours to establish a fact, is always of some importance. Though no one would enquire whether Euclid actually believed that the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles, yet we cannot help wishing to know, whether Oliver Cromwell was a hypocrite, or acted from conviction, when he murdered his sovereign and abolished the House of Peers, protesting that he did so to serve his country.

I must, therefore, be permitted to speak for a moment of myself. It was in the year 1792 that I first began to write in support of the present order

of things in England. When in Paris, I attacked the wild theories of the boasted constitution of 1789; and, amongst other things, the abolition of all distinction of ranks and universal suffrage. The work was printed in Paris, and published by a London bookseller,* and since that time, I have written a great variety of works, all of them guided by the same principles. Why it happens, that an individual who enjoys neither rank nor fortune, nor public place, nor emolument, should be anxious to preserve the present order of things, when many who enjoy them all, are totally unconcerned, I cannot properly explain, for I have no right to judge of principles or motives of such men, but I attribute it to their seeing the danger in a different light. A man who has never seen the ravages of fire, will not naturally feel as one who has seen it: the latter is my case.

I lived in the very centre of the French revolution during three years; I knew a number of the principal actors. The transactions were too interesting not to occupy my attention, and the wild enthusiasm too ridiculous not to excite contempt, and too dangerous not to occasion horror. Hence it is, that I contracted an irresistible antipathy to all such propagators of systems;† and, without consideration, either

* Lane, Leadenhall-street.

† As to the system-mongers and philosophers, I had no personal reason to dislike them; I knew many of them, and they behaved very well to me. When my book of Linear Arithme-

of interest or expediency, I have, on all occasions, acted from that antipathy ever since.

In the year 1797, on the same day that Mr. Sheridan acted so noble a part in the House of Commons, respecting the mutiny in the fleet, I dined with that gentleman in a small company, at a tavern, upon some business. On that occasion I thought it well to make some preliminary explanation about political opinions, to prevent a disagreeable feeling that otherwise might take place; I considered it as a piece of respect due to a man of his abilities; I therefore said—"No doubt, Sir, as I had the honour of being known to you about ten or twelve years ago, and was then what they call a whig, and am now called an aristocrat, you may think me a turn-coat; I shall explain that in a few words.—You know I have lived in France; where, during the three first years of the revolution, I saw so many wild and

tic was translated into French, and a copy presented to the Academy of Sciences, M. Condorcet addressed me in a fine speech. I was placed on the right hand of the president, during the sitting, and invited to come when I pleased, with a promise, that by calling out a member, I should always be admitted, as indeed I afterwards was. As individual men, their conduct was polite, attentive, and flattering. How different was that Condorcet at the academy and at the Jacobin club!! He was a man certainly of great merit, as a man of letters, but a monster in politics. But, as Robespierre was a still greater monster, Condorcet was sacrificed, after having himself brought destruction on the inferior class of monsters, who were not willing to go quite far enough.

wicked transactions, that they have given me a complete disgust to the violent Political Reformers, though I shall always wish for practical amelioration for the good of the country. I have changed my way of thinking in consequence of what I have seen, and am what they term an aristocrat, from that cause, and from no other. My father was a clergyman, and my grand-father a farmer, therefore I cannot boast of ancestry, for I can trace them no farther; and as for riches, I am not possessed of them, therefore from personal situation I should be a democrat, &c. &c." Mr. S. said, he could very well conceive the change, and that being a witness to the revolution, might make the strong impression I described; adding, that if any one thought that he went into the ideas promulgated in the book called the Rights of Man, they were greatly mistaken, &c. &c.

I mention this, to account for my strong attachment to the present government and order, as well as to prove that it has been of long duration; and, amidst misfortunes, of which I have had my full share, I have never felt my opinion on those points changed in the least degree. In this statement I never can be contradicted.*

* Amongst many strange exhibitions of a levelling spirit, that I was witness to in France, one was the burning the records belonging to all the nobility in that kingdom, which took place by order of the legislative assembly, at twelve o'clock in the day, in the Place Vendôme, in June, 1792. Several waggons arrived loaded with faggots, which were set on

The nobility, and the well-wishers of the present order of things, are not yet aware of the full extent of their danger; which is by no means over. I have found the greater number ready to encourage this undertaking; but I have found some few totally indifferent to what is thought of themselves, or of the order to which they belong. I can only say, that if such a spirit had been general, this nation would not now have been the envy of the world, and the prop of liberty.

Having shown that there are great advantages arising from an hereditary nobility, and that this nation owes much to their exertions, one concluding observation only occurs to me, in answer to the prevailing opinion, that preference is alone due to personal merit. Such a preference, however well founded it may be, would be attended with the greatest inconveniency, from the envy it excites, and the difficulty of ascertaining, by any impartial or satisfactory rule, to whom it is due. Hereditary nobility, amongst other things, are free from those disadvantages; so that, upon the whole, there is not one of the institutions we possess, viewed in every point, more essential to the maintenance of a free mixed constitution, than an hereditary nobility, who pos-

fire, when a number of other waggons, filled with large folio volumes, superbly bound in morocco and velvet, were thrown into the flames, amidst a mob that rejoiced at this triumph over hereditary rank and title.

sess a share in the legislation of the country.* And in this work it has been proved, that in time past the country has owed much to that order, which HAS PRODUCED MORE THAN ITS NATURAL PROPORTION OF MEN REMARKABLE FOR THEIR TALENTS AND VIRTUE.

Having thus given the intention, as well as the result of my work, as it relates to British Peers, a few observations only remain, relative to the Scottish nobility, those of Ireland, and the baronets; as it would be swelling this address too much, to give all that will be contained in the Prefatory matter belonging to them.

As the advantage of the British House of Peers essentially consists in the members being independent, and not elected; but sitting each in his own right: it follows, as a corrolary to that proposition, that the purity of the House of Peers is injured, by the admission of members who are elective.

By the Union with SCOTLAND, sixteen Peers

* Even Oliver Cromwell, towards the end of his career, after he had tried a number of schemes, had recourse to a House of Peers; and, where nobility has been demolished on the continent, it is rising up in a new way, notwithstanding the disposition of the revolutionists to resist the restoration of any distinguished rank of persons. The question of hereditary nobility is very similar to that of hereditary monarchy, in preference to elective monarchy. Mr. Hume, notwithstanding his bias to a republican system, prefers elective monarchy; and in this case his opinion may be trusted, as it is at variance with his inclination.

were introduced into the British House, who sit there by election, and by the worst species of election.—Electors, consisting of men who are themselves eligible, some of whom are always candidates, and most of whom aspire to that honour of being chosen.

The worst feature of the union, (in most respects a good measure, and upon the whole a very advantageous one), is, the situation in which it places the peerage of Scotland.—This work will prove, that it would be of great advantage to raise all the peers of Scotland to the British peerage, except sixteen, who would then sit in the house without election.—This would render the nobility of Scotland independent of court influence, as they ought to be, and as they were before the union, and would do away the disadvantages felt by those peers who are not elected to be of the sixteen, and who neither have the rights of commoners nor of peers. They are eligible, yet have only the power of voting at elections! A power rather vexatious than attended with advantage: at the same time injurious to the British House of Peers.*

* It is not a little singular, that this disadvantage, the only real one of importance, arising from the union, should have been overlooked by Lord Belhaven, Mr. Fletcher, and the other able and true patriots, who, in their anxiety for the honour and independence of their country, foresaw many evils that never took place, and never were likely, while the real evil never seems to have occurred to them.

The Scottish nobility will appear to great advantage as able men and friends of their country, though the constant discord that took place there, before the union of the crowns, placed them frequently in difficult situations, but so unlike any thing that occurs at the present times, that the real merit or blame of the action requires the reader to imagine to himself the state of things at the time.—The preface to the volume will enable the reader to appreciate the actions of the nobility at the different periods, and if properly attended to, *the Scottish nobles will, with all possible speed, be raised to seats in the House of Lords, as being necessary for the purity of that house and their own independence.*

We have seen in our own days the union with Ireland, and that the same error has been fallen into with respect to a number of elective peers, with this disadvantage, that the number is greater, and the evil more permanent. The Irish peerage is to be kept up to its full number, whereas, that of Scotland, by the failure of heirs, and the occasional absorption of the Scottish title in an English one, will, in time, come to an end; but the Irish union provides particularly for the continuance of the evil.

It is an evil more extensive, more permanent, and more difficult to be overcome, than that respecting Scotland.* A remedy of a different nature must

* It does not, however, follow that government, or those who framed the union, thought this AN EVIL; on the contrary, as

therefore be applied, for the Irish peers are too numerous to be raised to the British peerage; another mode, however, will be pointed out, of remedying in a great measure the evil, for such we consider the elective members in the House of Peers, and the situation in which the peers of Ireland are placed by the Union.

On the subject of Baronets, some matter, hitherto entirely new, will be brought forward, and the utility of that order explained, particularly since the union with Ireland has prevented the creation of Irish peers, and as the creation of British peers affects the legislature in a way that renders it necessary to circumscribe the number with a peculiar degree of attention.

On the whole, the English, Scottish, and Irish peers, will all find the Work on FAMILY ANTIQUITY such as it has been announced and intended, and

they could not be ignorant of the effect, with regard to Scotland, they probably intended it as a means of making government more practicable; or, in other words, the House of Peers more manageable and less independent.

therefore deserving of their support, as being THE BEST, AND PERHAPS THE ONLY WAY, TO REMOVE PREJUDICES AGAINST HEREDITARY RANK, AND TO PROCURE, FOR THOSE BY WHOM IT IS ENJOYED, THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC OPINION.

N. B. The Subscribers to the Work will find it well to have the Charts either mounted on rollers, or framed and varnished; which can be done at a very trifling expence, and preserves them unsoiled and untorn.

FINIS.

W. LEWIS, Printer, Paternoster-row, London.

W. LEWIS, Printer, Paternoster-row, London.

SECOND ADDRESS

TO

THE BRITISH NOBILITY;

ACCOMPANIED WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS AND PROOFS

OF THE ADVANTAGE OF

Hereditary Rank and Title

IN A FREE COUNTRY.

By W. PLAYFAIR, Esq.

INVENTOR OF LINEAR ARITHMETIC, AUTHOR OF AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF NATIONS; EDITOR OF THE LAST EDITION OF DR. SMITH'S INQUIRY, WITH NOTES AND A SUPPLEMENT, &c. &c.

A House of Peers sitting, each voting in his own right, and independent of the King and the People, is the best mode of preserving the rights of both, and securing liberty.

LONDON,

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1810.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

TO THE

BRITISH PEERAGE.

THOUGH the peers of England, Scotland, and Ireland, have served their country in different ways—though they have been under circumstances not by any means alike—yet we find, in their general conduct, many leading traits of similarity. They, in all their struggles for liberty, made a common cause with the people, and were gradually abandoning the privileges they enjoyed under the feudal system, whilst in other countries the nobility were incessant and strenuous to preserve their feudal power, no fragment of which they parted with, except when wrested from them forcibly by the sovereign of the country, or become incompatible with the manners of an enlightened age *.

* The degree of light or ignorance in which the inhabitants of a country exist, will always affect the liberties of the people in an indirect manner, as in every state of society men are governed by custom as well as by written law; and as the customs

The peers of the united kingdom have all of them the same species of merit, and a very great merit it is, namely, that of assisting the people, and taking part with them in every struggle for liberty; but with this merit there has been an error, which, of late years, increases, and ought to be guarded against.

Enough of attention to the dignity and rank of their order has not been paid by the peers of either kingdom, who have suffered their rank and title to be sported with by wits and buffoons, without showing that anxiety to redeem their character that would be not only wise but

that prevail depend very much on the state of knowledge and civilization. The Emperor of Russia has perhaps as much power as the Grand Turk, and certainly more than the Dey of Algiers: but he would be considered as a monster, if he were to use it in the same way. Were he with a scymeter to behead one of his ministers, his power could not be questioned, but his character would be lost. His feelings as a man, therefore, would not admit of it. Alexander the Great, in a fit of intoxication, disgraced himself by an act which Darius, the Emperor of Persia, whom he dethroned, might have committed without any disgrace. Many of the feudal privileges that were exercised in the fifteenth century, if they existed still in their utmost force, would be discountenanced by the manners of the age, and therefore would be as completely done away as if forbidden by the most positive statutes. This operation of time and civilization had gradually and silently, in every country in Europe, diminished some of the privileges of the feudal lords, but not all of them, for others remained in full force, and never were taken away but by violence, and after strong resistance.

becoming in men who, individually, are as easily hurt as any person in any other rank in society.

The ostensible marks of distinction, amongst the various ranks of mankind, have been for several centuries gradually obliterating. The real distinctions can but imperfectly be maintained without some auxiliaries. The man of worth and merit in apparent poverty meets with less respect than the affluent fool, even from persons who are not any way concerned in the poverty or affluence of either, and who are perfectly satisfied as to their respective claims to respect. This shews that the ostensible is of greater importance, in some cases, than the real, and therefore it is fair to conclude *, that it is of considerable importance in all. Now as it is absolutely impossible to renovate the antient ostensible personal distinctions, or to confine to men of rank alone that degree of affluence which arts and industry have disseminated widely in in this happy country, (under a free government, where exertion is uncontrouled, and property, the fruit of exertion, protected,) it becomes very

* When the French Revolution began, jockey-frocks and round hats, with small whips or canes, took place of the embroidered dress coats, chapeau-bras and dress swords, and it is wonderful what an effect these had in leading to the system of equality. To this day many of the antient nobility who suffered most by the revolution, attribute it almost entirely to the change of dress. About the same period the unfortunate queen abolished the formal etiquette at court, and facilitated thereby the grand change.

important to examine in what way the peers of the realm may obtain that support, from public opinion, that is necessary for the preservation of their order.

In former times, not only was great power possessed by the proprietors of the soil, but their hospitable manner of living, their personal dependants, and their superior education and accomplishments, secured them that respect which was necessary; but finding all those distinctions nearly efaced, there remains but one mode of reconciling society to the distinction of ranks—that is, by showing the UTILITY of the peers as a body of men having a right to participate in the legislation of a free country*.

It is to this point that I have attached myself through the whole of this Work; and I have not, to my knowledge, let a single opportunity escape

* It is not meant by using the word *reconcile*, that there is an actual hostility to the order, but men never are willing to acknowledge inferiority, except upon some ground that is admitted, and therefore the mind requires to be reconciled to that distinction; there are two causes for preference—the one is the right, the other the utility, which creates a right. UTILITY, generally extended, is the foundation of all public right. What is the origin of the local or temporary authority of magistrates, judges or juries, but utility, not natural right? yet no rights are considered as more sacred than those originating in utility. All public authority is grounded on utility, not on original right, like that which a man has to eat the fruits of his own labour; yet resistance to power, founded on utility, is considered and punished as the most heinous of crimes.

of showing, in every way that I could comprehend or believe to be true, the advantage arising from hereditary peerage as established in this country: I never let an occasion pass of enumerating the good actions of those individuals of which it is composed, and, without concealing the faults, I have given such a view of the whole as must convince the world that the nobility are individually most respectable, and as a body highly useful.

It is now fifteen years since I proposed this Work; and through many difficulties and interruptions, though it was delayed, it never was either laid down or laid aside; and it is with great satisfaction that in accomplishing it I have proved what, in the origin of the undertaking, I meant to establish, namely, that great advantages arise in a free country from an order of men inheriting rank and title, and having in their own right a vote in the legislature. This being established from facts, and not from arguments, must silence those persons who would persuade the public that such an institution is either useless or inconvenient, which is a very important point to the whole of society, but particularly to all men of rank or property.

When I first projected the Work, I was recently arrived from a country where property had been seized, rank proscribed, and equality proclaimed; but though the frenzy and delusion

that occasioned those proceedings are in some degree over, yet another species of error has risen in their place. To the abolition of all distinction of rank has succeeded personal pre-eminence, granted only to the adventurous and daring, who prove by their actions, that they are rather the scourge than the protectors of society. Though the idea of having only a personal nobility is not so wild as that of a total abolition of all distinction of rank, it is from that and some other causes much more dangerous. The system of equality, from its nature, could be but of short duration; for as men are not equal in talents, or the disposition to employ their talents, equality must, from the nature of things, soon be done away, and those who had risen by their abilities and energy would take care that it should not be restored; but it is not so with hereditary distinction, which will always find enemies in the existing race of men; the new plan is therefore calculated to be of much longer duration. Reason indeed tells us, that such a plan of distinction will find advocates in and supporters amongst the most able and energetic of every age, but it is not to reason alone that we have in this case to appeal. The history of the antient world, so far as it is known or intelligible to us, proves that there were distinctions of rank in every country, and even titles of dignity; but we do not find that they were here-

ditary; on the contrary, it was not till after the reign of Charlemagne, that Hugh Capet, the first king of a new dynasty, made all the magistracies and honours of the kingdom, such as dukedoms, earldoms, &c. hereditary, which, till then, and in all antient times, had been conferred on select and deserving persons, in general conventions of the people, and were held only during good behaviour. This took place in the end of the tenth century; so that, previously to that period, it must be admitted, that there was no such thing as hereditary title, except for sovereigns. It may then be assumed, that as it is but about eight hundred years since hereditary titles existed (since 987), and as society had long been organised previous to that period, but that equality never had existed, the scheme of personal nobility, where the title does not descend to the heir, is one of a very permanent nature, since, under various modifications, it had existed from the earliest ages till the tenth century. If then the wild plan of equality is done away, another, though less extravagant, but of a much more permanent nature, has succeeded, which is equally incompatible with hereditary nobility: it is so much the more dangerous of the two to that order, being of a nature that is not only *practicable* but of a nature *permanent*, and one that will at all times be very agreeable to men of enterprise and energy.

It so happens that at this very moment the nobility that are rising up on the continent are rising up under that new form; so that though the danger to hereditary nobility arises from another cause, that danger is even greater than it was at the beginning of the French Revolution.

It is true, that hitherto the principles upon which the French acted eighteen years ago, or on which they now act, have not taken such root in England as to produce any very material change. But how short a space is eighteen years? Besides, though we see no great actual change, do we not see some approximation towards a change in many institutions within these last eighteen years? Are we even to expect, that a change, originating in opinion, on a subject like that, is to proceed with rapidity at first? No; it must necessarily proceed slowly, till the majority are of one opinion, and even then it must wait for time and opportunity.

Even amongst the French, who are the most impatient people on earth, the distinction of ranks was not abolished till half a century had elapsed, during which titles were assailed by all men of wit and genius, or who pretended to either, from Voltaire down to the lowest writer of farce for the lowest theatre *. The Corps des

* All Voltaire's works are interspersed with hits at the nobility and the clergy, and some of them written expressly on pur-

Gens Desprit, or those who affect to belong to it, is a very formidable body, as its dictates are listened to and obeyed by the ignorant and the vain, who form the great majority of the people in some nations, and a considerable portion of them in all. Weak men, to avoid being thought ignorant, or of labouring under the impression of prejudice, follow men who are reckoned to possess wit or genius, just as country clowns follow a charlatan at a fair, whose tricks they admire, without the least conception how they are performed.

Rank and religion had been attacked, sometimes more openly, but always unceasingly, for half a century before the result appeared, by the prosecution and proscription of both orders *.

pose to turn both orders into ridicule. Barons and Marquises are singled out, the former for ostentation, prejudice and pride, the latter for frivolity and vice, so much so, that in reading the Dramatis Personæ one may guess at the characters, by titles of honour as well as by the quaint names of Shallow, Slender, or Jack Rattle.

* Even before the taking of the Bastile, in 1789, any person who was decorated with a star or ribbon found it hazardous to go into any of the quarters of Paris inhabited by workmen; and though nothing could equal the readiness, or rather eagerness, with which the nobles abandoned all their privileges and feudal rights (on the 4th of August that same year, in an evening sitting), yet that had no effect in softening their fate, or mitigating their sentence. Public opinion had long been turned against them, and, with a levity and short-sightedness, a sort of carelessness

Their ruin was signed and sealed before they had the smallest conception of its being intended; but it was carried into effect with a relentless

scarcely to be conceived, and impossible to be accounted for, they took no measure whilst they had the means for preserving themselves. Feudal rights, and many of their privileges, were really very fit objects of reform; but the spirit of reformation resembles fire, when once lighted it is with difficulty extinguished, and naturally spreads as long as it has materials to consume. The nobility, by their own consent, gave up every obnoxious privilege, and only preserved titles, coats of arms, and family records, which could, one would imagine, cause no offence; but the destroying spirit was unchained: in 1790, the year following; at an evening assembly, on a Saturday, when few usually attended, and the business was not given notice of, the levelling party came in full force, and proposed the abolition of all titles of nobility, ordering all armorial bearings to be destroyed; and having no opponents, this great measure passed in an assembly half intoxicated, and in a manner quite informal and illegal; so that in two hours the hereditary nobility of France were destroyed, exactly eight hundred and three years after its first foundation by the first of the Capetian kings, and two years before the last of that race (unless restored) mounted the scaffold. In France, as Mr. Burke said truly, every thing was done by design, nothing was left to chance, and the king was called Louis Capet (which, in French, has a particular contemptuous sound), by way of derision, connecting at the same time the first and last of the reigning family. There still remained one appendage of nobility, the patents and records of families. In two years more, that is, in June 1792, those were publicly burnt, by order of the Legislative Assembly; and in two or three months after, the nobility were hunted like wild beast; and ever since they have been a proscribed and persecuted set of men.

The progress of destroying all existing establishments it is

rigour, almost without a precedent, and which nothing but the most deeply-rooted hatred could have permitted.

curious to contemplate. The first step always is to withdraw from the party to be attacked the support of opinion. The next is to withdraw any actual physical means of resistance, then proceed from one step to another till nothing remains to be done. It is a regular progress, and, as it has happened in France in our days, it deserves to be left on record.

We have seen how the nobility were pulled down by degrees; let us see by what steps the clergy fell. As in the other case, the first thing was to withdraw the support of public opinion, to make religion be considered as a farce, its ministers impostors and an inconvenient burden on the people. The next step was to deprive the clergy of their wealth; with which they parted with astonishing facility, a facility that ought to have pleaded in their favour; but their enemies were relentless, and knew not what moderation and mercy were. The next step was to make them odious to the people, by representing them as refractory, and as enemies to the national regeneration that was going on. As the clergy had given up their temporal possessions without any struggle, it was necessary to impose on them some obligations that interfered with the dogmas of their faith, and obedience to the head of the church. This succeeded. The clergy, who had sacrificed temporalties cheerfully, would not sacrifice their consciences; and a conduct that sprung from an admirable mode of thinking and deserved respect, procured them the title of refractory, and enemies of the constitution. Thus they were made odious, displaced, and persecuted, till the cup of bitterness was filled to the brim, when they, as well as the nobles, were hunted like wild beasts, and death and imprisonment, or refuge in a strange country, were the lot of all that did not conform to the new regulation.

Let us see how the royal power was pulled down. First, opinion

The manner of thinking of a people can only be altered by degrees; but when once altered it never fails to produce a result, whether good, or bad, of short, or of long duration. It was thus by nobility being constantly held up to ridicule

was turned against the king by the same means employed against the nobles and the clergy; and then his person was humiliated and insulted. In the Parliament of Paris, when the king went in person to enforce a decree, he was kept from nine in the morning till late in the evening, listening to insolent speeches from the members, who repented so dearly afterwards. He was then compelled to call the States General, who began by seeking to quarrel with him about trifles; but his rank and natural benignity kept them back for a considerable time; however, every mark of respect gradually disappeared, and insult and insolence succeeded. The king submitted, and by his patience and forbearance frustrated many of their plans for exciting a quarrel; but at last hit upon the same expedient as with the clergy, and with equal success. The king had the right of the veto, or refusing his sanction to the decrees; and he used it provisionally in the case of the decree against the clergy. This was just what was wanted, and the poor ignorant and deluded people were made to consider the king and the priests as equally their enemies. The insults and cruelties that followed are well known, and will, till the latest period, be held in abhorrence.

It is plain from this statement, which is perfectly correct, (the Author of this Work wrote the history of the first five years of the French Revolution, most of which he was an eye-witness of), that existing establishments are first attacked by withdrawing the support of public opinion, then by turning opinion against them, and, lastly, by open force. First an establishment is represented as useless, next as burthensome, and then it is abolished without farther hesitation.

respect was withdrawn; and the Revolution in America gave the speculators, on a new order of things, confidence and strength. "There (said they) is an example of a people who are free, rich, and happy, without either a king, nobles, or established religion: let us imitate that people; but let us begin with the nobility, whose distinctions are the most offensive, and of the least utility; who have besides the least means of resistance!"

The nobility were quickly followed by the priests, and infidelity and equality marched hand in hand. There was still, however, one man in the nation above the others—the king! He, though one of the most virtuous and inoffensive men in the kingdom, and even benevolent beyond the most part, was first humiliated, then insulted, and last of all executed!

Monarchy, religion, and distinction of ranks, have all been attacked in a manner similar, that the mind of any observing and thinking man must be convinced that there is a species of revolutionary tactics as regulary understood and practised, as any military tactics whatever.—*(See the note.)*

The first approach in the attack of any existing institution is by gaining over, or, (which is the same thing,) alienating opinion; and therefore the mode of defence is by endeavouring to pre-

serve opinion in favour of whatever institution is intended to be preserved.

There is no human institution can exist for any great length of time without it is either supported by opinion, or found to be necessary; and even violence of opinion may sometimes overturn institutions that are very essential to the happiness of mankind. When the French, for example, overturned the throne and the altar, they overturned two institutions which, under one form or other, have been found necessary in every country, and consequently they could never long be suspended; yet they were overturned by the strong effort occasioned by opinion having been withdrawn from their support, and turned to act in a contrary direction.

It may be said, as it often has already been said, that those who co-operated in effecting the Revolution in France were designing men, acting not in consequence of opinion, but from selfish motives, and with particular designs. That there were numbers amongst them who acted from such motives, does not admit of a dispute; but they could have effected nothing, had they not gained over public opinion to their side, by which the great majority were led to co-operate. If it be granted that the individual leaders were men acting from selfish motives, that is still a stronger proof of the wonderful power of opinion,

as it proves, that by gaining it over to their side they made the other become entirely subservient to their interested views. Can any thing be a greater proof of the irresistible force of opinion than that, when men are once under its influence, they act without any other consideration than such as springs from that opinion, even when ill founded, and productive of the most terrible consequences * to themselves; for there were

* Had not military despotism risen up to controul opinion, it is impossible to conceive how the French nation would have been reduced to order. So long as money to effect the purposes intended could be procured by the assignats, or by any other means than by forced taxes, democracy had its sway; but when there were no longer any funds, but such as were levied on the people, and those funds obtained by coercion, the consequence naturally was, that the people were reduced to obedience, and when once that victory was obtained, the reign of democracy was over. Force usurped its place, but still this is not a permanent state of things; for one of the most certain of all future events is, that the present French government, established entirely by force, and in contradiction to opinion, will soon be destroyed, unless it is so modified as to bring over opinion to its support. So well aware of this is the Ruler of France, that, despotic as he is, opinion, that is, the general opinion of the people, is the only thing next to military force to which he pays the least regard, and which, as far as is practicable, he trusts to gain over to his side. The remembrance of the terrible effects of democratical anarchy, the hope of amelioration in time of peace, and the brilliancy of the conquests of their severe ruler, together with actual force, at present supply the place of opinion, as they did in Prussia under the rigid government of Frederick; but how easily was that government over-

thousands of instances of men sacrificing every thing to support a system they ought to have hated, but which they had been persuaded to approve of.

If opinion of its goodness is necessary for the support even of a government armed with power, how much more must it be necessary to the support of an order of men, or any establishment that is not supported by power? and such is that of hereditary nobility.

But though all the reasonings, with respect to the force of opinion in a general way, prove that it is indispensible for the support of every establishment, yet there are some particular reasons that make it peculiarly necessary for the British peerage, who are not like the Peers of other countries in Europe, that is before the last Revolution, merely insulated noblemen with rights and privileges which they exercised separately and without connection.

The British Peers have scarcely any right as individuals, but as a body they form an independent part of the legislature, and no law can be made without their consent; now this is one of the parts of the British constitution, which those who aim at what they term RADICAL RE-

turned, and how easily will the new one of France be destroyed, when the remembrance of the past horrors becomes less impressive, when hope fails and conquests cease? Then will opinion, in its turn, gain a victory over force.

REFORM in Parliament, have most at heart. This, though the greatest object, is not the first; and they feel not only that it is not the first, but that their views, in that respect, must be carefully concealed. The radical reformers only show half what they intend, and not half what they would actually do, when armed with power. This was (for ambition and avarice have no bounds, but the desire increases with the success) the very way of the French philosophers, who openly attacked the altar, but carefully concealed their views against the throne.

Our reformers always speak of a reform in Parliament as being confined to the Commons House; but here we must consider, whether their general practices and avowed modes of thinking agree with their ostensible intentions.

The *magical* effect which they seem to expect from a reformed House is impossible to be realised, whilst a House of Peers, acting on the present system, maintains its right not only to a consent, but, (except in a few cases of money bills) to an equal right of originating and altering every legislative measure. The opinion which those reformers entertain of what they term the corrupt influence of the Peers in the elections for members of the House of Commons, is a very clear indication of what they would be at, and what they will try to obtain; for they never mention the influence of the Peers but with acrimony, and as being of the

most baneful and dangerous nature. Again, let us consider the principle on which they proceed—Equal representation. Of this it is useless to say more than has been already said to show both its danger and absurdity; but here we must look at it in another view. We must consider, not what this equal representation would produce, but what it is meant to be, and particularly the principle on which it is founded.

The right of equal representation, which is the basis of all, does away all hereditary right, because by it election is essential to power in every form. In America, we have an example of what they want. There the senate is intended to have the controul that our British Peers have in England; but then they are elected as well as the members of the other House; and if Oliver Cromwell had hit upon the expedient of a senate, when he abolished the House of Peers, he would have had rather better success, because a senate is better than no controul at all, though the controul is very far inferior to that of a House of Peers; for the members of the senate are not independent and sitting there in their own right. This matter has been argued at length; and we have shown that the advantage of our House of Peers consists in that very independence which is so obnoxious to men acting upon a principle of equal representation *.

* Those reformers resemble the physician in one of Moliere's plays, whenthere was a consultation of several doctors respect-

It is obvious that the *radical* Reform of Parliament applies equally to both Houses, even by the fair construction of the words, as the Parliament consists of the two Houses; and if we couple that with the principle of election, which rises necessarily out of EQUAL REPRESENTATION, the general basis of the whole, it is not possible to remain a moment in doubt about the *radical* Reform being meant to extend to the House of Peers as well as to the House of Commons.

This is the more dangerous, that even the experiment of equal representation in France, which turned out so miserably, might, it may be said, have turned out differently if there had been a senate as in America (that is to say, two houses of representatives instead of one), to have prevented too much precipitation; and it must be admitted, that at the first view there is an appearance of justice in the observation. We must at all events admit the fact, that the expe-

ing the method of curing a patient. "I grant," said one doctor, "that your prescription will cure the man, but it is contrary to rule; mine will very probably kill him, but it is agreeable to rule; now, brother, consider—A dead man is but a dead man; but a rule broken is an injury to the faculty!"

The reformers reject happiness obtained by any other means than *equal representation*, that is their rule, and, like Moliere's physician, they will not allow it to be broken. Mr. Pope would say this is mistaking the scaffold for the pile; but Pope was not a modern philosopher.

riment was only made in France with one assembly, without a controul, and that, therefore, it is no example of what might have been the case had there been two assemblies, that is, a Senate and a Lower House*.

* Those who must yield to the arguments used in this work, drawn from the example of the French Assembly, may say, "It is true, you prove that universal representation, with only one assembly, ruined France—that the invention is horrible; but give us an elective senate to controul our other assembly, and then see what we shall do. There is no example of this sort before us; for the present Senate of France, as well as the other Assembly, are mere machines in the hands of Bonaparte, only meant as a propitiatory sacrifice made to the opinion in favour of representation, under the influence of which the Revolution took place, and which it would be very dangerous openly to despise." To this observation the answer is, that the example drawn from the French Assembly is certainly in some degree weakened by the circumstance of there having been but one Assembly. It is perfectly true, that this applies completely to the Constituent Assembly, that is, the Assembly which met first and framed the constitution. It applies also to the Convention, after that constitution was destroyed; for neither of these Assemblies acted under any controul; but the former reasoning will be found to apply perfectly to the Legislative Assembly, which, though not controuled by another assembly, ought to have been controuled by the constitution itself, that being the the most sacred of all controuls; but to this it never paid any attention, but when it suited itself. It evaded, resisted, and, when necessary, overturned the constitution, just as a company in England would dispense with some bye-law or temporary regulation. The *veto* of the king constitutionally granted was sus-

To so undeniable a fact, it is necessary to give a fair and plain answer; and it must be admitted, that, were not an assembly chosen by universal suffrage, so horrible a combination of persons in itself as to admit of no species of controul (save that of cannon and bayonets), a senate would be an advantageous modification; but such an assembly admits of no controul. This question it is not necessary to argue here at length, the question being, Whether *radical* reform does not necessarily comprehend a change in the House of Peers as well as in the House of Commons? Whether, amongst the leaders, that is not meant, and, even if it is not meant, whether it will not naturally and necessarily be the consequence of electing the members of the House of Commons on the new plan proposed?

If those who speak of a *radical* reform in Parliament understand language, they must know that Parliament comprehends both Houses; and

pended by a species of force, till it was thought more convenient to dethrone the king himself. This is the way that such an assembly acts; and had there been a senate, it would have thrown that aside, or suspended it, or done whatever else was thought proper or found necessary. The reasoning used and applied to the Legislative Assembly would have still applied as well if there had been a senate to controul; for no controul, however sacred, was of the least avail against the unruly thirst for destruction of men elected by the dregs of the people, as they must be under a system of equal representation.

that if they do not mean both, they should say a radical reform in the Commons House of Parliament only. That would be accurate; but there is every reason for thinking that it would be such a sort of accuracy as they do not wish for; it would at a future day, perhaps, circumscribe their operations in a manner they would be very sorry to see done, if, indeed, once let loose, they would stop at any thing. Parliament is a name including the two Houses, yet still there might be a reform in Parliament, not intended to extend to both: however, to satisfy us in that point, the adjective word *radical* is added, leaving no doubt with the inquiring man; and yet it has not given the alarm to those who only look at the surface of things *, who are either too

* Had the French orders, that is, the nobility and clergy, conceived at first that more was meant than was expressed, they would not have sunk without resistance under their enemies as they did; but they not only were not the first, but they were the last in seeing their danger.

We have seen the French clergy of all ranks in this country, since they were exiled from their own, and we have granted pity to misfortune; but it would be well to know, that the conduct of the clergy was in a great measure the cause of the terrible revolution that took place.

Intolerant to protestants, recusants, and every one who did not conform to the Church of Rome, without question or inquiry *,

* So late as 1785, the Protestants at Nismes and other places were obliged to assemble secretly amongst the mountains or woods, to perform divine worship; and Rabaut de St. Etienne, one of their ministers, was afterwards one of the great leaders of the Revolution, and a member of the first assembly.

indifferent or too unsuspecting to examine into the real intention.

they were completely negligent as to the real interests of the church; they would not admit of any sort of worship but their own, though they listened with complacency to the doctrine of those philosophic cheats whose aim and intentions were to overturn all religion.

A plan had been maturing over the whole of Europe for half a century, the evident end of which was to abolish religion, though the destruction of the established orders of government was also in view. Kings and nobles did not see that their overthrow was meditated; but the destruction of religion was so evident, that nothing but negligence in the extreme could have made the clergy blind to that. The fact was, that the intimate connection between the throne and the altar, formerly so well known (and of late years again become so evident,) was for some time forgotten; many princes, several kings, and one emperor, joined in the encouragement of a sect who laboured to overthrow them all.

That sect of philosophers began their labour about the middle of the last century, or rather sooner, under pretext of abolishing fanaticism; and indeed the persecutions that had at different times taken place, and even so late as the revocation of the edict of Nantz, in the latter days of Lewis XIV. gave their ostensible labours a justifiable motive.

Whether or not the first views of these men went only to the destruction of fanaticism, it is not necessary to inquire; but instead of doing that, by recurring to the original pure precepts of the Christian Church, the philosophers, as they were termed, aimed at overthrowing all religion, and substituting reason in its place; and this baneful project the French clergy allowed to be brought to maturity without any attempt to stop its progress.

A *radical* Reform, in its full and most extensive sense, signifies a compleat reform upon some

That they were ignorant of what was intended would be to suppose them fools; but that they were not so, is proved beyond dispute, by the following passage from a sermon preached in the cathedral church of Notre Dame at Paris, by the pious and worthy Father Beauregard, about thirteen years before the beginning of the Revolution.

"Yes, it is at the king," said the holy father, "at the king, and at religion, that the philosophers aim their blows. They have grasped the hatchet and the hammer. They only want a favourable moment to overturn the altar and the throne!—Yes, my God! thy temples will be plundered and destroyed; thy festivals abolished; thy sacred name blasphemed; thy worship proscribed! But what sounds great, great God do I hear! What do I behold! To the sacred canticles which caused the vaults of this temple to resound thy praise, succeed wanton and profane songs! And thou, infamous deity of Pagnanism, impure Venus, even thou dost advance hither, and, in the place of the living God, seat thyself on the throne of the holy of holies, and there receive the guilty incense of thy new adorers!*"

Such were the prophetic words of the eloquent preacher, but they produced no effect; the same negligence to the true interests of the church continued till the Revolution began, when its destruction was one of the first operations of the disciples of the philosophers; and it is worthy of being recorded, that so literally was the prediction of Father Beauregard fulfilled, that it was about sixteen years after he pronounced those prophetic words, that the

* When this sermon was preached, that immense church was crowded to the extreme. The eloquence, the pious zeal, and, more than all, the known hatred of father Beauregard to the philosophers, had brought numbers from every quarter, and, amongst them, many of this sect of philosophers, who were sadly mortified, and not a little alarmed; but they laughed and cried out "O! the fanatic!"

assumed principle of greater perfection; but even in its most limited acceptation it implies a *general reform*, extending to the whole of the substantive thing named, which in this instance *is Parliament*, that is to say, *both Houses of Parliament*. It is therefore certain that the persons with whom the guidance of this measure rests must mean a reform extending to the whole. Now, here, observe a colateral circumstance. It is only relative to the way of getting into Parliament that they seem to have an objection, which, connected with universal suffrage, is only applied by them to the House of Commons, but it applies still more compleatly to the members of the House of Peers, who have no consti-

ignorant and wicked atheists, who ruled in Paris, paid their impious adorations to the goddes of nature in the person of a naked common prostitute, placed upon the altar of that very church ... †.

The dignified clergy in France entered into all the plans and intrigues of the Court of Versailles; and, except in their costume, were men of fashion, to the full extent of the term, though there were some worthy exceptions. They might have done more to prevent the Revolution than the Sovereign could do, but they never attempted it; they rather gloried themselves in encouraging those *liberal opinions*, as they were called, under which appearance atheism, and the most detestable principles, lay concealed and were promulgated.

† I have seen some persons who were present at that sermon, who said, it was impossible to describe the awful appearance of the preacher, or the solemn, but ardent eloquence and energy with which he pronounced these words, which had no appearance of being premeditated, but were evidently the inspiration of the moment.

tuents, but can even vote by proxy when absent. This, according to the spirit of those radical reformers, is a much greater deviation from the true principle of legislation than any of those close boroughs (or rotten boroughs, as they are termed), against which they exclaim so loudly.

It is one of the great misfortunes of the present age, that men seek redress of real evils in theoretical rather than practical reforms. Speculative and plausible theories have led the present race of men astray, and they have fallen into the great error of mistaking secondary causes for original and primary ones.

Nothing is more absurd than to attribute all the imperfections of a legislative assembly to the mode of election, or to consider the mode of the election as the original primary cause of a good or bad representation, when the primary cause of the inconveniencies attendant on such assemblies lies in the imperfection of human nature itself. A representation of the people, let the elections be conducted as they may, will never attain any thing like perfection, either in practical effect or systematic arrangement; those therefore who excite discontent in a nation, because the representation is not perfect, ought well to consider what they are speaking about, and the consequences such speeches are like to produce.

There is not, in the most perfect possible state

of representation, an example of every one who pays taxes being represented; and if every one could be represented, probably we should not find it attended with any advantage farther than that wild theoretical one of being universal.

Universal suffrage, that political spell which is to remove every evil, was tried in France, and produced the most horrible association of representatives that ever was assembled. Never was there known a hord of banditti (who, from their situation, were at war with the rest of their race,) so atrociously corrupt in principle, or so completely wicked in practice, as the assembly chosen by universal suffrage. The cruel murders of the Royal Family of France, and of the most virtuous throughout the land of all the antient judges and men of principle and respectability; the elevation to power of Robespierre, and of men still worse, (though less known) were the result of the beautiful experiment of *equal representation** or *universal suffrage*. The soil of France

* The friends of universal suffrage will say that the comparison is not fair—that France is full of violent and vicious people, and that the English are wise and virtuous. Without contesting this point, however, as perhaps might be done with some degree of success, let us compare France with herself at different periods. The manner of electing the First or Constituent Assembly was, in theory, very imperfect. The Second or Legislative Assembly was chosen by an immense number of voters, and approached pretty near to general suffrage, as every man who paid half a

was stained with the blood of innocent men, who perished by thousands on the scaffold; and never did the most unrelenting conqueror treat a resisting people so cruelly as the representatives treated their constituents.

As this is the only example of the realizing

crown a year, direct taxes, had a vote: this included most of the population; but perfection was aimed at, and the Third Assembly, called the National Convention, was chosen by the *universal French Nation.* Every male who was of age (except debtors or paupers) had a vote. This was the ACME of political perfection, according to the theoretical reformers; and the history of the first five years of the Revolution (in our own time) proves that the real cause was thus—The first assembly, *chosen on wrong principles, was tolerably good;* the second, *chosen nearly by the perfect plan, was much worse*: and the third assembly, CHOSEN BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, WAS THE MOST EXECRABLE CONGREGATION OF PERSONS THAT EVER EXISTED. The representatives thus chosen, imprisoned, banished, and massacred their constituents, without so much as taking the trouble to put them on their trials. This is no exaggeration; all Europe trembled with horror at the cruelties that were committed with an impudent disregard for the rights of the very people who had placed them in authority. In one word, as the system of representation *got more perfect*, the representatives *got worse;* and, when the former became *quite perfect*, the latter became *quite infernal.*

The lower order would nominate in almost every instance; and, without inquiring into the advantage or disadvantage, the wisdom or policy of that, we must, in the first place, acknowledge, that it would be unfair; that it would leave those most interested in the preservation of the state in a situation the least able to protect it, or assist in its preservation.

that plan of representation which theoretical reformers aim at being put in practice, it cannot be useless to quote it, though only as a matter of curiosity. If, however, we consider that it is something more than a matter of curiosity, that the horrid result was a natural consequence of placing the power of chusing representatives into the hands of the poorer classes, who are in all countries the most numerous, and who will always, upon the plan of universal suffrage, have the most power, then we will admit that to follow such systematic theory is attended with incalculable danger.

We have observed, that in no nation whatever was the whole population ever represented; but still that observation did not carry the truth to the extent. If by being represented means having a vote, it may be proved, that in no antient state, nor in any modern one (except perhaps in the small republic of Geneva, and some of the Swiss cantons), have the third of the male population had votes. It seems sufficient for the purpose that there should be a number of electors to chuse representatives who will take care of their own liberties, in doing which they must necessarily take care of the liberties of the whole. They are all in one boat, and the electors must sink and suffer with the others; so that those who have votes and those who have none are

equally safe and equally well, for the voters, in securing themselves, secure the whole; and as in navigating a vessel, those who row or steer, and those who sit idle on a bench, must all sail or sink together, the grievance of having no vote is ideal, rather than real.

It was after the universal representation of France had covered the soil of that country with blood and the bones of its inhabitants, when even the waters of rivers were contaminated with the putrid bodies of its victims, that Ireland claimed for the Catholics a right of voting, on the principle that every citizen ought to have a vote. So little effect had example.

On this occasion, as on the former, the representation was held forth as the grievance; and the deluded people, who knew no better, thought they would obtain by those means what they felt to be still wanting to their comfort.

A number of years are necessary for the amelioration of an extensive country; and though Ireland was fast improving, yet much remained to be done, and the slow progress did not keep pace with the impatience of the people.

A most extensive and dangerous rebellion was concerted in 1796-7-8, the details of which are terrible and affecting in the extreme; but the transactions are much too recent, the relations too varied and contradictory, to admit of mi-

nute examination to any good purpose: only one conclusion is to be drawn from the whole *, "That whilst Ireland continued to be governed by a Parliament separate from that of England, there would be no means of making the country peaceable or happy."

All those persons who supported or brought forward the Union acted in consequence of this belief, and upon this principle; and indeed it would be very difficult to shew that they did not proceed on good grounds, as the experience of five centuries had proved the impossibility of making Ireland participate in the advantages of the British constitution whilst it had a separate Parliament.

* One party accuses the English government of perfidy in stimulating the Irish to revolt, and of punishing the revolted with the greatest severity, and with little regard to justice. The other again asserts, that the Irish were impatient and ungovernable, and were excited solely by French emissaries and Catholic priests. This is far the most probable in itself, and best supported by facts; but it is not a question to be agitated at length, for the reasons given in the text, because agitating such a question so soon would tend rather to produce irritation than conviction.—This, however, is certain, that there was a connection with France, and the revolt was stimulated by French emissaries, and a regular correspondence; and if the British and French governments stimulated the Irish rebels to the same acts at the same time, it was a singular co-operation of two powers that were so decidedly hostile to each other.

It was through a conviction of this that Mr. Pitt, after having maturely considered the subject, introduced this measure of a Legislative Union.

On the 31st of January, 1799, after a message from his Majesty was read, and after a very elaborate speech in support of the grand object, which the Sovereign had recommended, Mr. Pitt presented to the House these eight resolutions, which he had prepared, embracing the general plan of the Union:

"I. In order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be advisable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective Parliaments of his Majesty's said kingdoms.

"II. It would be fit to propose, as the first article, to serve as a basis of the said Union, that the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, on a day to be agreed upon, be united into one kingdom, by the name of "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

"III. For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that the succession to the monarchy,

and the imperial crown of the united kingdom, shall continue limited and settled in the same manner as the imperial crown of the said kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled according to the existing laws, and to the terms of the Union between England and Scotland.

"IV. For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that the said united kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be stiled "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that such a number of lords, spiritual and temporal, and such a number of members of the House of Commons, as shall hereafter be agreed upon by the acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament on the part of Ireland; and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an act of the Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every member hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the united kingdom shall, until the said Parliament shall otherwise provide, take, and subscribe the said oaths, and make the same declarations, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed, and made, by the members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

"V. For the same purpose it would be fit to

propose, that the Churches of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

"VI. For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that his Majesty's subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing, in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which treaties shall be made by his Majesty, his heirs or successors, with any foreign power, as his Majesty's subjects in Great Britain; that no duty shall be imposed on the import or export between Great Britain and Ireland of any articles now duty free; and that on other articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective Parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all articles, which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from foreign ports, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the like duties and regulations, as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts; that where

any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed, as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect; and that all matters of trade and commerce, other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the Union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the United Parliament.

"VII. For the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that the charge arising from the payment of the interest or sinking fund for the reduction of the principal of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that after the expiration of the time so to be limited, the proportion shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

"VIII. For the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that all laws in force at the time of the

Union, and all the courts of civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms, shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time, as circumstances may appear to the Parliament of the united kingdom to require."

Such was the plan or basis of the Union proposed between the two countries; and the greatest enemies of those who proposed it will allow, that in its principle it was equitable, and gave a full equality to Ireland, except in one thing where it was impossible for equality to subsist—The Parliament was to sit in England, and not in Ireland, which, as one Parliament could not sit in both, was, from the nature of things, unavoidable.

The example of the Union of the Parliament of Scotland, the effect it had produced on the peace and prosperity of that kingdom, and the still greater advantages that might be expected from the Irish Union, struck all those who were not biassed by party, or too ignorant to draw the parallel.

Scotland, neither from local circumstances, nor from the religion of the inhabitants *, nor

* Lord Grenville, in a very able speech, when he opened the business of the Union in the House of Peers, shewed clearly, that

from the nature of its internal government, stood so much in need of the Union as Ireland did, yet it has derived the greatest advantage from the measure; and as to the circumstance of national humiliation, supposed to be connected with the measure, it might be said to be nearly equal *: but, at any rate, the pride of Ireland could not claim any superior right to complain; and the interest of Ireland was much more likely to be advanced, even upon the first blush of the business; when, therefore, we consider the actual arrangements that did take place, Ireland has decidedly the advantage.

To those persons who, from habit, or any other cause, have an inveterate hatred to men who are distinguished either by rank or official situations, every argument to prove that the Union was founded on a conviction of the advantage to be expected from the measure will prove useless.

if ever the Roman Catholics were to be allowed a participation in voting for members of Parliament, the preparatory step must be the Union, such, or nearly such, as was then proposed.

* It will be seen, when we come to compare the two, that the terms of the Irish Union are much more favourable for that country than those granted to Scotland; and certainly candour must allow, that, as the throne of England had fallen to a King of Scotland only one century before the Union, and that Ireland had never been properly a separate and independent kingdom, it had not a right to expect better terms.

Such persons are as unchangeable in opinion as time in its progress; but the arguments used both in the English and Irish Parliament were founded on undeniable facts, drawn from the experience of a number of centuries, and indeed from the first period of the authentic history of Ireland, till the very moment that those arguments were produced. The situation of Ireland had been essentially ameliorated only eighteen years before the Union; yet during that short period discontents were greater than on any former occasion, and had even broken forth into acts of open rebellion, and not into a simple revolt against the authority of England, but revolt combined with France, her deadly enemy *; and that not in order to produce redress of grievances, but to separate Ireland from Britain for ever!

It is difficult to say whether the folly or the wickedness of this plan was the greater.—Had the rebels succeeded, they might have served the views of France; but, with Britain mistress

* The Dutch fleet, so gallantly and fortunately defeated by Admiral Duncan, was intended to carry assistance to the rebels in Ireland, with whom that measure had been combined. This fleet, sent by a nation that had abolished the Roman Catholic religion, and denied Christianity, was to have been received with open arms by the rebels in Ireland, the consequence of which might have been the total destruction of the country.

of the ocean, could they have been protected by that country? Could they have kept up any regular connection without a fleet of their own equal to that of Britain? Could they have maintained a connection with any other country? No, no. Had those patriots, as they termed themselves, succeeded, they would have been reduced to greater misery and distress than ever; and when we find the same people who had resisted Cromwell, and remained faithful to Charles I.—who resisted William, and remained faithful to James II., by both of which monarchs they had been severely governed and harshly treated, in open rebellion against a King who had done so much to make them free and happy as his present Majesty has done, we cannot but be convinced that a Legislative Union was necessary, because that was the only measure which could effectually remove the cause of complaint, by putting the people of Ireland on the same footing with those of England.

Those who brought about the Union have been blamed by the opposite party, and they have not been very strenuously defended by their own; but perhaps the business having been effected, they think that their best vindication will arise from the amelioration of Ireland, as the consequence of that event. In waiting till the result vindicates the measure, they might be right with a people less impatient than the Irish, or with a

people less violent under the effects of their impatience, but it ought to be considered, that the advantages produced will never be fully appreciated, if they are not properly laid before the public; those who will, at a future day, see the ameliorated state, will not have seen Ireland in its present condition, and they will not set the true value on the advantage*; or, even if they did, it is not easy to say what evils may arise before the Union has time to produce beneficial effects.

Every great change like that produced by the Union must be productive of evil to some individuals. There is no good without some mixture of ill: as for example—if it were possible to pay off the national debt, an evil of which so many complain, it would injure all those who live by the collection of taxes, and their dependents, who would all in their turn complain.—In Ireland, no doubt a very considerable num-

* There are many people in Scotland at this time, that think the Union injured the country. It was before that a kingdom, and had a Parliament of its own, which sounds high. It is now only a part of a kingdom, and it is the poorest part. These are facts from which a wrong conclusion is drawn. Scotland is richer, and the people enjoy infinitely more freedom, than before the Union, though that Union did not level the mountains, nor bring Scotland to a lower latitude, and nearer the sun. There are even persons lately arrived, from Dublin, in London, who confess that Ireland has prospered since the Union, but they have added, "in spite of the Union."

ber of individuals have been losers by the Union ; but that is not the criterion to go by. The question is, Has the balance been in favour of the gain, or the loss, or is it likely to be for the gain or for the loss of Ireland ?

Such is the important question, and whoever wishes to answer it, will consider the situation Ireland was constantly in, either from one cause or other, from the time it was first conquered till 1780. The situation of Ireland, from 1780 till the Union, makes a situation of a different sort ; and, lastly, the case of Scotland, before and after the Union, is to be considered as an example of what may be expected. During the first period, that is, from the reign of Henry II. till the year 1780, we find Ireland a most grievously oppressed country, although it had been amused with participating in all the advantages of Magna Charta. We find that revolt sanctioned oppression, and oppression sanctioned revolt, which it was unable to prevent; and we find not only that the acts of government, but the written laws, were, in a variety of instances, not only in direct violation of Magna Charta, but such as would disgrace the most arbitrary government in Europe, were it to enact them for an island peopled with slaves. We find this terrible situation of affairs to be rather the consequence of the difficulty of establishing a good

government, than from any wish to substitute a bad one; and therefore we must wish to remove those difficulties, which certainly, in a great part, consisted in the having separate parliaments, and which, therefore, so far as that was the case, were removed by the Union, and could not be well removed by any other measure.

In considering the second period of such short duration, viz. from the year 1780 to the end of the century, the conclusion in favour of the necessity of the Union is much stronger still.

Ireland had but just emerged from a very bad to a very tolerable state (to call it nothing more), when discontents began to be greater than ever. It was like a man relieved by the skill of his physician from the most violent cholic, attempting to destroy him who had administered relief before the sense of the benefit received had yet had time to be effaced. Remembrance of benefit is frequently obliterated by time; but since that was not the case, but that rancour and animosity followed the favour with great rapidity, which proves, that however much the situation of the people of Ireland was bettered by Britain, the minds of the people were not conciliated, and the government not of a nature to keep that spirit from breaking forth into open rebellion.

It was impossible, with the examples of such scenes of misery, always renewed under some

new form, and for some new cause, to expect rendering Ireland free and happy in itself, or making it an efficient integral part of the British empire, without an Union.

The Union has been represented as intended to complete the subjugation of Ireland. That was a very false and a very unfair representation. Not only to politicians, but to every unprejudiced man of common sense who knows the history of the country, it must have been evident that a complete change of system was necessary. To represent the Union as a measure unfriendly to Ireland, was the height of injustice. Ireland had been at the feet of England for centuries; it had been, as we have seen, worse treated than any country in Europe; yet this measure that would render such a situation of things impossible for the future, was represented as a new plan for making its situation worse.

The Irish, who had drawn a parallel between their own situation and that of America, found themselves by the Union placed exactly in the situation to which America had aspired, yet so far from feeling satisfaction, this only afforded new cause for discontent; it was therefore impossible to expect, that, without a change of a complete nature, any measure could be taken that would reconcile Ireland.

The circumstances under which the Irish

nation, or rather the population of Ireland, shewed its enmity to Great Britain during the last rebellion, were such as gave a particular colour of atrocity to that affair. The Roman Catholic religion, which the majority of the Irish professed, had been abolished or trampled under foot. The liberties of the French, with whom the Irish wished to unite and coalesce, had been totally destroyed: England was in reality the only barrier between Ireland and a state of complete subjugation and slavery; yet it was at this moment that the Irish people chose to espouse the cause of France, and become a thorn in the side of England *. After such a continuation of misfortune and misunderstanding between the two nations, attended with such melancholy consequences, the necessity of some great alteration

* There is not a more melancholy example of the effects of party spirit than that afforded by the Opposition in England to the men who did their utmost endeavours to lead the people of Ireland astray. The trials at Maidstone, and the character and conduct of the people tried at Maidstone, and the efforts that were made to screen them, when coupled with the sufferings of the poor deluded people who were their victims, is a most undeniable proof of the danger of leading the population of a country into an idea of fighting upon what is termed principle, when such men are, from the nature of things, incapable of understanding what principle is.

The amelioration of the state of the people with respect to

was evident. That the British ministry, and those who brought the Union to bear, were friendly in every way to Ireland, may be concluded from this fact, that the number of representatives admitted into the British House of Commons was objected to by the very persons who had been before, and have been since, in the habit of speaking of Ireland as an oppressed country.

It will be seen from the debates of the time, that Mr. Pitt was opposed on account of treating Ireland too well; and whoever is inclined to view his conduct in that affair with candour, and without prejudice, will admit, that his adversaries were abundantly severe on him; and that he was at great pains to improve upon the plan of the Union with Scotland, to the errors of which he did not shut his eyes. In this there was great merit as a minister; for the prerogative or power of the crown would have gained by an adherence to the plan of the Union with Scotland *.

tythes—with respect to what are termed middle-men, to whom estates are let in the first instance by the proprietors, and by whom they are sub-let to tenants at high rents, and on severe conditions, are real evils. To redress such grievances would be a real advantage; to talk of emancipation and equal representation, is only delusion.

* The following extracts from the Fourth and Seventh Articles of the Union show its spirit and nature.—The rest is matter of regulation, and of no importance in this place—

The number of Irish peers who have seats in the United Parliament, is not so great as it would then have been; and they are elected for life, which

"ART. IV.—That it be the Fourth Article of Union, that four lords spiritual of Ireland, by rotation of sessions, and twenty-eight lords temporal of Ireland, elected for life by the peers of Ireland, shall be the number to sit and vote on the part of Ireland in the House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom; and one hundred Commoners (two for each county of Ireland, two for the city of Cork, one for the university of Trinity College, and one for each of the thirty-one most considerable cities, towns, and boroughs), be the number to sit and vote on the part of Ireland in the House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom:

"That any person holding any peerage of Ireland now subsisting, or hereafter to be created, shall not thereby be disqualified from being elected to serve, if he shall so think fit, for any county, city or borough of Great Britain, in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, unless he shall have been previously elected as above, to sit in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom; but that so long as such Peer of Ireland shall so continue to be a member of the House of Commons, he shall not be entitled to the privilege of peerage, nor be capable of being elected to serve as a peer on the part of Ireland, or of voting at any such election; and that he shall be liable to be sued, indicted, proceeded against, and tried as a commoner, for any offence with which he may be charged.

"That it shall be lawful for his Majesty, his heirs and successors, to create peers of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, and to make promotions in the peerage thereof, after the Union; provided that no new creation of any such peers shall take place after the Union, until three of the peerages of Ireland,

renders them, when once elected, independent, as peers should be, and which, it has been observed in the Conclusion to the Peerage of Scotland, is

which shall have been existing at the time of the Union, shall have become extinct; and upon such extinction of three peerages, that it shall be lawful for his Majesty, his heirs and successors, to create one peer of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland; and in like manner so often as three peerages of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland shall become extinct, it shall be lawful for his Majesty, his heirs and successors, to create one other peer of the said part of the United Kingdom; and if it shall so happen that the peers of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, shall, by extinction of peerage or otherwise, be reduced to the number of one hundred, exclusive of all such peers of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland as shall hold any peerage of Great Britain subsisting at the time of the Union, or of the United Kingdom created since the Union, by which such peer shall be entitled to an hereditary seat in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom, then and in that case it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty, his heirs and successors, to create one peer of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, as often as one of such one hundred peerages shall fail by extinction, or as often as any one peer of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland shall become entitled, by descent or creation, to an hereditary seat in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom; it being the true intent and meaning of this article, that at all times after the Union it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty, his heirs and successors, to keep up the peerage of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland to the number of one hundred, over and above the number of such of the said peers as shall be entitled by descent or creation to an hereditary seat in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom:

not the case there. The Irish Union in this avoided one of the greatest errors that was committed in the Union with Scotland; and it is

"That if any peerage shall at any time be in abeyance, such peerage shall be deemed and taken as an existing peerage; and no peerage shall be deemed extinct, unless on default of claimants to the inheritance of such peerage for the space of one year from the death of the person who shall have been last possessed thereof; and if no claim shall be made to the inheritance of such peerage, in such form and manner as may from time to time be prescribed by the House of Lords of the United Kingdom, before the expiration of the said period of a year, then and in that case such peerage shall be deemed extinct; provided that nothing herein shall exclude any person from afterwards putting in a claim to the peerage so deemed extinct; and if such claim shall be allowed as valid, by judgment of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom, reported to his Majesty, such peerage shall be considered as revived; and in case any new creation of a peerage of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland shall have taken place in the interval, in consequence of the supposed extinction of such peerage, then no new right of creation shall accrue to his Majesty, his heirs or successors, in consequence of the next extinction which shall take place of any peerage of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland.

"That all questions touching the election of members to sit on the part of Ireland in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom shall be heard and decided in the same manner as questions touching such elections in Great Britain now are, or at any time hereafter shall by law be, heard and decided; subject nevertheless to such particular regulations in respect of Ireland as, from local circumstances, the Parliament of the United Kingdom may from time to time deem expedient.

evident, that if those who arranged the Articles of Union had wished the influence of the crown to have been extended in the House of Peers,

" That the qualifications in respect to property of the members elected on the part of Ireland in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom shall be respectively the same as are now provided by law in the cases of elections for counties and boroughs respectively in that part of Great Britain called England, unless any other provision shall hereafter be made in that respect by act of Parliament of the United Kingdom:

" That the Lords of Parliament on the part of Ireland, in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom, shall at all times have the same privileges of parliament which shall belong to the Lords of Parliament on the part of Great Britain; and the Lords spiritual and temporal respectively on the part of Ireland shall at all times have the same rights in respect of their sitting and voting upon the trial of peers, as the Lords spiritual and temporal respectively on the part of Great Britain; and that all Lords spiritual of Ireland shall have rank and precedency next and immediately after the Lords spiritual of the same rank and degree of Great Britain; and shall enjoy all privileges as fully as the Lords spiritual of Great Britain do now or may hereafter enjoy the same (the right and privilege of sitting in the House of Lords, and the privileges depending thereon, and particularly the right of sitting on the trial of peers, excepted); and that the persons holding any temporal peerage of Ireland, existing at the time of the Union, shall, from and after the Union, have rank and precedency next and immediately after all the persons holding peerages of the like orders and degrees in Great Britain, subsisting at the time of the Union; and that all peerages of Ireland created after the Union shall have rank and precedency with the peerages of the United Kingdom so created, according to the dates of their

they would not have made peers eligible for life.

Again, as to the right of peers who are not of the thirty for the House of Lords having a right

creatio s; and that all peerages both of Great Britain and Ireland, now subsisting or hereafter to be created, shall in all other respects, from the date of the Union, be considered as peerages of the United Kingdom; and that the peers of Ireland shall, as peers of the United Kingdom, be sued and tried as peers, except as aforesaid, and shall enjoy all privileges of peers as fully as the peers of Great Britain; the right and privilege of sitting in the House of Lords, and the privileges depending thereon, and the right of sitting on the trial of peers, only excepted."

"ART. VII.—That it be the Seventh Article of Union, that the charge arising from the payment of the interest, and the sinking fund for the reduction of the principal, of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively, except as hereinafter provided:

"That for the space of twenty years after the Union shall take place, the contribution of Great Britain and Ireland, respectively, towards the expenditure of the United Kingdom in each year, shall be defrayed in the proportion of fifteen parts for Great Britain, and two parts for Ireland; and that at the expiration of the said twenty years, the future expenditure of the United Kingdom (other than the interest and charges of the debt in which either country shall be separately liable) shall be defrayed in such proportion as the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall deem just and reasonable, upon a comparison of the real value of the exports and imports of the respective countries, upon an average of the three years next preceding the period of revision."

Upon the Fourth Article, the following debate took place in Parliament:

to become candidates for the Commons, it is a most ingenious device to avoid that political disqualification to which a considerable majority of

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (on the 25th April 1799) rose and said, he was not aware, after what he had stated on a former night, that it would be necessary for him to pass time in explaining or shewing the propriety of the *Fourth* Article; however, there was only one alteration he proposed to make in the printed resolution, which was, that after the words "it shall be lawful for the present members of the Irish House of Commons to be returned to the United Parliament," there be inserted these: "Provided always, and be it hereby enacted, That no more than twenty of the members so returned shall hold any place or pension under the crown; that if the number who most lately received their office shall resign it, and that no person in office shall be eligible for Ireland as long as there are twenty Irish members who always hold offices."

Mr. Grey observed, that there were several amendments he wished to move to this article, however he would defer moving them till the report should be brought up. There was one particular he could not help strenuously opposing, the extension of the number of Irish placemen who should sit in the House, to twenty, thus one-fifth of the whole might hold places. According to a noble Lord's statement, there were only fifty-two placemen at present in the British House of Commons, which did not constitute one tenth part of the whole. Mr. Grey then moved, that the number be limited to ten.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, that though the number of places held by members of the British House of Commons did not exceed fifty-two, yet there was a much larger number tenable. This, he observed, was a pretty clear proof of the moderation of the Crown, and that it would never abuse the con-

the peers of Scotland was condemned by the Union with that kingdom.

It must be admitted that Ireland has been well

fidence entrusted to it. There were two points which he would wish to lay down: that it was not proper to make it part of the Union, to fix definitely the number of places to be held by the Irish members; and that it was not proper to leave the matter altogether undetermined, as such a number might be held by them as might influence their decision on the final arrangement. He had wished to make the limitation rather higher than was necessary, because he thought it would be improper to reduce any who had performed service to their country to the disagreeable alternative of either resigning their employment, or ceasing to represent their constituents. It had been stated on a former night, that great corruption must have been practised towards those who voted for the Union in Ireland, as out of these there were 116 held offices under government; on this occasion he could not help correcting an error so very gross. The honourable member had counted the number of Irish members of every description who had held offices, and of these forty-eight only voted for the Union.

Mr. Grey remarked, that he believed the former statement to be very much within the fact.

Mr. Banks said, he felt considerable alarm at the introduction of 100 Irish members into the British House of Commons, and particularly that so many of them as twenty should be allowed to hold places or pensions. These twenty, he said, we might count pretty surely upon voting with the minister, and many would be connected with them by blood, by friendship, by civility, or by interest. He thought the most proper way would be to allow only the same proportion of placemen amongst them as there now was among ourselves.

treated with respect to the portion of expences it has been allotted to pay, which is less than in the proportion of its representation in the House of Commons.

The Secretary of War observed there were two questions: 1st, What should be done finally to prevent the over influence of the Crown? 2d, What temporary regulations should now be made for that purpose? The first, he said, it was impossible to discuss then; the second he should have thought it much better to have left unsettled.

Mr. Harrison wished to know whether the twenty members who were to come with places on their backs would be at liberty to accept of others on this side of the water?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer answered, that as many Irish offices were tenable by British members of Parliament, it would be very unfair not to permit British offices to be held by Irish members. An honourable gentleman had said, that all those places which were to return members were close boroughs. He allowed that several of them were; but he never said nor thought they were a grievance. They were the principal places in Ireland, and ought to be preferably represented.

Mr. Buxton thought the Union would trench more upon the prerogative of the Crown than the rights of the people.

Dr. Lawrence remarked, that as the population of Great Britain was estimated at ten millions, and that of Ireland at three, Ireland ought not to be allowed to send so many members as 100, while Great Britain sends only 558.

Mr. Wilberforce was of opinion, that as the resolution was to pass, he should rather vote for it as it was, than make any specific alteration on it.

Mr. Grey's motion was then negatived without a division, and the fourth resolution agreed to by the committee.

It may be said that one hundred members is not a sufficient proportion, either taking the extent or population of Ireland; but it will be observed, that the members who opposed the Union *in toto* opposed this article also, and said they were too many; so that in giving Ireland that number, the minister did all that he was able to do in favour of that country.

From the extracts from the Fourth and Seventh Articles, contained in the note given, and the reasoning to which they gave rise in the House of Commons, it appears clearly that the ministers acted, and meant to act, liberally towards Ireland: that they did not aim at converting the Union into the means of giving greater extent to the power of the crown; and that the cry of the corrupt manner by which the Parliament of Ireland had been brought to sanction the measure, is contradicted by incontrovertible facts.

This is not a place to enter into party discussions, or to make severe observations on those who opposed the Union; it is sufficient to have shown that those who brought forward the laudable measure acted from cogent reasons, and on pure principles; consequently they deserve the greatest praise, and cannot, with any degree of justice, be thought liable to blame or censure.

Unfortunately for mankind, those who are actively concerned in any measure of great import-

ance are generally suspected of being in part at least actuated by private interest, while the men who oppose it as frequently pass for being completely disinterested. The tendency of this judgment is to throw a cloud over every great measure like that of the Union; and this tendency to suspicion of motives is greatly assisted by the natural indolence of mankind, who resolve the question of motives more easily by attributing them to private and interested views, than by fairly examining whether such circumstances do not really exist, as might appear, when unbiassedly weighed by any honest and intelligent man, such as would show a solid and honourable motive of action.

The peers of Ireland have come in for more than their share of those rash and ill-founded suspicions. Nothing is more decidedly ascertained than that every attempt which had previously been made to make Ireland participate in the liberty and prosperity of England had failed; it was therefore the duty of the Peers of Ireland to support and give efficacy to the only measure that remained, from which a happy and permanent result might be expected.

The Peers of Ireland concurred in the measure, and most certainly not for the purpose of aggrandising themselves, of whom the far greater portion were reduced, in political importance, to

the situation and rank of Commoners. To attribute to the members of this body interested motives separately from the great object of the welfare of their country, is therefore contrary to every human rule of judgment *, as there are great and sufficient reasons for their conduct, which are obvious, and in no degree connected with personal interests farther than the personal interests of every honest man and good subject are connected with the prosperity of his country.

The manner in which the Union was passed was such, as, if fairly considered, must free those who have been blamed from any wrong conduct in the affair; for where any party does what seems best, after each trying to do more than they are able to effect, it is at least a proof that they are sincere, and not actuated by any intentions but such as are fair and honourable.

That Ireland obtained more advantageous terms than those who opposed the Union in the

* If men be determined to seek for a secret and *bad motive* of action when an apparent and good one exists, they follow a principle that would, if universal, destroy all confidence or esteem amongst mankind. Imagination may always assign a supposed motive when no obvious one exists; but imagination has not a right to act where there is reality; much less have any set of men a right to assign to others bad motives, when good ones are in full evidence. This reasoning applies completely to those who supported the Union, and equally so to their detractors.

English Parliament were willing to grant, is a fact upon record; it is therefore fair, and, indeed, unavoidable to admit, that those who promoted the Union wished that the interest of Ireland might be attended to as much as lay in their power *; and they seem to have studied every thing that could be done to do away for ever those disadvantages and inconveniences under which Ireland had laboured till that time.

The Peers of Ireland deserve great praise; yet they nevertheless have gotten great blame, and have been represented as selling their country, when it would have been much nearer the truth to say, that they *sold themselves to save their country!*

It is not easy to avoid saying something about what is termed the Roman Catholic question, if we aim at a compleat review of the conduct of those who proposed and promoted the Union. If any measure could prepare the way, with safety, for the granting political rights to the Catholics, the Union was that measure, as Lord Grenville

* Amongst other things, the manufacturers of woollen cloths and cotton stuff took the alarm in England; and therefore it is clear, that whatever men might say for political purposes, those persons who brought about the Union did every thing in their power to make it advantageous for Ireland. The accusing them of the contrary is rather singular, and is one of the most unjust aspersions ever witnessed.

very truly and very properly said, when he first opened the business in the British House of Lords; and the ill humour occasioned by that measure not having hitherto been adopted, is only a proof of that same sort of impatience which has so constantly been injurious to Ireland.

The situation of the people of Ireland has, within the last generation, in our own time, and within our own remembrance, been more improved than from its first conquest till the year 1780*; yet, because something remains to be done, discontent runs still high, and under those circumstances it may be fairly questioned, whether such discontent does not give reason to ask this question, "When they have gotten all they demand, will they be more satisfied than they are now? Hitherto concession, on the part of England, has not produced any beneficial effect in

* The reader will see with pleasure, in the biography of Lord Sefford, that he refused to thank the volunteers for their conduct, observing, that men who argued with their Sovereign with arms in their hands were not objects of approbation. Let the reader remember, that the same excellent man, when Mr. Serjeant Hewit, in England, offered to resign rather than support the court in measures which he thought against the liberties of the people. Such firmness and just impartiality are more honourable than the greatest acts of bravery and courage. The volunteers were the men who boasted that they had extorted conditions from England, which we have shown, however, was not the case—they were not extorted.

conciliating the people of that country, yet we have seen what they have obtained. Dazzled with the wild but vast and gigantic efforts of the French to become free in the beginning of the Revolution, the Irish people have since seen that same people sunk in the most submissive and most disgraceful despotism, without withdrawing that approbation of them which they granted under very different circumstances *. There is in this an apparent contradiction; but the truth is, that discontent with the British government was the cause, all along, of the enthusiasm in favour of France; but certainly, after religion had been abolished, its ministers either put to flight, massacred or imprisoned; no people who professed christianity, either Roman Catholics or Protestants, could have any desire to coalesce with France on account of religion.

On a full view of the affairs of Ireland from the

* It is a most singular circumstance attendant on the Revolution of France, that those who admired the republicans still admire the French, though under a more submissive and slavish yoke than ever was imposed on any nation!

The solution of this apparent riddle is neither more nor less than this—a wish for a change was the cause for the first apparent enthusiasm, and not any concern for French politics; and as that wish for change (that is the cause) continues, the pretended attachment to the French interest continues also. The friends of the French even carry the matter so far as to impute the failure of the plan of liberty to the war undertaken by England!

earliest period, nothing but an union of the two Parliaments could be expected to benefit the country completely; and however that measure may be now condemned by some persons, we may learn from publications nearly contemporary with the Union of England and Scotland, that Ireland was envious of that measure at that time. Dean Swift, who passed a very active life in exciting discontent in his native country, on every occasion, does in his fallacious and obscene allegory of *The Injured Lady*, (however much he may misrepresent facts,) prove clearly that the Union with Scotland was looked upon with envious eyes in Ireland*; but when an Union with Ireland

* From all Dean Swift's writings it is evident, that his great aim was to excite discontnet in his native country. Whoever reads his letters about Wood's halfpence with attention must see, that he went on that plan. Swift tried, as Voltaire has done since, to mix wit, scurrility, political economy, and philosophy all together; and the effect has been in both cases, that the wit and ill nature have given currency to calculations and opinions, which without their assistance would have been held in contempt. When a man talks of a great nation being utterly ruined by a coinage of bad halfpence to the amount of 50,000*l.* one is at a loss which to admire most, his ignorance or his impudence; but when we find him seriously calculate that those halfpence would rob each shopkeeper of 160*l.*, it is so absurd, that it cannot be attributed to ignorance, as by his own calculation the robbery would have amounted to more than ten times the whole nominal value of the halfpence. In the present day, when, from experience,

was proposed on more advantageous terms, it was opposed, not indeed by the same persons who were no more, but by persons who followed the same line of politics, and inherited that hostility to every measure originating in England,

we know more of the business, we know perfectly well, that though it was a villainous job (and it certainly was very improper to force such a measure), yet it could be of no serious injury to the country: that, in fact, it was in itself a matter of very little importance, taken hold of by men who wished to excite discontent, and handled in such a manner as to answer the purpose. This, by way of observation, is a proof that the people of Ireland are easily acted upon, and that a minor object may be palmed upon them for a major one, with uncommon facility and success. As to most other of the complaints urged by Dean Swift about trade, freedom, &c. they have been done away by this very Union, now so unpopular amongst the very people who would have supported it, had it been proposed by the Dean or those of his party. Of all the complaints made by Dean Swift, who was collector of complaints, which he blowed up as a butcher does a calf (to speak in his own style), the absentee is the only one not remedied, but rather augmented; it is at the same time necessary to remark, that every county of England has equal reason to complain of absentees. In no part of the island is the rent of land expended on the estates, but in the capital, where the court resides, law and justice administered, &c. This evil, however, if it be an evil, carries its antidote with it; for it is by the luxury originating in large towns that the produce of farms in the country is enhanced in value. As well might the distant parts of Ireland complain of gentry residing in Dublin, as of others residing in London; but such reasoning does not suit discontented men, or men who wish to disseminate discontent.

by which Swift and the patriots of his day were actuated.

The Irish Union was a far more advantageous measure for Ireland than the Scottish Union was for Scotland: First, because the Irish nation wanted it more; and, secondly, because it was more liberal in its conditions, and better arranged; it is therefore very unfair to consider the Union as being forced upon Ireland, or as being a harsh measure, for it is the very measure that those who opposed the Union would have brought forward long ago, if they had expected to have been able to accomplish it.

Every great change must necessarily injure some individuals, and those will naturally use the right of the injured in lamenting and complaining; but the object of every alteration, like that of the Union, is the general good, not any partial or particular advantage for an individual, or any class of individuals.

It is not, however, to any particular class of individuals that discontents relative to the Union are confined: they are extended to all those persons who systematically oppose English measures, of which it is one; but as they do not extend much farther, they are to be considered as proceeding from party, and not from principle. One of the greatest evils of a free constitution is, that there necessarily exists under it a prin-

ciple of opposition (that is, two parties), and therefore every measure that is taken, being the work of one party, must be run down by the other: it follows, then, not merely as a matter of course, but of necessity, that the Union must be condemned by those who had no hand in bringing it to bear; and if it had been, or possibly could have been, twice as advantageous for Ireland as it is, the complaints against it would have been the same which they now are.

It is of importance for the inhabitants of both countries, but particularly for those of Ireland, to consider how much their country has been led astray by men wishing to excite discontent; and how advantageous it would be for both countries to forget antient grievances and antient animosities, and proceed forward for the future with a firm design of increasing mutual prosperity, by encouraging mutual confidence.

It affords much consolation, in contemplating the history of Ireland, disastrous as it is, to see that the oppression it suffered was neither owing to the English people nor to the English monarchs, but to the underlings of men in power, and to a bad, or rather unfortunate, arrangement that prevented the two countries from coming to a fair understanding. It is no less satisfactory to find, that the resistance on the part of the Irish never originated in a hatred to England, but to

particular circumstances acting on active, impatient, and irritable minds, which excited them to deeds of which their enemies took the advantage; at the same time it must be admitted, that there has not been that firmness, united with moderation, in the Irish people, which forms so admirable a part of the English character.

This assertion is not made with the smallest intention of depreciating the Irish character, or exalting that of the English nation, but with a serious wish of impressing on the Irish people an idea of the necessity of being firm and moderate when any point is intended to be gained.

As one very recent and striking example in the case of the Roman Catholic petition, at this moment in London, in order to be presented to his Majesty, we see, from the able letter of Lord Grenville to the Earl of Fingall, that the Catholics, who boast of being the majority in Ireland, are neither quite moderate nor consistent in their claims. They pretend to aim simply at an equality of rights with Protestants, which, considering all circumstances, is certainly sufficient; but in doing so, they, perhaps through inadvertency, or not noticing the great impropriety of the demand, ask that the bishops should be nominated without any controul on the part of his Majesty, which is, in the first place, asking for themselves an independence of

the Sovereign, which the Established Church never aimed at possessing. This is asking more than they profess to ask, and far more than they claim a right to demand; and, at the same time, is shewing that they want confidence in their Sovereign, which, to shew in a petition, which they hope graciously to be granted, looks as if they wanted to secure a refusal.

On this subject Lord Grenville writes with great propriety and justice, abstaining carefully from that asperity which might have been excusable in his Lordship, as he had himself been the best friend of the Roman Catholics, and acted as their organ when they professed not to ask any such superiority over every branch of the Christian religion *.

* The following Extracts from Lord Grenville's excellent Letter to the Earl of Fingall, dated 22d January, 1810, will set this matter in its proper light, which is given here, that it may remain upon record:

"MY LORD,

"I HAVE the honour to address this Letter to your Lordship, in reply to that which I received from you, respecting the petition with which you are charged.

"I must, in the first place, assure your Lordship, that my opinion remains unchanged as to the object of your petition. It would be an act of undeniable wisdom and justice to communicate to our fellow-subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion, the full enjoyment of our civil constitution. Such a measure, accompanied by suitable arrangements maturely prepared,

It is, however, absurd to suppose, that this is demanded inadvertently; it has some meaning and ultimate aim, which is disavowed in the general declaration of only wishing to be put upon

and deliberately adopted, would, I am confident, above all others, give strength and unity to the empire, and increased security to its religions and civil establishments. Your Lordship is well aware, that on this conviction only have I supported it. To those establishments I am unalterably attached; their inviolable maintenance I have ever considered as essential to all the dearest interests of my country.

"I have twice already, at the request of the Catholics of Ireland, moved the House of Lords to take the subject into consideration. I did not in either case think myself responsible for your determination as to the time of agitating the question; a determination which, in the first instance, I had not suggested, and which, in the last, I had in my place in Parliament publicly dissuaded: but recent events had in both cases imposed upon me a peculiar duty, not merely for my own honour, but in justice also to your cause, to prove by my conduct, on the earliest occasion afforded by yourselves, that no change of public situation, no prejudice, no calumny, no clamour, could either vary or suppress my opinions on this great national question. This duty has, I trust, been fully satisfied.

"Circumstanced as this question now is, both in England and in Ireland, it is my deliberate opinion, that no motion grounded on your petition could at this time, in any hands, certainly not in mine, be brought forward without great and permanent disadvantages to its object.

"This opinion is founded, not only on the present known dispositions of Government and Parliament, but also on the unexpected difficulties which have arisen in Ireland, on the impres-

the same footing with Protestants. When the French Revolution began, the famous Abbe Sieyes wrote a pamphlet, to which he owed his celebrity, and the Revolution its first great im-

sions which they may too probably create, and on the embarrassments which they unavoidably produce.

" Many circumstances compel me to speak to your Lordship more at large of the recent proceedings in Ireland; with reference both to their origin and to their consequences. For this purpose I must beg leave to recal to your Lordship's recollection the grounds on which the consideration of these petitions has uniformly been recommended to Parliament. That which you have asked, and which has been supported by the greatest Statesman of our time, now no more, is not in its nature a single or unconnected measure. Its objects are, the peace and happiness of Ireland, and the union of the empire in affection as well as in government. Vain indeed would be the hope of accomplishing such purposes, solely by the repeal of a few partial disqualifications, remaining by a strange anomaly amidst the ruins of a whole code of proscription. To impute to you this visionary pretension, has been the artifices of your opponents. The views of your friends have been more enlarged.

" With the just and salutary extension of civil rights to your body must be combined, if tranquillity and union be our object, other extensive and complicated arrangements. All due provision must be made for the inviolable maintenance of the religious and civil establishments of this united kingdom: much must be done for mutual conciliation, much for common safety, many contending interests must be reconciled, many jealousies allayed, many long-cherished and mutual destructive prejudices eradicated.

" Such at least has always been my own declared opinion.—

pulse, in which he claimed for the Tiers Etat (that is, the people at large) a participation of power with the other orders, the clergy and nobility. What, said the crafty priest, is the Tiers

When this matter was last under the consideration of Parliament, I had occasion to dwell with particular earnestness on this necessity; I invited the suggestions of others for providing for it; and I enumerated several measures which eight years before had been in the contemplation of the government of which I then formed a part, and in conjunction with which I had cherished the vain hope of rendering this great service to my country.

"*Among these measures, I pointed out the proposal of vesting in the crown an effectual negative on the appointment of your Bishops.* That suggestion had previously been brought forward in the House of Commons, to meet the just expectations, not of any bigotted or interested champions of intolerance, but of men of the purest intentions and most enlightened judgment—men willing to do all justice to the loyalty of your present bishops, but not unreasonably alarmed at any possibility by which functions of such extensive influence might hereafter be connected with a foreign interest hostile to the tranquillity of your country: A danger recently very much increased by the captivity and deposal of the head of your church, by the seizure of his dominions, and by the declared intention of that hostile government to assume in future the exclusive nomination of his successors. The suggestion thus opened to Parliament, produced there impressions highly favourable to your cause; it was received as the surest indication of those dispositions without which all concession must be nugatory, and all conciliation hopeless. To my mind it had been recommended by long reflection. It had formed a part of the original conception of those measures as consequent upon the Union. It was now again brought forward with the concurrence

Etat?—Politically Nothing—physically Every Thing—yet it only aspires to be Something!

This modest demand of being Something concealed the ambitious project of swallowing up

of the two individuals from whose opinions those generally prevalent among your body might best be inferred; of the agent of the very persons to whose office it related; and of your Lordship, to whom, in addition to every other claim to respect and confidence, the exclusive charge of the petition had recently been committed. *What I said on the subject, in the House of Lords, was spoken in the hearing of both; and I received from both, while the impression was yet recent on your minds, the most gratifying acknowledgments of your satisfaction in all that I had stated.*

"It was never, I believe, imagined by any of us, that what then passed could be binding on the opinions of the petitioners. The Roman Catholics of Ireland are not a corporate body. They speak through no common organ. Their various wishes and interests, like those of their fellow-subjects, can be collected only from general information; and any opinions erroneously attributed to them, they, like all other persons, are fully entitled to disclaim.

"*I learnt, however, with deep and heart-felt regret, the subsequent proceedings which took place in Ireland, in consequence of this suggestion.* To discuss the grounds of those proceedings would be foreign from my present purpose. Their effect obviously must be not only to revive expiring prejudices, but to clog with fresh embarrassments every future discussion of any of the measures connected with your petitions. To myself unquestionably the difficulty of originating at this time any fresh discussion respecting those measures, does, in such circumstances, appear almost insuperable.

the other orders; but the Jesuit concealed his aim till he had obtained sufficient force to dispense with argument. The Irish Roman Catholics are more open, or at least they are less dangerously

"Let me not, however, be misunderstood. When I speak of the necessity of combining with the accomplishment of your wishes provisions of just security to others, I am no less desirous of consulting every reasonable apprehension on your part.

"To the forms indeed of those securities I attach comparatively little importance. A pertinacious adherence to such details, in opposition even to groundless prejudice, I consider as the reverse of legislative wisdom. I look only to their substantial purposes; the safety of our own establishments, the mutual goodwill of all our fellow-subjects, and the harmony of the united kingdom.

"That adequate arrangements may be made for all these purposes, consistently with the strictest adherence on your part to your own religious tenets, is the persuasion which you have long been labouring to establish, and of which I have uniformly professed my own conviction.

"Were it otherwise, I should indeed despair. But that these objects may be reconciled, in so far at least as respects the appointment of your bishops, is known with undeniable certainty. It is proved by the acquiescence of your church in similar arrangements under other governments, by the sentiments which many of yourselves still entertain as to the proposal suggested in 1808, and most of all by the express consent formerly given to that proposal by the most considerable of your own bishops.

"I see, therefore, in the present state of the subject, much unexpected embarrassment, and many difficulties, which renewed discussion, in the present moment, must, instead of soothing, inevitably aggravate. There is, however, no ground for ultimate

circumspect; for although they begin with a demand which appears reasonable, yet they do not wait till they have obtained that, but, without waiting, go a length that is neither prudent, nor

discouragement. The sentiment of reciprocal confidence, the spirit of mutual conciliation, would surmount far greater obstacles.

" To Parliament, when any more favourable conjuncture for this discussion shall arise, every information may properly be supplied, every wish imparted, every apprehension communicated. There only, by a systematic and comprehensive arrangement, can all the various difficulties be surmounted, which on every side embarrass this extensive subject. To be effective and permanent, such an arrangement must be mutually satisfactory.

" This is alike the interest of every member of the British empire, but to none more important than to the Catholics of Ireland. The stability of all your civil rights, both of those which you already enjoy, and of those to which you seek to be admitted, essentially depends on the tranquillity and harmony of your country, on banishing from it every hostile influence, and composing all its internal differences.

" These opinions I have expressed to your Lordship with the freedom of a tried and zealous advocate of your cause. On these grounds alone have I ever attempted to do justice to it. To have argued it on any other would have been a dereliction of my own principles.

" I need hardly add, that by the same principles my present conduct must equally continue to be directed. Should the petitioners continue to entertain the desire conveyed in your Lordship's letter, that I should lay this petition upon the table of the House of Lords, with that request I cannot hesitate to comply. It would be highly improper to deny to such a body of men the

decorous, nor just. It is imprudent to ask for independence where the Established Church has it not. Indecorous to insult the Sovereign by declaring mistrust at the same time that they demand favour and confidence; and unjust to found a demand of preference on the avowal of

opportunity of submitting, through my hands, if they should so desire it, and at their own time, their wishes to the legislature of their country. It would be still more inexcusable in a case where all my opinions and all my wishes are favourable to the object of their application. On the measure itself, if any motion respecting it be originated by others, I shall not fail to urge, with unabated earnestness, all the same sentiments which I have detailed in this letter. But I must with equal explicitness decline to be myself, at this time, and under so many circumstances of such peculiar disadvantage to your cause, the mover of any such proposition. I am satisfied, that by this decision I shall best promote the ultimate success of that great work which I have long laboured to accomplish. My reasons for this persuasion I have, I trust, sufficiently explained. They may be erroneous; they are at least sincere.

"To the principle of equal laws, to the great object of national conciliation, I am invariably attached. By me, they shall never be abandoned. But any personal exertions which I can make for the purpose of such inestimable benefit to my country, must ever be regulated by that discretion, which I am equally determined, in every situation, to reserve unfettered by previous engagements, and the faithful exercise of which my public duty imperatively forbids me to relinquish.

"I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

(Signed) GRENVILLE."

"*Earl of Fingall.*"

only aiming at equality. It is this want of firmness, moderation, and prudence, that has done so much harm to the Irish nation. It occasions disappointment and discontent on the one hand, while it excites mistrust on the other. What honest man, who is not in the secret, can help suspecting that there is some plan not avowed, connected with objecting to his Majesty having a *veto* with respect to Catholic bishops, when he not only has a *veto*, but the nomination of all the Protestant bishops?

In carrying the measure of the Union, Mr. Pitt, to avoid difficulties and delays, resolved not to introduce any stipulation for the Catholics, but reserve that measure for the Imperial Parliament. He sent over, therefore, to Lord Cornwallis the following communications to be made to some of the Catholic body. The paper bespeaks the inducements under which many of the Catholics were prevailed upon to support the Union; and its authenticity is verified by a letter from Lord Cornwallis to Francis Plowden, Esq., of the 8th April, 1805:

"The leading part of his Majesty's ministers, finding insurmountable obstacles to the bringing forward measures of concession to the Catholic body, whilst in office, have felt it impossible to continue in administration under the inability to propose it with the circumstances

necessary to carrying the measure with all its advantages, and they have retired from his Majesty's service; considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to its ultimate success. The Catholic body will, therefore, see how much their future hopes must depend upon strengthening their cause by good conduct in the mean time; they will prudently consider their prospects as arising from the persons who now espouse their interests, and compare them with those which they would look to from any other quarter; they may with confidence rely on the zealous support of all those who retire, and of many who remain in office, when it can be given with a prospect of success. They may be assured that Mr. Pitt will do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favour, and prepare the way for finally attaining their objects; and the Catholics will feel, that as Mr. Pitt could not concur in a hopeless attempt to force it now, he must at all times repress with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in the Catholic body.

"Under these circumstances, it cannot be doubted, that the Catholics will take the most loyal, dutiful, and patient line of conduct; that they will not suffer themselves to be led into measures which can, by any construction, give a handle to the opposers of their wishes, either

to misinterpret their principles, or to raise an argument for resisting their claims; but that by their prudent and exemplary demeanour they will afford additional grounds to the growing number of their advocates to enforce their claims on proper occasions, until their objects can be finally and advantageously attained."

The Sentiments of a sincere Friend (i. e. Marquis Cornwallis) *to the Catholic Claims.*

"If the Catholics should now proceed to violence, or entertain any ideas of gaining their object by convulsive measures, or forming associations with men of jacobinical principles, they must of course lose the support and aid of those who have sacrificed their own situations in their cause, but who would at the same time feel it to be their indispensible duty to oppose every thing tending to confusion.

"On the other hand, should the Catholics be sensible of the benefit they possess, by having so many characters of eminence pledged not to embark in the service of government, except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained, it is to be hoped, that on balancing the advantages and disadvantages of their situation, they would prefer a quiet and peaceable demeanour to any line of conduct of an opposite description."

The originals of these two declarations were handed to Dr. Troy, and afterwards to Lord Fingall, on the same day, by Marquis Cornwallis, in the presence of Lieutenant-Colonel Littlehales, in the beginning of May, 1801, a short time before his quitting the government of Ireland, and before the arrival of Lord Hardwicke, his successor. His Excellency desired they should be with discretion communicated to the bishops and principal Catholics, but not inserted in the newspapers. They appeared, nevertheless, in the English prints soon afterwards, and were from thence copied into the Irish papers.

When the Union was completed, the following Address was presented to his Majesty:

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament assembled, humbly beg leave to assure your Majesty, that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important subjects recommended to us in your Majesty's message respecting the connection between this country and Ireland.

"We entertain a firm persuasion that a complete and entire Union between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution,

and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections, by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce of the respective kingdoms, and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the stability, power, and resources of the empire.

"Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before your Majesty such propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to your Majesty's wisdom, at such time and in such manner as your Majesty, in your paternal solicitude for the happiness of your people, shall judge fit, to communicate these propositions to your Parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as may be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary work. And we trust, that, after full and mature consideration, such a settlement may be framed and established by the deliberate consent of the Parliaments of both kingdoms, as may be conformable to the sentiments, wishes, and real interests of your Majesty's faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may

unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable constitution, in the support of the honour and dignity of your Majesty's crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole British empire."

If the whole history of Ireland, from its first connection with England till the end of the late rebellion, was not a proof of the impracticability of rendering Ireland happy, without a radical change in the connection, the words contained in this address might be ascribed to policy, and not to conviction; but the experience of six centuries having constantly proved the same difficulty of governing Ireland in such a manner as to render it free and happy; and farther, the late rebellion, so soon after great ameliorations had taken place, proves, beyond a shadow of doubt, that whoever fairly considered the measure of the Union, must have seen that the interest of Ireland imperiously demanded it. It demanded something great, something immediate, and something effectual, and of this description there were only two measures—the Union, and the admission of Roman Catholics to all the privileges of those belonging to the English church establishment.

Of these two measures the Union necessarily must come first, supposing both to come, and

so Lord Grenville said when he opened the business, and so he has continued to say. The Catholic claims could never be listened to with safety until the Union was effected, and yet it so happens that those who are the most vociferous *for* the one, are the most vehement *against* the other; a circumstance for which it is very difficult to account on any other principle than that of party-feeling, which naturally and constantly leads an opposition to whatever is known to be the will or the wish of government. That those people are not the best friends to Ireland has been already shewn. They were the most jealous of the advantages she obtained by the Union; and showed much less liberality to Ireland, either political or commercial, than Mr. Pitt and those persons did with whom he acted, and who were so generally, indiscriminately, and constantly, accused of being actuated with a desire of domineering over Ireland.

It has been shown, by the letter to Lord Cornwallis, that Mr. Pitt did intend to make the Union a preliminary step towards giving farther privileges to the Catholics; and as this intention was known to those who assisted him in carrying that measure, we necessarily must give all of them credit for participating in that wish.

As to the second measure not yet having been brought to bear, it is not a subject to be agi-

tated here; all that is necessary being to prove, that the Union was a necessary preliminary step towards favouring the Catholics, as well as being the only other great measure that remained to be adopted for the benefit of Ireland.

From every view of the matter, we must admit, that the Union was well intended and well arranged for the benefit and happiness of Ireland, the following points having been established:

1*st*, That after the experience of six centuries, and particularly after the ameliorations brought about in Ireland in 1780, there could be no hope of rendering Ireland happy without some great measure that might unite it firmly with England, seeing that discontent never had been greater than after the amelioration of 1780.

2*d*, That from the example of the Union with Scotland, as well as from many other causes, there was reason to expect a more beneficial result from an Union than from any other measure.

3*d*, That in bringing the Union to bear, the British ministry was actuated by so kind a spirit towards the Irish nation, that the same persons who opposed the Union as an unwise measure, were jealous and alarmed on account of the advantages granted to that country*.

* The number of members being one hundred, twenty of whom might hold places, we have seen was objected to as treating Ire-

4th, That the civil incapacities complained of by the Roman Catholics could not have been redressed with any degree of safety without the Union; but that when some temporary obstacles that still remain are removed, the Catholics may expect an alteration; at least that the alteration they want is rendered much more safe and practicable by the Union.

5th, That there has not yet been time to experience the advantages of the Union, though the inconvenience and loss with which it is attended were, as in Scotland, felt instantly; that in all such cases the disadvantages are immediate, the advantage, though permanent, is distant, which occasions discontent at the first, through impatience or want of consideration.

6th, That, for all these reasons, it appears, that the Union was wise and well intended; and that the British ministry *, and those who sup-

land better than England or Scotland, which proves that the friends of the Union were actuated by greater good will towards Ireland than those who opposed the measure.

* Lord Grenville's and Lord Clare's speeches are proofs both of the measure and the disposition of those who proposed it. Those speeches leave no doubt that they considered the Union as preparing the way, sooner or later, for Ireland to enjoy every advantage in common with England, which is indeed all she ever can aspire to attain; but if it were a fit place here to enter upon that part of the subject, it would be easy to show, that with the low rate of taxation, compared with England, the great fertility of

ported them in the measure, were the true friends of Ireland; and that the Irish peers in particular merit the esteem and gratitude of their country, as having sustained a great loss in point of political importance by that measure.

Such are the conclusions that it is fair to draw from the consideration of the Union, taking it in every point of view, and without the smallest respect of parties.

The practice of courting popular favour by painting things in the blackest colours, and at-

Ireland, and a fair participation of the trade of England, the advantages will remain on the side of Ireland, notwithstanding the absentees which have been such a cause of discontent for several centuries. It is unfortunate that certain subjects of discontent have been greatly magnified by able writers, who have boasted their love for the people, but none of whom have ever tried to give the people satisfaction, by enumerating their advantages. It is a singular enough thing that men are inclined to think those who make them unhappy in the mind (by painting their distress), are friends, and give them thanks, when it is clear that the mental tormentor is worse than one who inflicts bodily pain, or deprives us of some degree of bodily comfort; yet such are treated as enemies, and punished severely. We all laugh at the mode which the methodist preachers please their congregation, by preaching up the certainty of the most terrible torments. We consider this as great weakness in the audience, particularly as the Great Founder of Christianity preached hope, and warned his disciples against despair. The absurdity of patriots and politicians who delight in hearing that their country is ruined, and that all great and rich men are rascals, is equally ridiculous.

tributing the actions of men to the most interested motives, is very prevalent, to the no small disgrace and misfortune of mankind. It is disgraceful, because malignity is evidently concerned in the business, and unfortunate, because it makes people less happy than they would otherwise be, and sometimes, in addition to the mental sufferance, brings on acts of resistance to power and revolt against authority. No country has suffered more from the arts used to excite discontent than Ireland; and the measure of the Union, and conduct of those who brought it about, have been severely arraigned, with what degree of justice we have endeavoured to shew, though that species of consoling calculation is not the way to please the generality of readers.

It now only remains to make some observations relative to the peculiar sacrifices that the peers of Ireland made by the Union.

In speaking of the Union with Scotland, it was observed, that the Scottish Peers were the only class of men who lost personally by the Union; and the same observation applies with equal truth to the Peers of Ireland, who are more numerous in proportion to the number who do not sit in the British House than those of Scotland. In addition to this great disadvantage to the Peers of Ireland, the number is always to be kept

up at nearly its present state. This is a disadvantage in reversion, if such an expression may be used, in as much as that the individual Peers of Scotland, whose families do not become extinct, will, in the end, all have a right to sit in the British Parliament, whereas those of Ireland never can have any such expectation. Even the little remnant of hope and of importance that is left to the Peers of Scotland, by their elections every new Parliament, the Peers of Ireland surrendered for the patriotic purpose of remedying one of the imperfections of the Union with Scotland, that of sending elective Peers into the British House.

However we look at this great arrangement of the Union, we see that it was *founded* in *necessity*, *planned* with *wisdom*, and supported by the real friends of Ireland, amongst whom the Irish Peers certainly stand the first upon the list, whether we consider their exertion in the cause of their country, or their readiness to sacrifice their individual interest to the public good.

That the situation of the people of Ireland admits of and requires amelioration, is certain; and in this the peers and gentry can do much, and it is highly for their interest as individuals to pay attention to the subject.

Until the Union, many embarrassments and obstacles stood in the way of improvement, which the legislature alone could remove; but now the

obstacles are of a sort to be best removed by the proprietors of the soil.

Many of the nobility of Ireland have travelled abroad, and those who have not travelled know from reading, that Spain, Italy, France, and even the fertile Flanders, are poor in comparison of England and Holland. They were formerly easy and rich, not in the proportion of the richness of the soil, or natural good situation of the country, but in proportion to their attention to arts and industry. Capital, and attention to the bringing up of youth, are all wanted, under a good government, for the prosperity of a nation; and it is easily in the power of the Irish nobility and gentry to enrich their country, to which nature has been very bountiful, in soil, climate, and an active and stout race of inhabitants; so that the basis is laid by nature: and the Union giving freedom of trade, and insuring the same degree of liberty to Ireland as to England, nothing remains but what depends on their own will and exertions to make Ireland a rich, happy, and flourishing country.

Of late years much has been written on the means by which nations obtain wealth. It is now a regular branch of study; besides this, England may very well serve as a pattern to copy from in trying to become wealthy.

Mr. Burke, one of the most profound and in-

genious writers of a late period, has made the following interesting observation on the prosperity of nations:

"In all speculations upon men and human affairs, it is of no small moment to distinguish things of accident from permanent causes, and from effects that cannot be altered. I am not quite of the mind of those speculators who seem assured, that necessarily, and by the constitution of things, all states have the same period of infancy, manhood, and decrepitude, that are found in the individuals who compose them; the objects which are attempted to be forced into an analogy are not founded in the same classes of existence. Individuals are physical beings, subject to laws universal and invariable; but commonwealths are not physical but moral essences; they are artificial combinations, and in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind: we are not yet acquainted with the laws which necessarily influence that kind of work, made by that kind of agent.

"There is not in the physical order a distinct cause by which any of those fabrics must necessarily grow, flourish, and decay; nor indeed, in my opinion, does the moral world produce any thing more determinate on that subject, than what may serve as an amusement (liberal indeed

and ingenious, but still only an amusement) for speculative men ; I doubt whether the history of mankind is yet complete enough, if ever it can be so, to furnish grounds for a sure theory on the internal causes which necessarily affect the fortune of a state. I am far from denying the operation of such causes, but they are infinitely uncertain, and much more obscure, and much more difficult to trace, than the foreign causes that tend to depress and sometimes overwhelm society."

Does not the sun rise, and do not the seasons return to the plains of Egypt, and the desarts of Syria, the same as they did three thousand years ago ? Is not inanimate nature the same now as it was then? Are the principles of vegetation altered, or have the subordinate animals refused to obey the will of man, to assist him in his labour, or to serve him for his food ? No ; nature is not less bountiful, and man has more knowledge and more power than at any former period ; but it is not the man of Syria or of Egypt that has more knowledge or more power. There he has suffered his race to degenerate, and, along with himself, his works have fallen into decay.

When those countries were peopled with men, who were wise, prudent, industrious, and brave, their fields were fertile, and their cities were magnificent ; and wherever mankind have car-

ried the same vigour, the same virtues, and the same character, nature has been found bountiful and obedient.

Throughout the whole earth we see the same causes producing nearly the same effects; why then do we remain in doubt respecting their connection; or, if under no doubt, wherefore do we not endeavour to trace their operation, that we may know how to procure or to preserve those advantages which we are so eager to obtain?

It is in the exertion and conduct of man, and in the information of his mind, that we find the causes of the mutability of human affairs. We have before us the history of three thousand years, and of nations that have risen to wealth and power, in a great variety of situations, all terminating with a considerable degree of similarity, from which we may discover the great outlines of the causes that invigorate or degrade the human mind, and thereby raise or ruin states and empires.

Ireland is a country that, if we judge from what we have before us, only requires the attention and encouragement of the great proprietors in order to make it a most flourishing country.

Let the lower classes of inhabitants be bred to industry from their youth—let agriculture and manufactures be encouraged, and it will be one

of the finest countries in the world. Then will the blessings of the Union be felt. The people of Ireland, like all human beings, have faults: but they are kind hearted, and only require to be used kindly, and assisted in their endeavours to promote industry in their country.

But as the history of Ireland, from the earliest period of its authenticity, shows that the nature of the people is such, that, feeling generously themselves, they are very susceptible of ill usage, and very impatient under its operation, great mischiefs have been occasioned by incendiary writers, exciting discontent; which practice still continues, and there is no termination to imaginary evils, whilst the imagination continues to be acted upon.

Instead of those persons who by writings and speeches excite discontent being considered as patriots, they ought to be held as the enemies of their country; and though the press is free for remarks, yet they who convert it to a bad purpose ought to be punished when the law reaches them, and treated with contempt, and discouraged, when they cannot be legally brought to punishment. The practice of considering every discontented man as a lover of his country, is productive of great evil; for no man or nation can be happy, if any one has art and argument enough to persuade them that they are miser-

able. Ireland has suffered much from this, and still continues to suffer much *.

Before I finish this last address relative to the Peerage, I have only to observe, that the wish of those who seek a radical reform is to abolish the Peerage, and it becomes every day more and more evident. It has been said in Parliament, by one of those who is a principal leader of reform, that the House of Commons is only one branch of the legislature. This is so true, and so well known, that the observation could only be intended to point, on a future day, at a reform in the other House. Where, indeed, is the influence of Peers in a few elections dangerous, if they are good men themselves? And if their interference at second hand, with a few of the Commons, is so much hated, how much more must their full and complete power of negativing any act of that House, give offence? The Reformers attack not what they hate most, but what they find offers the most chance of success, and from one step they go to another, till they have equal repre-

* An intelligent gentleman, lately from Ireland, admitted, that the country has become more prosperous since the Union; but then he added, in the same breath, "It is as if it were in spite of the Union, and certainly not in consequence of it." So strong is the effect of prejudging a question. That gentleman is not singular in his way of thinking, although it must be admitted that the mode of thinking is itself of a nature abundantly singular.

sentation and equality of ranks with an elective senate. It is of little importance *what is demanded at first*, if it be such as to bring them to *what is wanted at last;* and it is to be much feared that the most moderate reform would lead to the same result only by a more circuitous route. It might be a few years later, but it would not be the less certain, and perhaps one of the strongest reasons why it is dangerous to touch the House of Commons, is, that though we feel the evils that exist, we know also their extent. We know, that as nothing is perfect, it is of great consequence to be acquainted with the nature of the imperfection, which we cannot tell in making such a change. If there were a certainty that when a reasonable change was made, reform would stop, that would be something; but so far is that from being certain, that it is not even probable, it is very unlikely, and not to be expected.

It is precisely at the moment when the most serious attack is made on Parliament, but chiefly on the House of Lords, that I have finished publishing a work that shows the merit and utility of the Peers, by showing their past services, thereby establishing *a register* to which they may at all times appeal, to prove their claim to public esteem and national gratitude.

That such an important work should have been left so long undone, and that it should have fallen

to the lot of a man who has not the advantage of rank, fortune, or ancestory, is certainly a little singular, but as it happens to be true, we must only consider it as one of those strange moral phenomena, that human nature produces, whenever we see the possessor of what *is valuable and in danger*, blind to the danger, and inattentive to the value, whilst one who possesses it not, sees both the value and the danger. If I have done the nobility a great service, at a needful moment, in so doing I have also served my country, though not on this, as on former occasions, without a view to reward *, which with pleasure and gratitude I am

* In order to show that the zeal I have in the cause of distinction of ranks (which I take to be, if not the basis of British liberty, and our excellent constitution, at least a most necessary part of it), I subjoin the following List of Books and Pamphlets written by me in support of Government during the contest respecting the new theories about liberty, equality, &c.

1. A Letter to the English Whigs, showing the errors and absurdities of the French Constitution of 1789, and predicting its speedy Overthrow. Printed in Paris in May 1792, and published by *Lane, Leadenhall-street.*

2. Account of the Massacre on the 10th August 1792, bringing it home to the Jacobin Club. *Stockdale,* September the same year. N. B. I was in Paris at the time.

3. State of Paper Money in France, with a Table of future Depreciation, which turned out to be nearly right. December 1792. *Stockdale.*

4. Scylla more dangerous than Charybdis — shewing Democracy to be more dangerous than Royal Prerogative. 1794. *Stockdale.*

in full expectation of receiving from those royal and noble patrons who have encouraged the work.

In concluding the subject of the advantages of hereditary peerage and merit of the British peers I have found it necessary to anticipate some objections which may be raised to my Conclusion.

1st, It has been said that the Barons, during the reign of King John, only wished to stipulate for themselves, and that it was the King who insisted on the articles in favour of the people.

2d, It has been said, that during the reign of Henry III., when the Barons compelled that monarch to call representatives from the counties and boroughs thereby creating a House of Commons,

5. Three Letters in Answer to Thomas Paine's Attack on the Government Paper and Bank of England. 1795. *Stockdale*; and ORACLE Newspaper.

6. Proofs of the Ability of England to maintain the war. With three Charts of Revenue, Expenditure, and Trade. 1796. *Stockdale.*

7. History of Jacobinism, 2 vols. 1795. *Stockdale.*

8. Peace with the Jacobins impossible. 1796. *Stockdale.*

9. Letters from Edward and Henry to the Seamen in Revolt at the Nore. Printed by BURTON, *Little Queen-Street*, and GIVEN AWAY.

10. Defence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, relative to his Debts. *Greenland and Norris*, 1807.

Except the History of Jacobinism, not one was written with a view to gain money. This the Publishers can tell, and I have given their names, that it may be ascertained, if there is doubt.

they only did so to strengthen themselves, and that it was not with any wish to obtain representation for the people, so that (say they) we owe no obligation to the nobility on those two great occasions.

I have asserted the contrary, not with any view to mislead public opinion or to flatter the nobility but from a conviction of the truth of what I have said.

In regard to the facts respecting Magna Charta and the House of Commons originating in the demand of the Barons there is no dispute, and can be no difference of opinion.—The history of England, or rather the materials for the history, were chiefly compiled by churchmen, who represented the kings and statesmen in a favourable or unfavourable way, according to the treatment the church received from them, so that though we may generally trust to what is recorded as a fact, we must pay no attention whatever to their opinions, and we must judge from facts alone.

As King John signed Magna Charta by compulsion it is quite absurd to suppose that he had the power to insert an article or articles contrary to the will of the Barons.—It is equally absurd to suppose that the king, a man of no great understanding or wisdom, could out-wit or over-reach such a band of able and determined men.—It is then indisputable, *That the Barons*

inserted the articles in favour of the people in order to serve the people, and with their own free will.

As to the election of the Commons, if the Barons had only done that to procure aid and co-operation, they would, when that was no longer wanted, have shewn a desire to get rid of men with whom they had shared their power in a time of difficulty, but there never was the least mark of such a disposition.—The fact, however, is, that the Barons did not want the aid of the Commons against the King.—They had already got the victory, and the chief use they made of it, was to compel the king to call up representatives of the people. Short of that kind of demonstration, which questions in mathematics alone admit of, I think it is not possible to prove a case more clearly; and the general result is. That the representation of the people, which originated in the struggle made by the Lords has gained a preponderancy in the legislature without any hindrance from the House of Peers.

As to the rest, to say or suppose that those who struggled with their kings had nothing in view but the good of the people, that would be both false and absurd. The were actuated by interest and passion both, and sometimes unjust, (as all men are) but they never tried to aggrandise themselves at the expence of the people, over whom they once

had unlimited power, and with whom they divided their political importance, to whom, in short, they gave up all their feudal authority. It is therefore clear and certain that I have not gone too far, or spoken without reason, when I said that the nation owes a great deal to the nobility. That time, and the gradual changes that have taken place in arts, in science, and in manners, since the Conquest would have destroyed the feudal power, is not to be disputed; but that is by no means the point in question, it is sufficient to prove that the Barons themselves laid the foundation for the liberty of the people, and that the hereditary nobility of England have always with much wisdom and readiness watched over the interests of the people.—They have been mild and moderate in maintaining liberty, when mildness and moderation would do, but they have been firm and bold in times of necessity, and the least we can do is, to acknowledge the inappreciable obligation, by admitting the fact, and granting to their order that esteem and consideration to which it has so great and so undoubted a claim.

THE END.

P. Stuart, Printer,
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