

The Republican.

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A LETTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT,

On his thanking the Magisterial and Yeomanry Assassins of Manchester for MURDERS COMMITTED by them on the 16th of August last.

London, August 30, 1819.

SIR,

THE general indignation and disgust excited in the public mind, in consequence of the *atrocious Murders* committed by the Yeomanry Cavalry, at the instigation of the Magistrates of Manchester, on the bodies of the inhabitants of that town, assembled in a legal and peaceable meeting, for the purpose of discussing the best means to obtain a redress of their grievances, and a radical reform of the representative system, could have been exceeded by nothing but the Chief Magistrate of the Country sanctioning, and actually returning thanks to the *murderers!!!*—This, Sir, it appears you have done, through the medium of your Secretary of State for the Home Department, the ever-memorable SIDMOUTH; and as the document cannot be too generally read, or too much known, I shall here insert it, and make such observations upon it, as to me seem necessary.

“ Whitehall, August 21, 1819.

“ My Lord,—Having laid before the Prince Regent the accounts transmitted to me from Manchester, of the proceedings at that place on Monday last, I have been commanded by his Royal Highness to request, that your Lordship will express to the Magistrates of the County Palatine of Lancaster, who attended on that day, the great satisfaction derived by his Royal Highness from their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures, for the preservation of the public tranquillity; and likewise that your Lordship will communicate to Major Trafford, his Royal Highness's high approbation of the support and assistance to the civil power afforded on that occasion by himself and the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, serving under his command.

“ I have the honour, &c.

(Signed)

“ SIDMOUTH.

“ To the Earl of Derby, &c. Knowsley.”

R. Carlile, Printer, 55, Fleet Street, London.

It would appear, Sir, from this Letter, that the instigators of those murders committed on the 16th of August, by the persons whom I have before alluded to, have been allowed to communicate with the Administration and Executive, on their own crimes, and that their account of the proceedings has alone been attended to. This, Sir, is not acting on the principles of English jurisprudence. It is one of the grossest violations of moral decency ever placed on record. Hundreds of disinterested persons were assembled to witness the proceedings of that day, who were competent to give an unbiassed and unprejudiced evidence of the murders committed, and of the conduct of both parties; namely, the People assembled, and the Cavalry who sabred them. Yet not one individual has been sought after to elucidate any one circumstance; or any one tittle of evidence; and the offenders are allowed, by our *virtuous, sanctified, and sapient* rulers to exculpate themselves by telling their own tale, without being confronted with any honest man who witnessed the conduct of both parties.

His Lordship is further made to say, that your Royal Highness derived great satisfaction from the prompt, decisive, and efficient measures pursued by the Yeomanry Cavalry on that day, and expressed your high approbation of the conduct of Major Trafford in leading them on—To do what?—To cut down with their sabres a peaceable and defenceless People. What language can be found sufficiently strong to mark this with a due reprobation? How shall the future impartial historian record, with the necessary effect, that a Prince of the House of Brunswick, whose ancestors ascended the throne on the condition of keeping it only by their good behaviour, or as our Judges are presumed to hold their authority (*quamdiu se bene gesserint*) as long as they behave themselves well, that the Regent of Great Britain has publicly sanctioned the slaughter of several hundred of his unoffending subjects, and has not taken one step to satisfy himself of the facts of the case, or shewn the least disposition to protect any other portion of his People from a similar slaughter, but, on the other hand, has given every encouragement to it? Will he not rank him as a *competitor* with the most ferocious and cruel of the Deys of Algiers? Will he not enclose the page within a black border, which records the sanction of an English Prince to such a bloody deed? Reflect, Sir, on what you have done, and make to your indignant countrymen the necessary atonement. Let those be brought to justice who have advised you

to this act. Suffer not your name to be branded with further infamy, by lending it to such infamous purposes. The blood of your murdered countrymen cries aloud for vengeance. To you, Sir, the People look. It was under the fatally supposed mildness of your *regime*, that the People exposed themselves defenceless in a public meeting, and became the slaughtered victims of a brutal armed force—inhuman beings—cowards, that would have shrunk from half their number of soldiers; and such men have found the thanks of their Chief Magistrate! Oh! wipe away this stain, and wait not until an insulted People are determined to resent it. As yet, Sir, you have the opportunity to free yourself and family from this reproach. Delay not a day, lest you are a day too late. To-morrow might find the fever of a starving People heated into frenzy.

One of two things must be done. You, Sir, must replace Justice on her seat, and sweep away the corrupt and filthy influence that has of late surrounded her, or the People will recal that power, which to you by some means has been delegated, and acknowledge no sovereign but their own authority. Justice is all we ask—will you, Sir, dare deny it? My mind is dubious on this point, and cannot yet resolve. Thus much I would affirm, that if you do deny it, the fate of Charles, or James, is inevitably yours. And justly so. The time has come, when hostile feelings between the oppressor and the oppressed have been brought to hostility indeed. The irritated feelings of an injured and insulted People cannot subside. Increase they may, and increase they will, unless conciliation and redress are given. To you Sir, an opportunity has been offered, and is still held out to restore the fading pride and liberty of your country. Many are they, who, blinded with the liberal expressions of your younger days, have still held hopes, that you might be roused from that lethargic state, into which a luxuriant disposition had involved you, and brought to perform the important duties of your office, with a vigour consonant with your early promises. But this appears to have been a vain delusion; and should this last opportunity be permitted to escape you, you are lost for ever in the good wishes of your most sanguine friends.

Build not on that idle maxim, “that a King can do no wrong.” A King may do wrong—a King has done wrong—and a King may, and has been, punished for wrong-doing. Those who advise you to proceed on this maxim, are urging you to danger; whilst they make your name an instrument

for their nefarious purposes. I say, they make your name an instrument, because it is impossible, in the case on which I now address you, that you could have examined, or deliberated, on the conduct of the Magistrates and Yeomanry Cavalry on the 16th of August. The intelligence of that proceeding could not have reached the Home Department Office until the evening of the 17th: You, Sir, were then at a distance of at least one hundred miles from the metropolis, and could not have been apprised of this affair until the 18th, or, if a few leagues at sea, until the 19th; and yet on the 21st, we find Lord Sidmouth thanking the murderers, in your name, and expressing your high approbation of the deed. This becomes another proof, that all communication between yourself and the People is cut off; it is a proof that Sidmouth is really invested with that power he lately boasted of; namely, to anticipate your wishes and opinions, to stamp with your sanction his own will and determination. For what, do the people groan under the enormous salary you extract from them, and squander in such shameless profusion? A continuation of such conduct will make them all **REPUBLICANS**. Reflect, Sir, that a less expensive monarchy than yours could never be shaken from its hold in this country; such an adherence is there in the minds of the People to ancient and established institutions—so little are they disposed to change. But I feel convinced, that if your life is preserved a few years longer, you will teach even an English People the necessity of Republican Governments. A timely warning has been given you. Your future fate, and that of your family likewise, depends on the line of conduct you now pursue. A spirit is arising amidst the inhabitants of this country, that will not be trifled or tampered with. You, Sir, may be now enjoying all the profusion a prodigal mind can desire, whilst reposing in the lap of luxury and pleasure. But recollect, Sir, your imagined security may be fatal, as it keeps you unprepared to meet the storm that is fast gathering around you, which you may find will unexpectedly burst upon you, and which all the congregated force of your wickedly-devising Ministers may not be able to repel, and screen you or themselves from its destructive power.

One important thing must have already impressed your mind, if you pay the least attention to the affairs of the country you are so amply paid for superintending. The Magistrates, for whose murderous conduct you have expressed a decided approbation, have vainly attempted to institute a

charge of High Treason against those who were prominent at that meeting, and who had the good fortune to escape the sabre; and yet, with all that perjury and villainy could do, they could not, with the approbation of your Ministers, trust the charge before a Jury; and all this treason is at length softened down to a Conspiracy and Misdemeanor, which is a vague, unmeaning, and pitiful charge, for any Administration to lay before a Jury. The time, my forboding spirit tells me, is near at hand, when the traitors to their country's welfare will find their due elevation. Those traitors are to be found in your Cabinet; they are the members of your Administration! Bring them to justice, fill their places with honest men, and you will see the prosperity of your country on its return. But whilst the fundholder is supported by the labour of the wretched and miserable artisan and agriculturist—whilst an immense standing army is kept up for the purpose of intimidation, and for the purpose of extracting half the profits of the labourer to support the idle and the dissolute—whilst the extreme of luxury and dissipation is enjoyed by one portion of the community, at the expence and destruction of the necessaries of life for the other—whilst the laws are violated, and murders are committed in open day, by those in whose hands the sword of Justice has been placed—and whilst the violation of those laws, and those murders committed, receive the sanction of the constituted authorities, I think I may safely affirm, that we have arrived to that stage of society, when every liberal and constitutional writer has argued the necessity and the justice of a People appealing to their *dernier resort*, an appeal to force, to annihilate the existing order of things, and to begin *de novo*. Reflect on this, Sir; ere it be too late.

RICHARD CARLILE.

A SECOND LETTER TO LORD SIDMOUTH,

Secretary of State for the Home Department,

On the conduct of the Magisterial and Yeomanry Assassins of Manchester, on the 16th August, 1819; and on his Lordship's conduct as subsequently connected with that Assassination.

MY LORD, London, September, 1, 1819.

ON the 18th of August, I addressed a public letter to your Lordship, and endeavoured through the medium of

that letter to give the public a narrative of the proceedings at Manchester, on the 16th, having been a spectator of the horrid massacre, committed on that day, by your faithful servants, the Yeomanry Cavalry. The letter produced that effect, which I had both desired and anticipated, and I have to return you my sincere thanks for the benefit you have conferred on me, by the notice you have taken of it at Downing Street, and at the Home Department. There is no question, but that the instructions given to *Morris* the Police Officer, to go and make oath of its being an unlawful, inflammatory, and seditious libel, before your worthy coadjutor the Lord Mayor (*Atkins*), emanated from your office, and that his sapient worship the Mayor, was the mere mouthpiece of your will and intention. Oh! what a gratifying moment it would have been, to have occupied a secret place, in that conclave of imbecility, and folly, where my Lord Viscount Sidmouth, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, High Steward for the Dean and Chapter of the Holy Church of St. Peter, Wesminster, &c. &c. &c.: his Honour and Worship Sir John Silvester, Knt., Recorder of the City of London, the terror of the innocent, and the scoff of the guilty, &c. &c.: and the Right Honourable John Atkins, expectant Baronet, Mayor of the City of London, and Lord of Finsbury, late Member of Parliament for the said City, &c. &c., and others, their fellows, sat cutting up this said letter by piecemeal, analysing its different parts, and endeavouring to make it a compound of constructive treason! The "wise saws," the starts, the fits of mingled fear and imbecile indignation, would have formed a fine subject for the pencil of Hogarth. Four full days and nights it took this sapient junto, to come to some decision, and not even then, would they have decided, had not the Attorney General shewn more wit and prudence, and sent their worships home to take the bail. But to be serious, my Lord, and to call your attention to your conduct, as connected with the Massacre at Manchester, I will say no more of his worship the Mayor in this letter, but devote another to the purpose, and address it to him.

In my last, I stated to your Lordship, that I should wait and see, what farther steps would be taken by the Executive and the Administration in this horrid affair at Manchester. I could not at that moment have imagined, that without any fair and candid examination of the matter, and within five days of the Massacre, you would have been found the instru-

ment of the Executive, in expressing its *high approbation*. in conjunction with your own, of the conduct of the MURDERERS. Experience, and close observation of your general character, had induced me to give you credit for being prepared to pursue desperate measures against the advocates of a fair and equal representation; but I could not, I did not imagine that my Lord Sidmouth, who affects to carry a mind and disposition tempered with religion, should have first prepared the minds of the Yeomanry Cavalry, to commit this act. and having broken the peace, violated the law, and committed murder in a wanton, deliberate and uncalled-for attack, on a peaceable and legal assemblage of the inhabitants of Manchester, that he should have unhesitatingly, and even without enquiring into the facts of the case, have expressed his *high approbation* of such murderous conduct, on the part of the Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry. 'Tis done. It cannot be recalled. But yet I still have hopes that the time is not far distant, when this act with many others, will form sufficient grounds for your impeachment, and I doubt not your conviction. Do not smile my Lord, I have no idea that such will be the case under the present state of things; a change is apparently at hand, when you, and each of you must answer for the bloody deeds that have met your *high approbation*.

Nothing can exceed the contempt shewn for the existing laws, by those who are paid large salaries to enforce them. The People have been ever ready to appeal to those laws, but their oppressors have at all times shewn the disposition to act as if they were exempt from their influence. The magistrates of the metropolis have of late been chiefly employed with their Police Officers in watching the walls, to see what placards have been stuck against them, and whenever they find any that are objectionable to their minds, they are busily employed to demolish them. They dare not meet the principal, whose name is attached to the bill, as the act of parliament requires, but give vent to their spleen by the demolition of the placard, after it has been stuck up; or perhaps, illegally arrest the man who obtains an honest shilling by sticking them. Several cases of this kind have of late occurred, which reflects the highest disgrace on the Police establishments, at the head of which your Lordship stands. There are two instances which have come under my cognizance and which I shall hear narrate. The first is, the man who was holding a show-board with a placard on it before the door of the Crown and Anchor

Tavern, in the Strand, announcing that a meeting was then holding there, to express an opinion of the Manchester Massacre. It has been invariably the practice, when any meeting of importance has been holden at that, or any other tavern, that a man has been employed to stand at the entrance of the house, with a placard announcing the intention of such meeting ;—such was the case at this time, a man who perhaps could not read the placard, was standing at the entrance of the tavern, with it on a show-board. He is surrounded by five or six Police Officers from Bow-street, taken (it appears) without any warrant, before the sitting Magistrate (Mr. Farrant) and committed to the Cold Bath Fields Bastille, for (what they please to call) having published an unlawful, malicious, and seditious libel, is actually kept in confinement seven days, until bailed out, whilst they durst not touch or molest the real author, printer and publisher of that placard, who comes to the meeting, and addresses that meeting openly and publicly, in language of disapprobation and execration of the conduct of the actors in the Manchester Massacre, far more strong and pointed, than any thing inserted in the placard. How contemptible and disgraced must such a magistracy appear in the eyes of every liberal-minded and reflecting man!

Another instance worthy of record in these eventful times, has occurred in the Borough of Southwark ; but there, I am aware your Lordship has not so much influence as in the county of Middlesex. A man is found standing on Kennington Common, with a board, on which is inscribed ORDER, ORDER, and on which is pasted a printed bill, announcing that a meeting, which was intended to have been held on that day and on that spot, was postponed, and that the inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark were requested to unite with the inhabitants of the county of Middlesex, and City of London, and to meet in Smithfield on a future day, on which placard an intention was also expressed, of making an appeal to the Prince Regent to stand forth and save the People from the massacre with which they were threatened by merciless tyrants. The man is first requested by the Police Officers to move on and not to congregate a crowd, when the very nature and object of his board was to disperse them, and to prevent their disappointment in expecting a meeting to take place. The man moves on, according to the request of the Police Officer, and after some deliberation on their parts, they seize him and his board, and take him off to Union Hall before the sitting Magistrate.

The Magistrate takes the word of the man for his appearance the next morning. The man accordingly appears—the Magistrate openly declares that he finds no charge against him, but puts him in a coach in the custody of an Officer, and sends him off to the Lord Mayor, that is out of one county into another, to see if the Lord Mayor can find any charge against him. The Lord Mayor finds no charge against him, and sends him back to the Magistrates of Union Hall, who, at length, venture to commit him for publishing what they call a seditious libel, namely, holding a board in his hand with Order inscribed on it. The man is imprisoned six days, the Quarter Sessions comes on, an indictment is laid before the Grand Jury containing three counts, and charging the man with sedition, a severe contest takes place with the Grand Jury, as it appears a few honest men happened to be amongst them, they cannot agree over night to find the bill, they break up, and the next morning after some warm conversation, a majority of them find the bill. The man is called on to put off his trial until the next Sessions, he refuses and demands trial *instanter*; he is put before the Jury. A Counsel on the part of the Crown, makes a long, raving, ranting, speech. The man tells his own tale for about a quarter of an hour, when the Jury become disgusted to see the time of a Court of Justice wasted in this manner, and almost immediately acquit him, and the man carries off his obnoxious board and placard in triumph, laughing at the fools, his prosecutors.

This my Lord, is the manner in which the Magistrates of the Metropolis employ themselves; they are becoming the scoff and jest of every man possessing common sense, and your Lordship in your Magisterial capacity, does not cut a much better figure. Take shame to yourselves. Your Police Offices but ill accord with the old English regulation of constable and beadle. They are become the nurseries of crime, they never prevent, whilst there is hope of further profit being made of the criminal.

Having sufficiently noticed the Magistracy and Police establishments of the metropolis, I would draw the attention of your Lordship to those of Manchester, where both Magistrates and Police display such a want of feeling, such a want of legal knowledge, and such an evident brutality, that they appear adapted to preside only over a horde of savages. How contemptible have they been made to appear! Whenever Mr. Hunt has stood before them, they are ready to shrink into themselves, and almost afraid to utter an expression lest

they should commit some blunder. Dressed up in a "little brief authority," they inflict a terror on the minds of those over whom they have some influence; bring before them a man bold and honest, who knows the extent of their duty and authority, and who is bold enough to correct them when they exceed either, and they sink into all their native littleness.

The annals of this Country have been more disgraced within the last month than within any month during the reign of James the Second. His Chief Justice Jefferies, and his General Kirk boldly attacked any and every person that was opposed to them. With the Judges and Magistrates of the present day all is evasion. We find them in country-towns, and before country juries, strongly condemning in the conduct of the agent, what in London they are compelled to countenance in the principal. Almost every judge that has been engaged on the summer circuit, has been found preaching to the grand jury a sermon, either on what they call sedition or blasphemy. At Exeter, Judge Best disgraced himself and the seat he sat on, by pointing out an individual to the notice of the Grand Jury, which Jury, parrot-like, echoed back his charge by immediately finding a bill against that individual for seditious and blasphemous publications. It might be naturally expected that the individual was the original publisher of such pamphlets, but no such thing; they were published in London, two years since, and three London Juries have found them to be no offence; and Mr. Justice Best has had an opportunity of seeing them publicly exposed for sale during the last two years. The Attorney General has been compelled, from motives of fear, to withdraw three informations that had been filed against the present publisher, and many complete editions of them have been sold since that time.

Before an enlightened Jury they durst not try a political question. Perhaps they have hopes of finding Juries at Exeter of the same stamp as the Warwickshire Jury, who lately tried Russell, of Birmingham; when the Lord Chief Justice (Abbott,) with a contempt for all judicial and moral decency, told the Jury that the publication, in his opinion, was a profane and seditious libel; although his Lordship had presided at one of the trials of Mr. Hone, where the Jury convinced his Lordship of the contrary. The Jury echoed back the charge, and the foreman of the Jury, who was the only special juror, and appeared to be the only man amongst them that knew his letters, after having pronounced the ver-

dict Guilty, ludicrously recommended the defendant to mercy, which is as much as to say he should not be punished; and actually slept in the same room, at the same inn with the defendant, and candidly told him, that he did not know they had a right to give a verdict contrary to the judgment of the Judge. The defendant stands virtually acquitted, for nothing but the subtle and wily conduct of the Judge could have drawn from them a verdict of guilty. They had no idea of the man being guilty, it was their ignorant fear of the Judge that induced them to pronounce it. Those men are guilty who have ruined him with the expence of this persecution, and the guilt hangs heavy on their minds.

This, my Lord, should impress on the minds of future defendants in cases of libel, that a puerile courtesy and submission to the dictate of the Judge, may be fatal to them. In a case of libel, the man who presides in the court is at such time no Judge; he is a mere officer of the court to enforce order and regularity of proceeding. The Jury are the sole Judges: and I for one would rise and interrupt the man who presided, if he dared to give an opinion that would tend to prejudice my case. Had Russell elevated the minds of the Jury by pointing out to them the importance and extent of their authority in his case, and at the same time pointed out to them the extent of the authority of the man presiding in the court, they would have most assuredly pronounced him *not guilty*. The contrary verdict arose entirely from their ignorance of the forms of law, and the extent of their own authority.

I have been led into a digression from the subject of this letter, in consequence of the disgraceful conduct of the Judges and Magistrates both in town and country, within the last month. They are become the veriest tools of corruption, whilst Justice has neither share nor lot amongst them. The very Home Department over which your Lordship presides is the mere receptacle of spies and informers, of frivolous and idle charges which you and your coadjutors are daily striving to magnify into something terrible. Your sole aim and object is to impress on the minds of the few who possess property in the country, that there is a conspiracy on foot to deprive them of that property. That conspiracy exists, but not amongst the people. That conspiracy is in the cabinet. And it is much to be feared that too many will be led away by false alarms until they are hoodwinked into the snare.

I shall conclude this, my Lord, with an endeavour to im-

press on your mind, that no effort on your part can wipe away the blood that has been spilt at Manchester; nor the stains that have fallen on the seat of Justice. Both cry aloud for redress. Redress or revenge must and will be had; and I would earnestly advise your Lordship to hasten to the stool of repentance.

R. CARLILE.

A LETTER TO JOHN ATKINS, ESQ.

Lord Mayor of the City of London.

MY LORD,

THE late acquaintance that has arisen between us, requires that some explanation should be given to the public of the motives by which you have been actuated. In the first place, there is no doubt, but that you received orders to issue your warrant from the Home Department, to the *chief* of which, the obnoxious letter was addressed. And your Lordship, eager to display your servility, contrived to put the warrant in force at that period, when it would become most offensive, being the Saturday afternoon. At the time of my arrest, you were not to be found, and I had the satisfaction of being deprived of your Lordship's presence until Monday. I would contrast this conduct with that of the Common Sergeant, at the time when Mr. Hunt laid a bill before the Grand Jury, charging Stoddart, Quin, and Mitchell, with publishing a malicious libel in their paper, called the *New Times*, in which libel he was held up as a fit person for assassination. The Grand Jury without hesitation, found the bill on the Saturday. Mr. Hunt applied to the court then sitting at the Old Bailey for a warrant—a warrant was granted but to prevent those worthy gentlemen from being molested on the Saturday, the Common Sergeant ordered the execution of it to be suspended until the Monday, and this is what you call equal justice. I am arrested on the Saturday, on the Monday morning I rise from my *straw bed* and find myself surrounded with military, the first communication made to me is, that your Lordship has ordered no one to see me but in the presence of the Governor. Although this to me, was a mere matter of indifference and proved nothing but your Lordship's malignity towards me. And likewise, that in his presence no political conversation should take place—very pretty my Lord—I suppose your Lordship was of opinion, that I should have leisure to con-

trive the burning of the city, the destruction of the church and state, or some very important thing, and therefore your Lordship was determined that I should do all myself, as you took care not to allow me any agents to concert with, out of the prison.—A very prudent caution, my Lord, to save yourself from the hysterics.—However, to proceed, I had the honour to meet your Lordship on the Monday, your Lordship is not quite certain whether I can be bailed or not, but your Lordship in the mean time, very condescendingly offers to fill up the time in enquiring after the persons I offer as bail. The bail would have been unobjectionable before an honest Magistrate. I have only to regret that I have disgraced one of them, by putting his responsibility in competition with your Lordship's.

Tuesday comes, I again appear before your Lordship, and you affect to be dissatisfied with one of the bail. But the fact was, that your Lordship, and your Lordship's friend, the learned and accomplished Recorder, combined your legal knowledge, and found, that in writing and publishing this letter, I had committed HIGH TREASON; and I had to enjoy safe custody 48 hours longer. Quickly your confirmed evidence is laid before the Attorney General, and he—*impudent upstart*—treats with contempt and derision, the deliberate and well-weighed opinions of two such eminent *civic civilians*. Never forgive him, my Lord; depend on it, that the Attorney General is a REPUBLICAN and a DEIST, or he would have acquiesced in your honest wishes. I hope your Lordship will report the case at the *next levee*, and get so dangerous a man dismissed from that office. For whilst he remains there, I fear your Lordship will have no trials for HIGH TREASON, BLASPHEMY, or SEDITION. It was a most unfortunate circumstance for your Lordship, that your old friend, *Sir Samuel Shepherd*, had not remained in that office, he, *poor fellow*, was the ready tool of such sapient advisers; he blundered on right or wrong, and shrunk neither from disgrace nor calumny. However, your Lordship finding your definition of High Treason contemptuously treated, you were then so obligingly condescending as to take the proposed bail, and never shall your Lordship's admonition that followed, be effaced from my memory. I must confess, my Lord, I was rather ungrateful at the moment, but your Lordship's *well known humanity* will be no doubt exercised, when you recollect, that I had not time to reflect on the threatened perils my misconduct had incurred. It appears, however, that your Lordship had anticipated my

docile disposition, and felt justified in not exercising your dire and dread authority. So strong are the obligations your Lordship has conferred on me, that I have resolved to publish a *brief memoir* of your Lordship's valuable life, as soon as your friends have furnished me with the necessary and promised information. In consequence of my good intentions towards your Lordship, I trust, that if Sidmouth should this week order you to issue another warrant, you will have the goodness to give me due notice, that I might bring some dozen gentlemen as bail, that your Lordship might have good choice; until then, I bid your Lordship farewell.

R. CARLILE.

TO MR. CARLILE.

SIR,

PERMIT me, as your fellow-countryman to thank you for the patriotic firmness with which you have encountered the exactions and tyrannical measures that have been adopted towards you, by our present short-sighted Rulers. It is the duty of every well-wisher to his country, and every real friend to human happiness, to countenance and encourage that line of conduct which you, with so much credit to yourself and so much advantage to the public, have perseveringly pursued. It is not simply a question whether you shall be allowed to follow your own peaceable avocations, or waste the prime of your years in a dungeon; it is a question between the present Government and the People of the British Empire;—between a hypocritical “Vice Society,” and a liberal-minded public;—between boroughmongering despotism and universal liberty.

The verdicts of the Juries to which, *perhaps*, your string of persecutions will be submitted, will decide the important question, whether Englishmen have a right to speak and publish the honest dictates of their consciences, or whether they shall become a band of hypocritical and contemptible slaves, crawling about, like the reptiles of Spain, at the feet of their oppressors, and depending upon the favour of police officers and the mercy of priests. I confess, however, I have no fear of the result. I cannot imagine that a London Jury will consent to become the instruments of bigotry and intolerance: that they will rear an Inquisition upon the ruins of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights: that they will say to the inhabitants of Great Britain, at this enlight-

ened era of science and civilization, you shall not read or promulgate opinions that may militate against the decrees of the Council of Nice!

With what shadow of consistency can Protestants forbid the dissemination of opinions that may not happen to square exactly with their own? Have they forgot the blood which, at the epoch of the Reformation, their ancestors shed in defence of their civil and religious rights? Was it laudable and praise-worthy *then* to overturn a system which had existed, "as by law established," nearly a thousand years, and shall the senseless cry of heresy and sedition *now* be raised against those who calmly and dispassionately endeavour to point out the errors and absurdities of that which has not only scarcely existed three hundred, but is so divided and subdivided by the arts of "fishers of men," and the folly of human gudgeons, that it has become a thing of shreds and patches, a tattered garment, scarcely containing a piece of the original, and barely sufficient to hide the nakedness of priestcraft?

Let us remember, too, that at the period of the Reformation, the press, that glorious palladium of the Rights of Man, was yet in its infancy, that the means of information then possessed by the mass of the People were few and imperfect; that if they wished for either religious or political instruction, they were obliged "to submit themselves lowly and reverently to their *spiritual pastors and masters*," and remain content with, or at least unable to dispute, the *dictum* of the man whose interest it was to keep them in ignorance and superstition. But that little grain of mustard-seed is now become a goodly tree; the sources of knowledge have been opened to all classes of the community; and the philanthropy of Lancaster, and the defensive, but short-sighted, policy of the patrons of Bell, have enabled almost every child in the kingdom to partake of the advantages resulting therefrom.

And shall we retrograde from this sunny eminence of knowledge, to the cold and misty vale of ignorance and superstition? Shall we forbear to get wisdom and understanding merely because the acquisition may be unpleasant to those who are in self assumed authority over us? Base, and grovelling, and unworthy of the blessings of light and liberty, must be the slave who would subscribe to so diabolical a doctrine.

Nor can I conceive how the sincere Christian—the man who wishes to regulate his life according to the precepts of the virtuous Founder of Christianity, can bring himself to

support a bigoted and vindictive spirit of persecution. Can he fail to remember that his great master pronounced such subjects not cognizable before human tribunals; that he warned his disciples not to boast of being the children of Abraham, nor to exclaim "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;" but to do Justice, love Mercy, and hate Hypocrisy: that he commanded them to "prove all things" and "hold fast to that which is good:" and forbade them to rest their hopes of pleasing the Deity, upon the observance of rights and ceremonies, or the adherence to particular creeds; for, said he, "the time will come when men shall neither worship God in this temple or upon that mountain, BUT IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

Do not imagine, Sir, that because I argue in this manner, I believe your persecutors to be actuated by any, even the most erroneous sense of Religion. The chief priests and scribes of Jerusalem, made long prayers and enlarged the phylacteries of their garments, not for the purpose of glorifying God, but that they might "devour widows' houses!"

But I know there are many well-meaning, and estimable persons in private life who really believe that the writings to which you have given increased publicity, are really of an immoral and blasphemous tendency. They believe this because they have heard them condemned in the most unqualified manner, by persons whose reverend garb, and sanctimonious demeanour, precluded the suspicion of insincerity and injustice. Alas! that we should be thus duped and misled by the artifices of men who fatten upon our fears, and laugh at our credulity. To such persons I would say, arouse yourselves from your mental lethargy; take your talent from the napkin, and be no longer the voluntary dupes of priestcraft and corruption; read, like "the noble Bereans" of old—read and examine the *scriptures*, that is *the writings*, for yourselves; if they contain any thing contrary to reason and morality, reject and condemn them; but, if like the discourses of him whose authority you will not disregard, they breathe a spirit of glory to God, and peace and good will to all mankind, then retract your erroneous opinions, regard with suspicion the men who have endeavoured to rob you of the glorious privilege of reason, and boldly come forward and vindicate the characters and intentions of those who are suffering for the cause of *civil and religious liberty*.

JOSEPH FITCH.

Old Road Academy, Stepney, Aug. 31, 1819.