

A
SERIOUS
ANSWER

1782

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1782

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A
SERIOUS
ANSWER
TO
LORD GEORGE GORDON'S
LETTERS

TO THE
EARL OF SHELBURNE:

IN WHICH
An Attempt is made, by fair and ingenuous Argument, to
give ample Satisfaction to his LORDSHIP'S Doubts;

AND
To relieve him, if possible, from any Inquietude for the
SALVATION OF THE STATE,

CONSIDERED EITHER IN
A MORAL, POLITICAL, or RELIGIOUS VIEW.

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A SERIOUS
ANSWER, &c.

MY LORD,

Jan 1884 #11
memo
10/1/84

HAVING carefully perused your letter to the Earl of Shelburne, I candidly confess, though there is no *pleasure* in answering it, yet the system of measures which you seem obstinately inclined to pursue is so *dark and dangerous*, the principle from which they spring, so wicked, that I cannot help thinking it *necessary* to "*deal with you roundly, freely and concisely**."

* His Lordship's own words.

With

With respect then, my Lord, to the solitude you express “*for the support of good government, and the true public liberty, safety and peace of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England and Ireland,*” I beg leave to congratulate you upon your release from a great portion of trouble and concern about the interests of the last-mentioned country ; for I can, from the most unquestionable authority, the concurring voice of the whole nation, assure you, that there is not this day breathing a man whose zeal and assistance the people of that kingdom hold in more complete contempt than your Lordship’s. This, my Lord, which can proceed from nothing else in the world than that strange habit of blundering the country is proverbial for, is a truth you might have been long since sensible of, and which the Irish nation, composed as the mass of it is, of Papists, Protestants and Presbyterians, have collectively and individually, upon several

veral occasions, manifested in the strongest and most pointed manner. I am therefore, my Lord, the more surprised at the heart-breaking anxiety you so tenderly express for their true interests, which your friends account sincere, because they think you superior to all covered knavish designs, though perhaps *a little* practised in hypocritical cant.—But, indeed, to suspicious minds it would seem as if you were not thoroughly sincere in your professions of kindness towards them, by the manner in which you represent the indignities offered your countrymen, the two chief justices, for their untimely interference in the affairs of that country. You appear, my Lord, to take it into high dudgeon that the Irish should have the audacity of charging the Earl of Mansfield with presumption for entertaining and deciding on a writ of error from the Irish courts; or, as your Lordship phrases it, for the execution of

his office according to the laws of the land: this, together with the *ardent* reception which the effigy of Lord Loughborough experienced at their hands some time ago, you call “ugly symptoms of harmony.”— You say they look like “*anarchy and confusion, and the utter subversion of good government, the true interest of the people, the honour and happiness of the King’s Majesty and his posterity, and the true public liberty, safety and peace of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England and Ireland.*”

My Lord, I am not very old, and yet I remember indignities offered those two noble Lords, and particularly to the former, which really wore the appearance, and deserved more the appellation, of symptoms of anarchy and confusion which were likely to end in the long string of mischiefs I have just quoted from your
amazing

amazing letter, than those harmless pastimes of the people of Ireland.

It is an observation, my Lord, of a late very ingenious author, who was as remarkable for saying good things as your Lordship is for doing them, that when a person sits down to write, it is not altogether amiss for him to know something of the subject which he is going to write upon. This rule your Lordship does not seem directly to attend to; for if, whilst you was about to hold up the Irish to the rod of correction, *the frown of the noble Lord at the head of the treasury*, you had taken a moment's time to consider, you would have found that it was a slight deviation from the truth to call Lord Mansfield's entertaining and deciding upon an Irish writ of error, the execution of his office according to the laws of the land. Whereas the interposition of any English

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judge

judge or court of judicature in an Irish suit, is the grossest violation of law, and a criminal outrage to the King and courts of Ireland. In this light the people of Ireland look upon it, my Lord, and will, I trust, ever continue so to do, unless your Lordship in the warmth of your zeal, for “the liberty, safety and peace of the three kingdoms,” may take it into your head to go amongst them and convince them of their error; in which mission if you succeed, they and their posterity cannot fail to be grateful to the latest ages.

Every body remembers the horrid outrages committed upon Lord Mansfield's person and property, by Lord George Gordon, whose *burning* zeal for the Protestant religion has been so laudably imitated in the sister kingdom by those, who wanting every other pretext for making

war

war upon their unoffending Catholic neighbours, resorted to this old and wicked one: the consequences have exactly corresponded with the motives, the necessity of self-defence produced a civil war of unprecedented cruelty and calamity, and the final subjection of the country.

Now, my Lord, I shall come to the main subject of this letter.—Your Lordship with a view to shew, that “*neither attention nor disposition shall be wanting on your part to countenance the crown, (when you can do it with honour to yourself)*,” after quoting a passage from his Majesty’s speech, relative to the United States of America, in which his Majesty expresses his hope that religion, language, interest, affections, may yet prove a bond of permanent union between the two countries, publicly calls upon the Earl of Shelburne and the rest of the cabinet to second his

Majesty's hopes and disposition on this head immediately, *by directing the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Secretary Townsend to move in the House of Commons without a day's delay; the one for the repeal of the Quebec Bill, and the other for the repeal of the English Popery Bill."*

With regard to the Quebec Bill, my Lord, I should most heartily coincide with you in my warmest wishes for its speedy repeal, (being like you, an enemy even to the shadow of arbitrary government in any part of the King's dominions), if I looked upon the principle of the bill to be inimical to that constitutional liberty, which ought ever to be the distinguishing characteristic of every British settlement. I cannot, however, but remark, that you have extremely perverted the objections made to that bill by some of the greatest men in this country; nor have you been
more

more candid in applying the passage from the declaration of American independence, which does not in the most distant degree glance at the countenance that act affords to the established religion of that province.

The objections urged by the Americans against the Quebec Bill, go only to the *Civil Establishment*, as evidently appears from the extract you made, which runs in these words, "For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these provinces." The American congress in enumerating that bill among the reasons which induced them to withdraw from any further political connection with the mother country, could

could not have the remotest idea of censuring the full toleration of the Roman Catholic religion in that province. The arguments they make use of correspond exactly with the objections made in the English parliament against passing the bill. They complain of the establishment of an arbitrary government in their vicinity, so did the opposers of the bill in the House of Lords and Commons. There is no mention of religion throughout, which if there had been, must be highly absurd, as every body knows, that the religion of the Canadians* received no additional security

* But when Lord George discusses the policy and propriety of granting to the Canadians a parliamentary confirmation of the terms on which they surrendered to the British government, with arms in their hands, he ought to pay the just tribute of applause to the magnanimity, wisdom and justice of his Sovereign, who in this instance widely departed from the cruel and intolerant disposition of that bigot, whose parliament revoked the conditions granted by King William to the gallant Irish, on the capitulation at Limerick; a *sovereign* instance of *royal gratitude*, for the attachment of the Milesians to the *auspicious* house of Stuart, so warmly panegyriized by his Lordship in all the speculations which he has thought proper to submit to the first lord of the treasury.

from that act: they had, before it, lived in the amplest enjoyment of civil and religious freedom; blessings which they would, I am well convinced, under the true constitutional British form of government, have to this day continued in the peaceable possession of; except indeed the PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION, in tender concern for their spiritual happiness, had dispatched some of their *blessed apostles* to create dissention between them and their Protestant friends: and if public report may be credited, those very Catholics would receive, with sorrowful hearts, the news of the passing any act, which might deprive them of the benefits of the English constitution, the value of which they had learned to estimate, notwithstanding their having been educated under an absolute monarchy.

Upon the other bill, my Lord, I have

the misfortune to differ with you---altogether, it is some consolation to me, that in this difference of opinion, I shall be supported by the unanimous voice of every man of sense and respectability in the nation; and that is particularly the cause to which you are indebted for this address.

When I see a young nobleman, descended from one of the first families in his country, distinguished for their generosity, loyalty, and religion, even that very religion, the professors of which it is the whole study of your life to render miserable—a young man with parts sufficient to acquire *some degree* of rank in the paths of civil or military fame, systematically debasing himself to a level and coalition of sentiments with the very dregs of the earth—a set of beings, who, beside the faculty of walking *upright*, (though
pressing

not "in the ways of God)," and expressing something like articulate sounds, shew no other faculty that could entitle them to the name of men: When I see him, after having, according to the opinion of many, been greatly instrumental in the shocking scenes of horror and calamity which the METROPOLIS of the British nation, the SEAT OF EMPIRE, LAW and MAJESTY, suffered from the ravages of a furious banditti; after having in consequence of this been nicely poised in the scale of justice, and saved from an ignominious death by a hair breadth 'scape, and after having by his fanatical proceedings, rendered his very name, the once highly honoured name of Gordon, despicable all over Europe: When I see him, after a considerable interval of retirement and quiet, (in which had he meditated, even unto melancholy and madness, upon his past irregularity, I should be little surprised) recurring with additional acrimony

mony to the very same course, in repugnance to the admonition of all his friends—and when I see evidently that all this is but the offspring of studied cant and premeditated knavery, designed to create a dangerous unrivalled influence among the most contemptible, gross, and abandoned part of the community: I say, my Lord, when I observe all this, I cannot suppress my temper, I cannot help thinking it high time that your Lordship should be dealt with *roundly, freely, and concisely*, by those who really feel an interest in the well-being, and participate in the happiness of their fellow christians and subjects of whatsoever sect or denomination.—

Away then, my Lord, with the abominable trumpet of sedition! and if you are sincere in your professions of regard for the liberty, safety, and peace of the three kingdoms, let it immediately, without a day's delay, be hung up in the temple

ple of concord, amity, and unfeigned religion. Will not the example not only of all the sensible and worthy part of your own countrymen, but of all Europe have any effect upon you, or tend in any shape to abate your religious furor? If you turn your eyes, my Lord, to the different powers on the continent, you will find, that religious distinctions are worn thread-bare; you will see in the courts of the two first Monarchs in the world, every man promoted or denied advancement in the civil and military departments, not according to his aversion from, or zeal to, the prevailing religion of the state, but according to his merit or demerit. Fortunately, my Lord, these two great characters differ in the mode of worship which they were respectively educated in, the one is a Roman Catholic, the other a Protestant—they have long lived in a state of rivalship, and yet they are not apprehensive that the

religion of any officer in their employment will influence his fidelity. The Emperor of Germany entrusts Protestants with the most important posts in his dominions, and equal confidence is reposed by the great Frederic in Catholics. In France, one fourth of the officers are Protestants: Spain, Sardinia, and even the court of Rome itself, are making advances towards the abolition of all restrictions on man's conscience, which the more they are enquired into, the more impolitic, unnatural, and unchristian they will be found. Do not the Catholics and Protestants alternately occupy the church and the benefits of the church in some parts of our own Monarch's German dominions? — How often has the American congress, consisting of men whom you would represent so hostile to the toleration of Catholics, publicly attended the celebration of the rights of the church of Rome? Does not the strictest

strictest harmony subsist between the different sectarics, of which they are composed, and of whom the Roman Catholics are no inconsiderable body?

And, my Lord, were you to fix your attention nearer home, what miracles might you see wrought in consequence of the extermination of all distinctions in matters of religion in the sister kingdom! There, my Lord, happily for the freedom, honour and prosperity of a long oppressed and much injured country, the Papist, Presbyterian and Protestant are become one body: animated by one spirit, the spirit of universal philanthropy, kindness and charity, and directed by one principle of true patriotism, loyalty and independence, their interests are now the same and their affections reciprocal.—There, my Lord, the clouds of bigotry and fanaticism are dispelled by national wisdom, and

and national justice ; religious prejudices, animosity and tyranny, are succeeded by heaven-inspired harmony and unlimited toleration—the absurd, barbarous phantoms of Popish disaffection and treachery are wholly and for ever dissipated—so much so, that not long since you might have had the satisfaction of hearing in the south, a Protestant bishop exerting his oratorical powers to obtain a liberal donation from his flock, towards erecting a stately mass-house for their Roman Catholic neighbours ; and this glorious example followed by several Presbyterian congregations in the north*.

The

* These were indeed the proud days of *Erin*, when the gallant and generous sons stood forth a glorious example to the world—how impossible it is for any power to resist the just demands of an UNITED PEOPLE, who leaving quibbles and subtle distinctions in matters of faith to the learned leisure of the schools, nobly resolve to vindicate their common country from all internal as well as external oppression. Then were the delegates of

ARMIES

The study of these happy changes, my Lord, which are proofs unequivocal of the little value the Irish nation sets on *your* regard for their *temporal* and SPIRITUAL *safety*, would afford you a noble opportunity of scrutinizing, to infinite advantage, that system of public measures which has so long disgraced you; and of convincing your mind of its enormity and wickedness. If you should question the truth of the last mentioned facts, I am ready to produce in evidence, those records of public events from which you yourself derive your intelligence, and to

ARMIES of IRELAND received with the highest honour and distinction at the court of St. James's, as well as in the House of Commons of ENGLAND; and then may an Irish gentleman boast in any part of Europe, that he had a COUNTRY, a FREE INDEPENDENT IMPERIAL COUNTRY—what has he to say now: *que c'est une province D'ANGLETERRE*. Such are the fruits of religious animosity, and such the general degradation necessarily produced by partial oppression and invidious distinctions.

which you refer the noble Lord at the head of the treasury, for the authenticity of your own statements.

Your Lordship might see in that country priests and friars of all denominations, whom you would represent as the emissaries of Antichrist, and who were a few years back liable to be maltreated and dragged like felons to the common gaol by such beings as yourself, caressed and patronized by the first characters in the state, I had almost said in the world. As your Lordship reads the Irish papers, you cannot, I presume, be a stranger to the encomiums bestowed by all the leaders of the Irish parliament on that illustrious philosopher, priest and patriot, Arthur O'Leary; a name dearer to Irish Presbyterians than all the APOSTLES in the eighty-five societies of which your Lordship is, as becomes your professed principles,

ples, the worthy patriarch. You cannot be ignorant that this respectable clergyman is now chaplain to one of the most honourable and powerful regiments in the whole volunteer army. And if you want any further proofs of the admirable alteration in the religious policy of Ireland, let me entreat you to attend to the following passages which I have extracted, for your comfort, from the address of that honourable and distinguished corps, the independent Dublin volunteers, to their commander, colonel Henry Grattan, and from his answer; the whole of which is, one of the most masterly pieces of eloquence in the English language. The volunteers, alluding to the VIth of George the Ist, call it "A law enacted during an intoxication of power, against a country then oppressed by the tyranny of its usurpers, AND BLEEDING IN CONSEQUENCE OF ITS OWN UNHAPPY INTESTINE DIVISIONS."

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Observe

Observe now, my Lord, I beseech you, how this sentiment is re-echoed by the great assertor and guardians of Ireland's liberties. — "I agree with you (says he) that the VIth of George the Ist. was passed when we were depressed by the intoxication of power and weakened by intestine divisions. There was at that time in the stamina of the community a radical weakness; we had taken precautions against our own strength and liberty by the emaciating cruelty of barbarous laws, and we felt in our own bondage the natural returns of our own tyranny; fortunately we have discovered the error: it was your policy and my decided opinion to adopt the Catholic body. I conceived it to be a sacred truth, and written as it were in the tables of fate, THAT THE IRISH PROTESTANT SHOULD NEVER BE FREE, UNTIL THE IRISH CATHOLIC CEASED TO BE A SLAVE. By the

the charter of toleration these intestine divisions which you speak of, have ceased; and with them the denomination (or rather usurpation) of Great Britain has departed." I should not, my Lord, have dwelt so long upon the state of Ireland, but that, as I write solely with a view of benefiting your Lordship, I was willing, by the most forcible examples drawn from the blessed effects of an enlarged, wise and liberal system of religious policy in that country, whose former situation is here described, with as much truth as spirit and eloquence, to convince you of the *prudence* of relinquishing that creed, which I much fear will ever continue to rank you amongst the persecutors of the innocent, and the enemies of good order and true religion. Will you then, my Lord, having this noble example and its testimony before your eyes, still deliber-

ately persevere in forging chains for the insignificant number of Catholics in your own country, who, in the constitutional language, should be called the FREE-BORN sons of England? Remember my Lord, that when an African negro sets his foot upon the English shore, he is then as free, to all intents and purposes, as the most respectable member of your Lordship's associations. How doubly barbarous is it then to attempt or wish to fetter those who have the good fortune of being born in such a country, at a period too when all Europe begins to relax in severities which originated in superstition, and subsisted through the zeal of bigotry and ignorance?

Look around, my Lord, and observe how the ambition of the distinguished young noblemen of the age is exercised.

Attend

Attend to the conduct of the amiable and worthy Scots nobility—remark the modes they adopt to attain respectability and fame, by honourable and patriotic pursuits—reflect upon the honour and influence which the heir apparent of the illustrious house of Montrose has acquired by turning his thoughts to objects of real advantage to his country*. Take example from him, or the ingenious Earl of Buchan, or the public-spirited, independent Viscount Maitland†—contemplate their virtues, their studies and their pursuits—learn from their habits, to apply yourself to subjects worthy of your elevated birth.

Take

* The present Duke of Montrose, who about this period, introduced a bill for the purpose of repealing some of those laws which English oppression had inflicted on the brave and faithful clause.

† Now the Earl of Lauderdale, whose uniform adherence

Take the advice of a man who wishes to respect you on account of your forefathers; those whose principles you every day insult; whose memory you stain; and whose name you must disgrace by an adherence to that line of conduct you have long given in to.

I can well conceive, my Lord, that you might, with a good heart, have been originally betrayed into the shameful, unworthy paths you have for some years wandered in—the fatal and sometimes irresistible force of adulation—the affectation of singularity—the ambition of being at the head of a party, whom you could always set in motion like any common piece of mechanism—or, possibly, the consciousness of being obliged, without this step-

rence to those principles of public liberty with which he set out, entitles him to the esteem and love of every man who values the genuine spirit of the British constitution.

ladder

ladder to notoriety, to pass your life in obscurity, unknown and unregarded.—Some or all of these motives might have warped your judgment, and debauched your understanding. But, my Lord, the world is weary of making allowances for you; all future appeal to their good nature will be fruitless: nothing, believe me, now remains to preserve a remnant of good name, but to dismiss for ever from your society the vile assemblage of wretched miscreants, who poisoned your mind with those execrable notions of fanaticism, the influence of which has already so materially injured yourself, and disgraced that government, whose safety and dignity you would seem solicitous to preserve—or else, my Lord, if you please, rather call them together, inform them that you are now thoroughly convinced of the impropriety and danger (observe, my Lord, I make use of the gentlest terms the language affords)

affords) of the doctrines you and they have hitherto maintained.—Tell them, my Lord, that the policy of the whole Christian world is now changed, that the craft cannot longer look for success, and that you are determined, not only to abandon it, but that the remainder of your life shall be spent in acts of atonement for the injuries and injustice you have offered the most inoffensive of your fellow subjects—persuade them, my Lord, and your parting admonition will surely have weight, to follow your example, to disband and seek some honest means of getting bread. Should any of them argue against your advice, tell them, that the world despises and detests them; read to them the edicts of the Emperor, the ordinances of Spain, Sardinia, and Rome, relative to religious toleration—read to them the proceedings and regulations of the American states—read and explain to them particularly the
glorious

glorious conduct of the Irish nation—and if all these lessons do not prevail, read to them, my Lord, with due solemnity, the black catalogue of the massacre, rapine, and desolation they gave rise to in the capital of the British empire, at the very threshold of their mild and beneficent Sovereign, in the year 1780!!!

“After your Lordship has taken all these pains,” with your brethren, you will have done your duty, by shewing that neither “attention nor disposition shall be wanting on your part to countenance the crown, when you may do it with perfect honour to yourself; or to promote a right bond of permanent union between the different classes of British subjects.” This, my Lord, will shew your wisdom and disinterestedness; we shall then be convinced, that it will be the fixed object of your

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heart;

heart, to make the general good and the true spirit of the Christian religion the invariable rule of your conduct. Now, my Lord, let us consider a little, what effect this laudable change will produce in men's opinions of your Lordship; and indeed when one reflects on the universal prejudices against you, and the odium which your proceedings has raised in the breasts of all honest and sensible christians, there is but little room to doubt you will have abundant cause to be grateful to me, for having thus admonished, and first led you into the secret of your situation—mankind, my Lord, and particularly the people of England, though they have most cause to reprobate you—may charitably impute all your former transactions to a pliancy of disposition, and the fascinating arts of those wretches whose interest it became to seduce an easy nature, and who
inflated

inflated your mind with false notions of religion and government.---They may display their habitual generosity in making allowances for the intemperance of youth, and that *natural warmth* of genius which you are said to possess; and probably they may convert their contempt into pity, ascribing your errors to the delusions of the head, in which your heart had no concern. Review, my Lord, the manner in which you treat his Majesty's speech—but your language seems to me extremely natural: for what disrespect towards the Sovereign may not be expected from a man who at this day launches out into encomiums upon the “*true old covenant principles?*” A license so daring, as to make one almost lament that the press, that palladium of English liberty, should not be regulated within stricter limits. But beware, my Lord: out of the circle of your own reli-

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gious

gious intimates, the King-killing doctrine will find no advocates in these kingdoms. Your Lorship well knows this ; and I am on that account very much inclined to suspect that this was introduced, not so much from the expectation of any public effect it could produce, as to forward some hidden sinister purpose you may have in agitation. Lord Mansfield, the *oracle of law and wisdom*, was of opinion, and now is, that the riots in June 1780, were the effects of system. The dangers we have escaped justify suspicion ; but this dash is perhaps flung in *to tickle the fancy of your friends in the north* ; designed as a lure to their generosity, in order to procure a few more *bawbees* from that wretched herd who have already exhausted their slender means in making a stock purse to recruit your Lordship's finances*.

O turpe

* The smallest sums were at this period collected by public

O turpe dictu! the Duke of Gordon's son swaggering in a London newspaper about the *independence* of his circumstances, and yet condescending to receive the lowest charitable offerings of a miserable *Caledonian* peasant!!!

What is become of your pride, my Lord? You talk much of "ancient families," and seem to pique yourself not a little upon the nobility of your descent; and yet we see you every day running into excesses of folly and meanness that would disgrace the vilest member of the vilest society in that "*valuable book*," about which you complain so much and regret that his Majesty "was once graciously pleased to refuse it from your

public advertisements, by the enthusiastical followers of this deluded young nobleman, with a view to encourage his fanatic and mischievous measures.

hands."

hands." The marked contempt of that refusal would have for ever deterred any other than yourself from again thinking to affront a Sovereign, who wishes indeed to be the father of his people, with such an execrable compilation*.

In the name of God, recollect yourself, my Lord; pause a moment on the accumulation of disgraces you bring, not only on yourself, but upon your family, by such acts as these, and correct yourself, while correction is yet within your grasp: There may still be a possibility of your escaping perpetual infamy—Avoid then, my Lord, the ruin that awaits a perseverance in your present line of conduct.

* What a woful change of opinion has been since wrought in his Majesty's mind by those artful and designing *secret* advisers so justly reprobated throughout this *whole* reign, and whose object has uniformly been to sow dissention between the Sovereign and his people!!!

My

My Lord, however unfavourable I had been used to think of you, it was really matter of astonishment to see the *absurd and insolent use you* make of his Majesty's name, where you relate the substance of "the several conferences between you." As to your declaring to the world "the secret which Mr. Secretary Townshend* communicated to you," that may be easily pardoned; for I believe those who know that *shrewd statesman*, will readily think that had he whispered in your ear all the secrets he was possessed of, mankind, through your kind publication of them, would not be much the wiser. But

* The late Lord Sidney, better known by the familiar name of *Tommy Townsend*, one of those renegado patriots who, after declaiming for years, and (like a *lazeroni stans pede in uno*) making speeches against all the DOCTRINES and PRACTICES of the court, became one of its most abject sycophants.

when

when the King of *Great Britain* graciously vouchsafes *in the fullness of his condescension* to confer with a man of your comparative insignificance, and suffers himself to be tortured with subjects revolting to his mild, beneficent nature, decency, and a becoming sense of gratitude on your part, should have precluded all public mention of what might "have passed between you." However, my Lord, as your hand was in, I am sorry you did not go a little deeper into the relation of *all the serious important subjects which were discussed upon those occasions*, and not to suffer yourself to be so much swayed by an unmanly excess "of delicacy and pity for other people's characters, to suppress the full history of those dark transactions" which so materially affect your own. For I agree intirely with your Lordship, that "*matters of account cannot be made too public;*" and indeed, my Lord, if you should unfortunately

nately happen to die, things remaining as they now are, and men having no other documents to guide their opinions, than what the world is already in possession of, I should be greatly alarmed, my Lord, from the conviction I have that "Your honour, your loyalty, and your memory would suffer exceedingly from all the bloodshed, misfortunes, and calamities attending one of those bills, to which you are such an implacable enemy." I am also concerned, my Lord, that you have not favoured us with the name of that Scots judge, whose correspondence with the head of the Popish-clergy in Scotland, contributed, you say, so much to the partial repeal of those penal laws, which were truly described by the first authorities in the state to have been "*written in blood.*" The suppression of his name I esteem a loss to the public, and an injury to himself—but whoever he

is, if it should ever happen, which is not improbable, through the weight of your Lordship's influence with the "*eighty-five societies*," that he should be obliged to quit both his office and country, I can confidently venture to assure him of a most comfortable and honourable asylum in the bosom of that kingdom, which, as the most promising nursery of toleration, happiness, and freedom, the oppressed Genevans have made choice of for a place of refuge.

Surely, however your Lordship pronounced a monstrous libel upon his motives for interesting himself in behalf of

* "*Alas! poor country!*" how sadly altered is thy condition since this happy day, and how wofully hath thy fair aspect been disfigured by religious and political contentions. Such are the destructive effects of the councils of the Fitzgibbon's, Berresford's Forster's, Castlereagh's, and all that fell race that have prostrated the imperial pride of Ireland!!!

the

the poor Catholics, and upon the wisdom, humanity and justice of the British senate in declaring that repeal to have been brought about “for the purpose of arming the Papists against the Colonies, and not from any benevolent views of parliament, as was set forth by the orators, and in the second edition of the Popish memorial, to screen the real design from the English.” What, my Lord! Was it for the purpose of arming the Papists against the Colonists, that Sir George Saville brought in that bill? Was it for the same purpose that the greatest luminary of the law, the present Lord Ashburton*, Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, (whose exertions in favour of that oppressed body are amongst the

* Lord Ashburton, whom the British historian, in the glowing colours of description, will transmit to posterity, not only as the luminary of law, and jurisprudence, but as a man who adorned the finest genius by the lustre of the cardinal virtues practised in every stage and scene of life.

most honourable and praise-worthy of all his great and virtuous deeds) so ably seconded him? But this is not the only wilful misrepresentation I have pointed out in your "amazing length" of letter. Sorry I am, my Lord, that it was not; for, had such a measure been timely adopted, his Majesty's ministers would not to-day have to negotiate treaties with independent America; nor would slaughter and devastation have been spread through the Colonies, the justice of whose original struggles I am as ready to subscribe to as your Lordship. The Catholic body of *Scotland*, England and Ireland, (I follow the order laid down in your Letter) admitted to serve in the fleets and armies of their country, would have added such strength to the hands of government, as, properly directed, would enable us effectually to punish the perfidy

fidy of the house of Bourbon, ungenerously seizing the opportunity of our internal dissensions to strike a fatal blow at the power and glory of the British Empire; and to reduce the revolted Colonies, not to unconditional submission, but to a just, constitutional state of dependency upon the mother country. Unfortunately, my Lord, for the dignity of the British crown, the wealth and commerce of these kingdoms, and the general welfare of the empire at large, that opportunity, through the indecision and imbecility of the administration, of that day, is lost; never, I fear, to be regained.

I must confess, however, it gives me no small satisfaction that the world, my Lord, and particularly all true Protestants, will be no longer at a loss to estimate the motives of your opposition to the Roman Catholics, when they find you
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in the same breath that vents your spleen against them, declaiming freely and roundly, in the *right old covenant phraseology*, against prelacy, which you call the twin sister of Popery, as a grievance and reproach to the constitution.

This language, my Lord, is explicit and undisguised; and you have my hearty thanks for speaking out. Your meaning is too obvious to need any comment from me. And I much question if there be not another irksome *defect* in the government which your Lordship and the SOCIETIES would be as forward to remedy as you would be to abolish the bench of bishops. This, my Lord, would be glorious work, and truly worthy of such undertakers as Lord George Gordon and the Protestant Association. Let me beg, however, that, when it is intended to set about the laborious task of
civil

civil and religious reformation, your Lordship will reflect that the lawn sleeves are as necessary in the upper house to assist the minister, whoever he be, for the well-directing of the unwieldy state-machine, as the forty-five members are in the lower house; unless, indeed, it may be proposed to get rid of the Lords altogether, which I am much inclined to think would be the most *convenient* way of arranging things. Certainly it would be the most agreeable to the *right old covenant practice*. [*Vide HUME passim.*]

Having now, my Lord, gone through the greater part of your very dangerous letter, I shall beg to go a little farther, and transcribe some part of the former correspondence between you and the noble Lord at the head of the treasury. A careful revision of which, in my opinion, should convince your associates

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sociates and yourself of the more than contemptible light you are held in by all parties. You desired last May, in the following letter, to be indulged with an opportunity of waiting on that noble Earl, in company with a deputation from a committee of the Protestant Association, in order to solicit his interest for the repeal of the Popery Act.

“MY

“MY LORD,

“I HAVE the honour to acquaint your Lordship, by direction of the committee of the Protestant Association of London, Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark, that they have unanimously appointed a deputation of conference to wait upon your Lordship, as one of his Majesty’s principal secretaries of state, and to solicit your Lordship’s interest for the repeal of the late act in favour of Popery in England; and that the gentlemen of the said deputation will wait upon your Lordship on any day your Lordship is pleased to appoint.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship’s most obedient

and humble servant,

G. GORDON.”

Welbeck-Street, MAY 31, 1782.

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“Addressed

“Addressed to the Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne, one of his Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State, &c. &c.”

His Lordship, with how much propriety I will not take upon me to say, appointed a day for you and them to wait on him, which you did accordingly; but as it would seem, not being quite pleased with the sort of reception you met with, you desired that he would give you in writing his sentiments upon the subject of your request, which he did in the following manner:

“To the Right Hon. Lord **GEORGE GORDON.**

“Shelburne House, 7th June, 1782.

“ **MY LORD,**

“As your Lordship wished me to write my sentiments in answer to the application made to me by your Lordship, and the
gentle-

gentlemen who accompanied you, for my support, in case of an application to parliament for the repeal of the act of the XVIIIth of the King, respecting persons professing the Popish religion, I desire to assure your Lordship, that neither you, nor any of them can be more averse than I am to any measures tending to encourage the growth of Popery. *But in the act in question I can discover no such tendency.* I am firmly persuaded, nothing like it was intended by that measure, and that the acts of parliament remaining on the Statute Book will be sufficient to prevent the success of any attempt, so to misconstrue that act of parliament as to make it an engine in the hands of any emissary of the church of Rome to the prejudice of the Protestant religion.—Your Lordship will permit me to observe to you, that *there can be little colour for any complaint on the part of the church of Scotland,* as the

act in question does not extend to that part of the united kingdoms; and I know of no intention any where to alter the laws respecting these subjects in Scotland. I do not scruple to add it as my opinion, that any such alteration will be improper, *which does not meet with the entire concurrence of that church.*

“ Under these circumstances *I cannot too strongly recommend it to your Lordship, to exert your whole influence to discourage any measure of which ill-designing men may avail themselves to endanger the public quiet, in a moment when it is of peculiar importance to the foreign and domestic interests of the country to preserve it.*

“ I have the honour to be with great truth,

Your Lordship's

most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

SHELBURNE.”

In this answer, the Earl of Shelburne (who was never *reputed* a friend to the Catholics) has expressed the opinions of all descriptions of men, that have taken a lead in politics these seven years, upon that bill, the dangerous tendency of which seems to distress your Lordship so much. He tells you plainly, there exists no cause for your complaints—that you are intirely wrong—the world and your Lordship may see too by the language of his letter what opinion he holds you in, and what apprehensions he entertains of the public tranquillity being again endangered by your unwarrantable proceedings. The Earl of Shelburne is a very guarded man in his expressions, and yet you may see enough of his mind to satisfy your blind adherents and yourself, what little quarter may be expected from him, if any new mischief should arise from the further prosecution of the schemes against the quiet and happiness of the Roman Catholics.

I shall here take my leave of your Lordship, with an assurance, that if I should be fortunate enough to be any ways instrumental in awakening you to a proper sense of your interest and honour, and of the ruinous precipice on which you stand, I shall consider the few hours I have employed on this letter disposed of to the greatest advantage. Your enemies, amongst whom I may count all the virtuous, religious and respectable characters in the country, will perhaps censure me for taking any notice of your extravagances. They will most likely say, you should be allowed to rove unheeded about the world like another Don Quixote, attacking imaginary windmills and enchanted castles—armed with the resolutions of the Protestant association for a LANCE, and your own letters about the *true Presbyterian interest for a TARGET*. But I must observe, that whoever reasons thus ought to consider
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the wide difference between the principles of your Lordship and the celebrated knight of La Mancha. His mind was full of notions of gallantry, disinterestedness and unlimited charity; your Lordship, on the contrary, have in view but one object, which you seem determined to accomplish *per fas aut nefas*. Unhappily that object involves in it the ruin of a considerable number of your fellow christians, whom you unceasingly persecute; and, in all human probability, the total subversion of the constitution and government—cases not without precedent, (when men of your stamp were suffered to proceed with impunity in their diabolical designs). When this is the case, however much we may despise you, security becomes treachery, and must open the door to certain destruction. Your partizans and yourself will probably think I have dealt too severely by you; this charge I
could

could with great truth answer in the words of the Roman wit, which were never more applicable than to your religious friends, *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo—favete linguis*. I am free to declare, however, that if I have in the course of this letter applied harsh terms to your Lordship, the use of such weapons was very disagreeable to my feelings; but as I have endeavoured to follow to the utmost of my poor ability your own example, “*as to seriousness and simplicity in these few remarks*” on your very dangerous letter, *the only instance in which I could possibly bring myself to copy after you*, it was impossible to avoid emphatic language, in order to attach “any impressions on your Lordship’s observations.” Beside as I write solely with a view of curing your Lordship of a great malady, which I perceive plainly verging to a desperate crisis, I could not help conforming to the practice of much abler

physi-

physicians, who, when they find the disorder taking a violent head, generally prescribe harsh medicines. The Earl of Shelburne, habituated to all the refinement and elegance of court polish, couches in the smoothest language, and compresses in concise but pregnant expressions, these ideas, which I am obliged to convey in the common way of declaring and publishing the suggestions of the human mind.

However this simplicity of style and manners may suit *one* material purpose of this address, which is to explain your character to the mass of people, once seduced to their *own*, and the destruction of their fellow citizens, by your publications, meetings and speeches. These compositions were unnoticed, because they had no literary ornament to recommend them; and because they were the pro-

ductions of Lord *George Gordon*, government disregarded them, men of genius despised them; but the rabble imbibed every false assertion as apostolic truth—and reposing implicit confidence in the integrity of your head and heart, conceived that religion was dearer than all other human blessings; and that this religion was fundamentally sapped, by the legislature granting toleration to one body of the community to say their prayers in their own way, and go to hell if they pleased, since it was impossible to convert them, either to the “*old covenant*,” or the religion of the state.

This outrage to your Lordship’s principles, which was committed by an enlightened legislature unanimously concurring in the policy and wisdom of the measure, brought you up to the senate door, with legions of fanatics, who had the unparalleled

paralleled impudence to call themselves Protestants, at your heels, to demand of the British parliament the revocation and repeal of their most solemn act. Their characteristic fortitude and integrity induced them to treat a proposition recommended by such marks of hostility, with the profoundest contempt. The *saints* irritated, laid the city in ashes—your Lordship was tried for your life—your escape was difficult—excited the wonder of all Europe; and has moved your own astonishment so much, as to induce in your mind a belief, that there is no power in the community competent to your punishment. It is to remove any such presumptuous ideas, amongst other reasons, that I solicit, my Lord, your attention to this plain address. Distribute it among the *saints* in Moorfields and other *pious places*, as a justification, if your *engage-*

ments to them require any, of your desertion of their cause and practices. Return to an illustrious family, justly alarmed for your future conduct and safety, by perceiving evident marks of your disposition to engage once more with "*Sancho Fisher*" in religious errantry. By inculcating peace, and precepts of philanthropy and love, among your fellow citizens, endeavour to conciliate yourself to the mildest Sovereign. Thus, acting and reflecting, you will communicate consolation and additional felicity to the whole house of Gordon, and recover the public opinion and esteem. But should your Lordship proceed in your present career, to scenes similar to those which have already sprung from your fanatical machinations, it will be then too late, when you are involved in their consequences, to repent having rejected the admonitions of a man, disinterestedly

interestedly disposed to restore you to
 sanity---to honour---to the confidence of
 your Sovereign---the respect of your coun-
 try--- and the confidence and attachment
 of a numerous, ancient and illustrious
 family!

THE END.







