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CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
STATE OF PARTIES,
AND THE
MEANS OF EFFECTING
A
RECONCILIATION
BETWEEN THEM.

L O N D O N.

Sold by G. G. and J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW, and
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[Price ONE SHILLING.]

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E R R A T A.

- p. 15, l. 4, for *where* read *where*.
p. 32, l. 31, for *publisted* read *enacted*.
p. 33, l. 10, for *tbier* read *their*.

AT a time when the opinions of men are so much divided upon various points of political speculation, and when, in consequence of that difference of opinion, the part which they act is so opposite, it seems extraordinary that there should exist a very general agreement respecting the dangers of the country, and the insecurity of the constitution; but this, however extraordinary, is unquestionably the fact; wherever public affairs are made the subject of conversation, the same unvaried gloom prevails: We hear no triumphant assurances that the nation is unanimous, no hopes of a speedy amendment of our affairs, no attestations of popular contentment. On the contrary, we perceive many perplexed with doubts and apprehensions which they cannot conceal and yet are unwilling to confess, divided between interest and duty, conviction and shame; others again, once confident and sanguine, brooding over recent miscarriages in the sullenness of disappointment; some forming presages of calamities; and many venting the deep, though not loud, murmurs of discontent. The origin of our present evils is much contested; the precise tendency of them is also a matter of violent dispute; but whether it be probable that they will lead to an absolute monarchy, or to a democratic republic, as the opposite parties rendered

violent by long conflict shall chance to prevail in power, this is certain, that in either case the present form of constitution will be violated, and from recent events it may be inferred, that if that form of constitution be worth preserving, its preservation can only be effected by the *speedy* and *active* union of moderate men in lenient and conciliatory measures. To a wise, prompt, and vigorous co-operation of this sort, upon constitutional grounds, and for constitutional purposes, the truest friends of their country turn their present regards, as the best, perhaps the only method left, of abating the dangerous animosities of the high monarchical and popular parties, and of withdrawing the well-meaning on both sides from those extremes which a generous love of natural rights and a quick sense of grievances on the one hand, and an exclusive affection for property and power on the other, may compel them to pursue. For when the circumstances of our situation, internal and external; when our private dissensions and public calamities are impartially examined, there will appear sufficient reason to believe that the English constitution cannot long exist precisely the same in all respects as it exists at this period. If a timely and judicious reform in the representation takes place, the presumption is, that it will be invigorated and perpetuated: If abuses should be peaceably acquiesced in, it is natural to suppose that the unchecked and rapidly increasing influence of corruption would soon produce the dissolution of it: If the delay of reform should occasion a

disastrous

disastrous struggle, terminating at length in the annihilation of what is called the republican party, it is not less obvious that the consequences of such a defeat would be generally fatal to our dearest rights, which would then be retrenched at pleasure by the victorious faction to the immoderate aggrandisement of the aristocracy or the crown. Lastly, should the contest end in favour of the popular party, it is not visionary to conjecture, that a mighty body, inflamed by eloquence, exasperated by wrongs, and rendered by opposition sensible of their own strength, might tumultuously bear down the privileged orders of the state, and establish republican equality upon the ruins of our existing constitution. To these different terminations of our present form of polity, apprehended by men in different degrees, as their interests, fears, and prejudices determine them, there can be little satisfaction in looking, except from a motive to recommend some mode by which a contest so hazardous may be prevented, our grievances redressed, our animosities allayed, and our constitution preserved from the fury of heated factions, as well as from the danger of internal delay.

No one who reflects upon public affairs can be ignorant that three considerable parties are formed in the state, of unequal strength, and of different opinions. One determined, until all danger from republican doctrines shall be finally removed, to support at all hazards, and with all its influence, the usurped as well as constitutional privileges of the aristocracy and the

crown. Another is formed of men who, eager in the cause of natural rights, and wearied of renewing fruitless petitions to the legislature for a moderate reformation of abuses, have at length pledged themselves solemnly to pursue with unremitted zeal the establishment of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, as essential and preliminary to every other reform. The third consists of those who wish to effect an immediate and temperate reform in the way of amicable compromise between the above parties, for the sake of national tranquility, and for the extension and better security of our just rights, by those regular means which our impaired constitution is still said to afford. From this bare enumeration it is evident that the last-mentioned description of men differs much more from the first than from the second; and therefore, in the rapid progress of abuse, when the disorder, grown desperate, will not only justify but demand a more desperate remedy, when strong apprehensions for the very existence of liberty shall become nearly universal, it is not impossible that this party, despairing of the practicability of moderate plans in a highly agitated state of the public mind, and preferring acquiescence rather than opposition to the popular will, may in such deplorable circumstances be driven into a closer union with that which professes the most extensive system of reform. As these parties already unite in many points, and may hereafter in a conceivable crisis unite in more; so the two first never can unite in the sentiments which either of them

them maintain; one side being determined to resist the invasion of opinions which they term democratical, at the risk of rendering our monarchy absolute; the other no less intent upon asserting their natural rights, and repressing the encroachments of the privileged orders, although in consequence of bitter opposition to their demands, the struggle should terminate in the establishment of a pure republic. If this statement be tolerably exact, it surely exhibits an object of infinite importance, and necessarily points to the most serious considerations—the fate of our constitution, and the happiness of every individual living under it, are immediately involved; and when we reflect upon the influence of Great-Britain, it is not too much to add, that the freedom and welfare of Europe depend upon the event. Hostilities between the two opposite parties cannot possibly, in the present distracted state of public opinion, and the calamitous situation of public affairs, lead to any conclusion which the friends to order and liberty united will not deeply deprecate: And it seems highly expedient that their bitter and encreasing animosities should be suspended by patriotic and constitutional means, by the respectable intervention of the middle ranks of men co-operating with the declared and active advocates of moderate reform. To urge this seasonable interference, before the time be past, is the true object of the following pages; and the writer has only to regret that (conscious as he is of the pressing importance of the subject) he cannot do it justice, nor treat it with an ability

lity in any degree proportionate to his zeal. It is his intention to state some particulars respecting each of the abovementioned parties, and to consider the result in connexion with the present situation of our affairs.

Of the high monarchical party, the views and opinions may be collected from a variety of authentic sources; from the resolutions entered into, and the writings circulated by the late associations; from the conduct those associations pursued, and from the measures they supported in others. These meetings consisted of men distinguished from their fellow-citizens chiefly by their station, their wealth, or their dependency on the higher powers;—estimated with regard to their influence or property, they certainly composed a very respectable share of the kingdom; but, upon a numerical comparison, they bore a very small proportion to that body of the people by whom no associations were either formed or approved. These meetings originated from a report propagated from high authority, and spread with infinite industry, that a savage plot had been detected upon the point of execution, formed to overthrow the monarchy, the peerage, and the church; to level all distinctions of property and birth; to destroy every subsisting establishment; and to introduce republican equality, with a long train of horrors in their room. The parliament was suddenly assembled, the militia embodied upon very suspicious grounds, the tower secured by additional fortifications, barracks were erected near the great manufacturing towns, and troops
 dispatched

dispatched by forced marches to places supposed to be most eminently infected with the spirit of revolt. These measures naturally filled the kingdom with astonishment, and the more so when there appeared no object worthy of such mighty preparations. Yet although no enemy, foreign or domestic, was discovered, the plan of defence was considered as still incomplete; as if the whole civil and military powers of government were not to be depended upon in so perilous a crisis, as if the lower ranks without exception were ready to burst forth into rebellion, ministry thought fit to raise private combinations of men of property to support the exertions of the executive magistrate. In order that this pointed insinuation of the weakness of the executive power, and the necessity of reinforcing it with fresh influence should be made known with every possible effect, the imminent danger of the country was first proclaimed by an assemblage of the professed friends and dependants of ministry, with a well-known placeman at their head. This was the original association, and the object was clearly, under pretext of a present alarm, to gain a general pledge from the higher ranks in support of future measures, and to excite in the nation at large a disposition to undertake a war against that people with whom the shadowy authors and abettors of domestic conspiracies were supposed to be closely allied.

Whether any plot really existed, and whether the associated Bodies believed in its existence, are points with which the present argument has little concern. If a plot existed,
 ministry

ministry ought to have proved its existence, and punished the authors of it in broad day-light, by the known laws of the country, for the sake of public example: If the whole was a forgery, (and where is the demonstration of its truth?) then are ministry to be reprobated as the true authors of the alarm itself, and of the consequent war. As to the Associators, if they did not believe in the reality of the plot, but supported the belief of it in others, it is manifest that they are men, who, professing a regard to truth, at the same time deem fraud and imposture necessary in the administration of a free government: If they did believe with sincerity, (which we are willing to admit) then their subsequent declarations may be regarded as so much the more dangerous to the liberties of England, from being the effect not of warmth or delusion, but of cool and deliberate conviction. It would, however, be unfair to impute to every individual concerned in these meetings all the sentiments which were published by the authority of their committees, or an unreserved approbation of the conduct which those committees suggested, and for a while so eagerly pursued. Many worthy men were hurried into those associations by the strong current of opinion, by the mandates of power, by a dread of public danger, which a little reflection proved to them was false; or by a dread of private calumny, which no experience has proved not to have been founded in truth;—many refused to sign any other than the temperate declaration, drawn up at Merchant Taylors' Hall;

Hall; many having signed others, never afterwards frequented those extraordinary meetings; while some, with a spirit worthy of more general imitation, publicly seceded from them as soon as they discovered their proceedings to be inconsistent with the liberal spirit of English gentlemen, destructive of all private confidence and public harmony, and hostile to the constitution they pretended to preserve. But even after these exceptions, the numbers and influence of those who remained inflexibly attached to the support of High Monarchical and Aristocratic doctrines are sufficient, connected as they are with ministerial power, and supported by the immense patronage of the crown, to excite in us a well-grounded apprehension for the security of those rights which we still enjoy under our decayed constitution.

These associated Bodies, conscious, we will suppose, of real danger themselves, found it expedient to raise an alarm in others; and to prove the sincerity of their own fears, they appealed to those measures of ministry, the necessity of which had never been substantiated by evidence, (though capable of the clearest proof if real) and which, in fact, could only be justified by proofs the most cogent. Ministry, in return, appealed to the fears of these Alarmists as a justification of their own measures, and made the alarm they themselves had created a ground for subsequent proceedings; thus, by a collusion of parties, or an imposition of one upon the other, the public mind was kept in a state of anxious suspense, and effectual

steps were taken to profit by the credulity of the moment, in order to strengthen the hand of the executive power. During this memorable perturbation of the kingdom, all who durst avow themselves the friends of popular rights experienced the most unkind and ungenerous treatment. Their enemies, entrenched behind ministerial and judicial power, continually harassed them with vexatious attacks, and betrayed too frequently a barbarous and unmanly triumph. Unmerited odium was studiously attached to their character, dark surmises were circulated respecting them, and their conduct was imputed to the worst of motives; because they refused to abandon their fixed principles to the capricious humours of the opposite party, they were reviled as the promoters of discontent, and the instigators of rebellion; and their principles were anathematized as dangerous Theories, hostile to the rights of the reigning Family, although by the operation of those very principles that bigotted tyrant, James, had been expelled from the kingdom, and the present Family seated upon the throne. While in such meetings every mind brooded with a distempered sensibility over the horrors of revolution, and every tongue was loud in declaiming against impracticable Speculations, the Sovereignty of the people, Anarchy, Atheism, and the Rights of Man, was it to be wondered if, by a natural association of ideas in minds thus diseased, the very name of Liberty should be heard with horror, and considered as the watchword of insurrection? Accordingly, in their misguided zeal

zeal to extinguish the flames of licentiousness, which their sickly imaginations continually presented to them, they had well-nigh swept from those altars, which had been erected by the labour of ages, and cemented with the best blood of our ancestors, the Vestal fires of the British Constitution. For admitting that our frame of government might have been endangered by the circulation of opinions described under the loose and general denomination of *seditions*, what candid man will deny that freedom itself, the soul and spirit of that government, was brought into imminent hazard, when the whole kingdom was converted, as it were, into a Spanish Inquisition, and when the power of accusation, placed by the constitution in the attorney-general, or grand juries of the kingdom, was boisterously usurped by a set of men who enjoyed no specific delegation or public trust? The celebrated protest publicly entered into against these proceedings, by Mr Erskine and the other friends to the Liberty of the Press, deserves to be long and gratefully remembered. They assembled “to object to the *popular* prosecution of *public* offences, which the crown, if they exist, is bound in duty to prosecute by the attorney-general, where no individual can count upon a personal injury, and where the personal interest of the subject is only as a member of that public which is committed to the care of the executive authority of the country.” And they ask, in solemn terms, and with a patriotic solicitude for the liberty of the subject, “When, without

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“any

“ any state necessity, or requisition from the
 “ crown or parliament of the kingdom, bodies
 “ of men voluntarily intrude themselves into a
 “ sort of partnership of authority with the exe-
 “ cutive power, and when, from the universal
 “ and admitted interest of the whole nation
 “ in the objects or pretexts of such associations,
 “ the people, if they continue to spread as they
 “ have done, may be said to be in a manner
 “ represented by them; *where is the accused to*
 “ *find justice amongst his peers, when arraigned*
 “ *by such combinations?* Where is the boasted
 “ trial by the country, if the country is thus to
 “ become informer and accuser? Where is the
 “ cautious distrust of accusation, if the grand
 “ jury themselves, or some of them, may have
 “ informed against the object of it, brought in
 “ the very bill which they are to find, and sub-
 “ scribed for the prosecution of it? Where, in
 “ the end, is the mild, complacent, relenting
 “ countenance of the jury for trial, that last
 “ consolation which the humanity of England
 “ never denied, even to men taken in arms
 “ against her laws, if the pannels are to come
 “ reeking from vestry rooms, where they have
 “ been listening to harangues concerning the
 “ absolute necessity of extinguishing the very
 “ crimes and the criminals which they are
 “ to decide upon in judgment, and to condemn
 “ by their verdict? But if these proceedings
 “ must thus evidently taint the administration
 “ of justice even in the superior courts, where
 “ the judges, from their independence, their
 “ superior learning, and their further remo-
 “ val

“ val from common life, may be argued to
 “ be likely to assist juries in the due discharge
 “ of their office, what must be the conduct of
 “ the courts of quarter sessions, where jurisdic-
 “ tions over these offences are co-ordinate,—
 “ where the judges are the very gentlemen who
 “ lead these associations in every county and city
 “ in the kingdom, and where juries are either
 “ their tenants and dependants, or their neigh-
 “ bours in the country justly looking up to
 “ them, with confidence and affection, as their
 “ friends and protectors in the direction of their
 “ affairs?—*Is this a trial by an English court and*
 “ *jury?* It would be infinitely more manly, and
 “ less injurious to the accused, to condemn him
 “ at once without a hearing, than to mock him
 “ with the empty forms of the British constitu-
 “ tion, when the substance and effect of it are
 “ destroyed. By these observations we mean
 “ no disrespect to the magistrates of our coun-
 “ try; but the best men may inadvertently place
 “ themselves in situations absolutely incompati-
 “ ble with their duties.”

This memorable declaration, a glorious mo-
 nument of the moderation, the talents, and the
 patriotism of its author, was made public on the
 19th January, 1793.—Much effect could not
 be expected from it at the moment of its ap-
 pearance, but even then it seemed to animate
 the timid and dejected friends of public free-
 dom, and to raise a blush in all of the opposite
 party who were not destitute of shame; it was
 rather calculated to produce conviction when
 the enthusiasm of the moment should subside,
 and

and when its manly warnings should be confirmed by melancholy facts: These daily occurred: The large subscriptions entered into by those who now formed the Club-government of the kingdom, were in many instances appropriated to the reward of spies and informers, either acting under the direction of the committees, or communicating to them *anonymous* intelligence. In other instances the expences of prosecution were defrayed from the same funds; where the proofs secretly communicated did not amount to conviction, the unfortunate persons, the objects of disguised slander, were seldom permitted to escape unpunished; if in trade, they were marked out as persons of suspected loyalty, and therefore unworthy of encouragement. Where the betrayers of private confidence or social freedom denounced their victims upon stronger evidence, great bail was generally demanded, and severe sentences inflicted upon their conviction. If the accused person was found perfectly innocent of the charge laid against him, no reparation could be expected by the injured defendant; wherever it appeared that the accusation was malicious and defamatory, the miserable sufferer was unable to punish the aggressors by prosecuting them in return; because, however he might be injured by the malignity of the secret informer, no action could lie against the public prosecutor in that case for damages. In reviewing the trials that have taken place throughout the kingdom, chiefly at the instigation of these Tory Clubs, the miserable effects of this uncon-

unconstitutional system of jealousy, influence, and arbitrary coercion, were moreover proved by the different degrees of punishment which were inflicted in different places upon persons in circumstances precisely similar. No one uniform principle prevailed: In consequence of which, persons on whom no seditious intention could be proved, provoked perhaps by the watchful agents of power, or surprized in the unguarded moments of intoxication, were sometimes consigned to punishments equal in degree with those which in other places had been inflicted upon more notorious offenders. Of such a nature were the measures eagerly pursued by the combined Alarmists in the heat of their zeal, to prevent the people from reading any political publication which pointed out abuses in Government, or which taught them to believe that their Constitution would be secured, and their happiness promoted by a Parliamentary Reform.

If these Tory combinations were objects of considerable alarm, from the illegal and unconstitutional means they employed in suppressing whatever was published by the opposite party, the danger was encreased when the nature and tendency of their own papers came to be considered. Writings more hostile to morals and religion, more insulting to mankind, more libellous upon the English Government, never appeared. The exploded *High Church and King* doctrines were now revived in full vigour, and eagerly subscribed by men who wished to pass amongst their fellow-citizens as genuine

nuine Whigs. Some of these men presumed upon their former characters to give popularity to their present doctrines; this had a considerable effect; and the old defenders of revolution principles cordially uniting with the Tory party, poured forth from every press elaborate defences of Monarchical rights, and rancorous invectives against the supporters of freedom. The horrible excesses committed in France formed the constant theme of their puerile declamations; these they uniformly, with equal falsehood and absurdity, imputed to the Principles of liberty. At length, the execution of the unfortunate Lewis, who fell a sacrifice to the villainy of bad ministers, and whose fate foreign Courts, predetermined upon a war with France, for obvious reasons took no pains to avert, however they might affect to deplore it, proved an event highly serviceable to the designs of the Tory party; and they impatiently seized the favourable opportunity of inflaming a loyal people to a pitch of unparalleled frenzy. The public was now told, that every consideration of policy, and every dictate of religion, required an instantaneous display of Vengeance from Great-Britain; it was represented as inconsistent with our duty to God, to the King, to Ourselves, and to Mankind at large, to suffer the perpetrators of this foul deed to live;—but those who had voted the death of the unfortunate Prince were supported by the great body of the people; thus a war of vengeance necessarily led to a war of Extermination, and for this execrable alternative every art was used

used to prepare the popular mind. The reader is referred for proofs of these uncharitable sentiments to the Appendix — without strong proofs such a charge ought not to be credited. In short, the most despotic principles of the most despotic Princes of Europe became the creed of the party. The Duke of Brunswick's retreat was piteously bewailed, and his manifesto represented as well-intentioned and just; although every reasonable man must concur with Mr Sheridan, when he asserted on the 15th December, 1792, “ it was that hateful
 “ outrage on the rights and feelings of human
 “ nature, that wretched tissue of pride, folly,
 “ and inhumanity; it was the Duke of Brunf-
 “ wick's manifesto that first steeled the heart
 “ and maddened the brain of all France; which
 “ provoked those it had devoted to practise all
 “ the cruelties it had impotently threatened to
 “ inflict; which sharpened the daggers of the
 “ assassins of the 2d of September, and whetted
 “ the axe suspended over the unfortunate Mo-
 “ narch.”—The singular publications circulated at this period, after magnifying the horrors of what they call Anarchy and Republicanism, depicted in glowing colours the comparative mildness and stability of absolute Governments, wherein one person reigning by divine authority, or indefeasible hereditary right, can instantly, by a judicious exertion of military force, overawe seditious complainants, and preserve the peace of civil society, without recurring to the dangerous expedient of granting redress: They urged arbitrary Monarchs to be watchful of their

own rights, the better to secure the blessings of arbitrary Government to their happy subjects; they bade them beware of suffering Reformers to exist in their respective States, and exhorted them to coerce with salutary rigour every effort of Liberty as the future parent of Anarchy and Atheism; they abjured for ever the uncourtly doctrine of the natural rights of mankind, and, coupling Democracy and Ruin as cause and effect, they scrupled not to prophesy the certain downfall of the American States. The pre-eminent degree of freedom and happiness enjoyed by the wise and generous republicans of the new world, while it falsified the arguments, excited the malignity even of some who had rejoiced in the final establishment of their independence; the actual state of America had been frequently appealed to by the admirers of republican doctrines; it became necessary therefore for the advocates of High Monarchical principles to diminish the force of this powerful example, by underrating the happiness of that people, misrepresenting the merits of their Government, and confidently presaging its destruction. These same authors maintain that all Government exists *for*, not *from*, the people; and are careful to refuse the people any rights in their collective capacity, particularly that supreme right by which, according to the opinion of Locke and others, they are justified, when they feel themselves violently aggrieved, in resisting tyrannical exertions of power, and in altering the frame of their Government; but although they withhold from the
 people.

people of every country a right to interfere in their own concerns, they applaud the interference of princes in the concerns of a foreign people, and of course, by the natural consequences of their argument, justify native princes in any change which they may chuse to make, upon grounds of State necessity, &c. in the Government of their own subjects, over whom they possess a sort of natural authority.

In these publications, the people were often reminded that the English Constitution was the best and most free in the world; and while they were strictly forbidden to pry into its defects, they were confidently assured that all attempts to improve it must end in its ruin. They were told that Republics were necessarily seats of civil confusion, but were not permitted to enquire into the facts. They were informed, that the poor had more reasons of contentment than the rich; but were not permitted to read any thing which questioned this statement. The whole body of the Dissenters were in other works described as disloyal, seditious, and pestilential, infected to a man with democratic opinions, and implacable enemies to subsisting establishments; to them were ascribed most of our great national evils, particularly the American war. These calumnious imputations upon so respectable a body of citizens (refuted by the reading and the observation of every unprejudiced man) were capable of producing the most disastrous effects; and the marked lenity with which the leaders of the Church and King mobs at Birmingham and other places had been treat-

ed, justly alarmed them for their future safety, while these writings, openly reviling them as a proscribed and impious race, were circulated not only with impunity, but for some time with the express sanction of the Government Clubs. What passions the authors of these performances designed to raise in the people by such assertions, they alone can inform us; the seditious tendency of such malignant falsehoods, when connected with the history of certain loyal insurrections, is immediately seen.

These and other inflammatory doctrines were strongly enforced in numerous works, distributed or recommended by many of the associated Bodies. But by no author, employed in this disgraceful service, were similar doctrines supported with greater extravagance of fancy, or want of candour, than by the justly celebrated Agriculturist, Mr Arthur Young, in his Tract entitled "*The Example of France a warning to Great-Britain,*" a Tract which deserves the reader's notice, not only from the singularity of its contents, so strikingly at variance with the author's other productions, but also because the very able and spirited pamphlet lately published in answer to it, under the name of "*Peace and Reform against War and Corruption,*" will amply repay him for the disgust excited by the perusal of the former. After the most virulent invectives against the friends of temperate Reform, whom he terms Jacobins disguised for the easier perpetration of their horrid schemes, he declares his utter aversion "to milk-and-water declarations of loyalty," and asserts that the conduct of the
Court

Court party ought to be “in *extremes*,” because there is “*no medium* in moments like these.” After avowing, in one part of his book, that, “if there is any one principle more predominant than another in his politics, it is the principle of *change* ;” and assigning this as a curious reason “for not having changed his principles,” he in another part calls upon the Associated Fraternities “to resist *every* idea of Reform upon principles of giving more power to the *people*,” and with a caution doubtless well applied, exhorts them to oppose “*all change* in that Constitution which gives *them* the means of wealth, and protects *them* in the enjoyment.”—Tired of pronouncing eulogiums upon the English Government, he libels at length the House of Commons as “corrupt and bribed,” and is not ashamed to ask, “if the *nature* of such an assembly demands to be *corrupted* in order to *pursue the public good*, who but a visionary can wish to remove corruption?” “*Extravagant Courts, selfish Ministers, and corrupt Majorities*,” are in his mind “intimately interwoven with our practical freedom ;” and he adds, that the House of Commons, “which ought NEVER to be considered as the representative of the people, have produced the happiness of this country by NOT speaking the will of the people.”—After indulging in these contradictions and absurdities with much confidence and self-applause, he at length commences the most violent attack upon public liberty that has been made since the period of the Revolution. Englishmen well know, and we trust will always maintain, that
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the *Right of petitioning* for a redress of grievances, or for any alterations in Church or State, is amongst the most ancient and invaluable of their privileges, and particularly secured by a statute of William and Mary, which “ declares the subject’s right to petition, and that all commitments and prosecutions for petitioning are illegal.” This venerable bulwark of the British Constitution, this sacred provision for the liberties of the people, which it were high treason on any plea of state necessity to diminish, or abrogate, or suspend, our author boldly and unblushingly proposes to remove; he proposes that the people themselves should *petition* for its removal, little doubting, if the people of Great-Britain could convert this right into an instrument of its own destruction, that the most essential advantages might be taken of such a surrender by the executive power, in times so adverse to the pretensions of Princes. “ It appears to me (says he) that there would be a *singular propriety* in the *Associations* which are at present spreading through the kingdom petitioning Parliament to pass an act to declare all clubs, associations, societies, and meetings of men, that assemble for the purpose of obtaining changes in the Constitution, *illegal*.” Having deprived the people of this grand fundamental right, he applies himself to discover such measures as might for ever prevent them from regaining it; and, suspecting the temper of the present militia as too constitutional, distrusting even the support of a regular standing army in such a case, and forgetting the use that might be made of *foreign*

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auxiliaries, he loudly exclaims, “ the innovation WE want, and ought to call for with one voice. is a MILITIA RANK AND FILE OF PROPERTY ! ”

What are the wants of this gentleman, and the party of which he is the organ, Englishmen will do well to examine, before they abandon the best fruits of the Glorious Revolution, and admit into their balanced Government the hideous innovation of a Military Aristocracy; a monster, whose wasteful ravages would soon prove equally fatal to the People and the Crown.

Of such materials is the work of Mr A. Young composed; nor would any notice have been here taken of a Pamphlet so unworthy of serious refutation, but that from the strong recommendations issued in its favor from the Crown and Anchor, and other associated Bodies, it may be considered as the orthodox Creed of the present Court Politicians—the authentic Manifesto of the Monarchical Party.

Besides the treasonable and seditious doctrines enumerated above, of which one should have thought that nothing but the excess of alarm could have prevented Englishmen from perceiving the true drift, there was one circulated of a more novel and extraordinary nature; this was the notion respecting an *Equalization of Property*. It was held by the Crown and Anchor Association, and other affiliated Societies, that this was a general principle of the French Legislature, and of all who were supposed to wish for a peace with France. Nothing was ever more remote from truth than this assertion. It was
well

well known that there existed a decree in France making it death to propose even an Agrarian Law; and it was universally allowed, that any attempt to equalize property would be absurd, wicked, and impracticable in any country, or under any form of Government. Whence then arose this chimerical idea? From the necessity of producing such a degree of terror in persons of the landed and monied interests as should incline them to pursue, without examination, *all* the measures of Ministry respecting France, and to adopt *all* the doctrines promulgated by the Tory combinations. To this source may be traced that most impudent as well as most dangerous of all falsehoods, the report of an Equalization of Property. Yet this doctrine, which was solely founded in the imposture of those who pretended to support Government, was gravely combated, and with much laboured ingenuity, as a popular and prevailing opinion by several eminent opposers of Peace and Reform! Many men of great good sense and integrity were deceived into a belief of it, by the arts of the Ministerial Committees, assisted by their own prejudices; and from their writings against it, the lower ranks of the country were first awakened to the consideration of the doctrine. This savage outcry against a phantom of their own raising had other effects besides exciting a political terror; it tended to bring even the terms *Equality* and *Equal Rights* into disgrace, and thus misrepresentation and calumny were artfully used to force the people to renounce what their ancestors had established with their blood. This

This exclusive regard for the preservation of property against the supposed designs of persons no otherwise known than by the general description of Levellers and Republicans, may be considered as no obscure intimation of the future conduct of the High Monarchical Party, who being now completely terrified by the reports which prevailed, anxiously sought to encrease that Power by which they imagined they should be protected in the undisturbed enjoyment of their possessions. For if these Associators are sincere in the apprehensions they expressed; if they think the dangers of Republicanism so imminent, and the introduction of it big with such calamity to themselves and to their country, it is not unreasonable to infer that their opposition to popular rights will increase in proportion to the encreasing strength of the popular party; that they will, on the one hand, seek to diminish the privileges of the people, as the means of giving success to popular pretensions; on the other, to enlarge the prerogatives or influence of the Crown, as the means of suppressing the *spirit of Reform*; and finally, that in case of any popular eruption (which Providence avert!) they will much rather chuse to render the Monarchy absolute, than concede in moderation to the just demands of the aggrieved party. Can we entertain a reasonable doubt of this, when we see an attempt revived by the favourite Authors in these Government Clubs, to place the Rights of the English Monarchy upon other grounds than the *free consent of a free people*?

Why do they endeavour with so much zeal to introduce, under the disguise of eloquence and sophistry, the pernicious doctrines of Kingly Rights exploded at the æra of the Revolution, unless their plan is prospective; and that having relaid the old foundation, they mean, *in case of exigency*, to re-establish that superstructure of Tyranny and Superstition demolished by our glorious ancestors? Hear the oracles of their party: “The doctrine that the Sovereignty, whether exercised by one or many, did not only originate *from* the people, but that *in* the people the same Sovereignty constantly and unalienably resides, tends, in my opinion, to the utter subversion not only of all Government in all modes, and to all stable securities to rational freedom, but to all the rules and principles of morality itself.”—*Burke’s Appeal*, p. 56, 57. In another work, the same great Author ridicules Dr Price for “telling the Revolution Society that his Majesty is almost the only lawful King in the world, because the only one who owes his Crown to the *choice of his people*. This doctrine is either nonsense as applied to the Prince now on the Throne, and therefore neither true nor false; or it affirms a most *unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional* doctrine.”—*Reflections*, p. 16, 17.

Englishmen need not to be here informed, that their own immortal Patriot and Philosopher, LOCKE, an eye-witness of that Revolution, the principles of which Mr Burke has attempted with all the wonderful powers of his ingenuity

ingenuity to pervert, holds a language diametrically opposite to that just quoted: This venerable Whig expressly asserts, that King William's title was only valid inasmuch as it was founded in the *consent* of the people; "which
 " being the *only one* of all *lawful* Governments,
 " he has much more fully and clearly than
 " any Prince in Christendom." Yet with this authority, and that of many other writers, spectators of that great event, directly in opposition to his ideas of passive obedience, Mr Burke scruples not to declare, that "those who con-
 " demn him and his book, of course condemn
 " *all* the principles of the *ancient Constitutional*
 " *Whigs* of this country." Many other passages might be here cited from the works of our modern Filmer, to shew in what utter contempt he holds that great fundamental doctrine in our Constitution, which derives all power *from* the people. The Tory doctrine, that the Monarch reigns by a right independent of the consent of his people, thus rescued from oblivion after the interval of 100 years, was upon the late alarm eagerly adopted, inculcated, and maintained by *near three thousand* affiliated Societies, as the Grand Specific against the dreaded infection of Republican opinions. Amongst the numerous papers industriously circulated by these Tory Meetings, to impress this truth upon the common people, one boldly avows, in broad expressions, the Divine Right of Kings. "Have
 " you not read the Bible? Do you not know
 " that it is there written, that *the King is the*
 " *Lord's Anointed?* But did you ever hear of
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“ his having anointed a republic?” Several hundreds of this libellous and treasonable hand-bill, stamped with the imprimatur of Mr Reeves, were circulated by authority in every town in Great-Britain. Dr Horsley, Bishop of St David’s, preaching before the Lords, uses the following language, which so far from being disavowed by the auditory to which it was addressed, received their unanimous sanction on the motion of the Archbishop of Canterbury:—

“ God, to his own secret purpose, *directs* the
 “ worst actions of *Tyrants* no less than of the
 “ best and most godly princes. Man’s abuse,
 “ *therefore*, of his *delegated* authority, is to be
 “ borne by *resignation*, like any other of God’s
 “ judgments. The opposition of the individual
 “ to the Sovereign Power is an opposition to
 “ God’s providential arrangements. In Go-
 “ vernments which are the worst administered,
 “ the Sovereign for *the most part* is a terror not
 “ to good works but to the evil; and, upon the
 “ whole, far more beneficial than detrimental
 “ to the subject. But this general good of Go-
 “ vernment cannot be secured upon any other
 “ terms than the *submission of the individual* to
 “ what may be called its *extraordinary evils*.
 “ St Paul represents the earthly Sovereign as
 “ the vicegerent of God, *accountable for miscon-*
 “ *duct to his heavenly Master*, but entitled to
 “ *obedience from the subject*.” Here we see Scrip-
 ture perverted into an instrument of attack
 upon the Constitution, and by one of those
 who profess to bewail the declining attachment
 of the people to the Crown, and who la-
 bour,

hour, according to their own account, to make the principles of Monarchy generally popular, to secure our liberties upon their just basis, and to display the true spirit of the glorious Revolution! Will it be said, that the propagators of these regenerated dogmas do not seriously believe in them? This sort of excuse only aggravates their conduct, because it is a confession that they are employed in disseminating what they know to be false: But whether they believe or not in these pernicious absurdities, it is evident with what unceasing pains they inculcate them upon others; and what would be the consequence of their success? Unquestionably the security of the English Monarchy, which now rests upon the affection of Englishmen, would be diminished, if placed upon the narrow mouldering pedestal of antiquated Right, rather than upon the sound and broad foundation of Popular Consent: Standing, as it does, upon this ground, it has an interest in preserving the basis by which it is supported; but, resting upon any principle independent of the people, whether of Divine Authority, or Hereditary Indefeasible Right, it clearly acquires an interest totally distinct from the people, and a privilege of extending its own prerogatives at pleasure, being, as the Bishop asserts, “*accountable for misconduct only to its heavenly Master,*” and in no wise responsible to the people for the exercise or extension of power, to which resistance is forbidden, and submission, it seems, enjoined on Scriptural authority. Good God! are these the doctrines
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into which we are to be repelled by our abhorrence of Jacobine Systems, or the Theories of Mr Paine? Is this the Idol which in the end of the 18th century is to be enshrined in the Sanctuary of the British Constitution? Are these the Altars to which they lead us? Is this the prepared Sacrifice, the unhallowed flames of which are to be lighted up with the Records of our Freedom? When, under pretext of opposing salutary reforms, such palpable innovations are attempted, it behoves Englishmen to consider their constitutional securities, and to reflect upon the Rights which gave rise to them, and the circumstances under which they were obtained. The times call urgently for this careful retrospect. For when such dogmas as have been glanced at above are embellished with the argument and eloquence of the greatest writers, dispersed by the members of near three thousand Associations, propagated with unwearied art and industry, the authors of them loaded with ministerial favours, those who do not believe in them reviled as Republicans, the more violent opposers of them coerced with penal severities; what unprejudiced man will maintain, that the Constitution is in no danger from the unresisted progress of the High Monarchical Party? The foregoing premises justify us in concluding that the danger is considerable, particularly when we call to mind that most extraordinary act, the *Convention Bill*, lately published in Ireland; reviewing carefully the declarations, doctrines, and conduct of this junto, we are authorised in asserting, that, however upright
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their private intentions may be, their public proceedings as a party are not constitutional; that, in a panic for one Branch of the Constitution, they have renounced all regard for the other; that, in their abhorrence of innovation, they have abandoned their ancient jealousy of the executive power, and the necessary support of popular rights; that, in consequence of a groundless alarm for their own safety, (which, if real, would not excuse thier conduct) they *are* employed as a matter of precaution in fortifying that influence which is the notorious cause of popular discontent; and, finally, that in a more advanced stage of the dispute, which every good man will deprecate, they *will* readily invest the executive magistrate with uncontrouled power, rather than suffer their hated adversaries to accomplish a Reformation upon the broad plan avowed by one who has now the honour to be a Cabinet Minister, and Master-General of the Ordnance.

WHILE the Tory party forsook the middle grounds for these unconstitutional excesses, the more zealous Theorists in the cause of Reformation were in consequence repelled into the opposite extreme. If the dread of Anarchy diminished the terrors of absolute Monarchy to the one, an apprehension for their remaining Rights, when such High Church and King doctrines were avowed, raised a new spirit of resistance in the other. Moderation was derided on both sides, and busied chiefly with watching the motions of their antagonists, each seems to have almost forgotten how large an intermediate
space

space was filled by their fellow-citizens who embraced more temperate opinions. Reviled as Jacobines, Incendiaries, Assassins, and publicly charged with a design to execute the most horrid plots against their country, the advocates of Universal Suffrage were not likely to supplicate the party that calumniated them, nor to intermit their endeavours to procure the object of their pursuit. Divided and weakened they might have been by lenient and conciliatory measures originating from the higher Powers; but it is evident to the most superficial observer, that they have recently gained both numbers and confidence from the nature of this ill-judged and ill-conducted opposition. Their arguments were strengthened, their antipathies became more implacable, their demands grew more peremptory, and their zeal was encreased to the utmost, not only by a daily accession of converts, but by this circumstance, that while the abuse thrown upon them, and the severity of their sufferings, made several persons who disapproved in part of their doctrines regard them as injured citizens, it was utterly impossible for any unprejudiced man to undertake a *bona fide* rational defence of the opposite party. Before the avowal of exploded Dogmas became the signal of persecution for opinions, and before the spirit of Filmer, of Laud, and of Jefferies, revived in opposition to Liberty, had roused a ten-fold spirit amidst these men in its favour, it was reasonable to suppose that by prudent management and accommodation the number of theoretical Reformers might have been

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been diminished; by prudent compromise and concession, it is to be hoped that their demands might yet in great part be satisfied, and their party prevented from encreasing its ranks. The Duke of Richmond is certainly a high authority; and when it is considered that during the riots, on the 2d June, 1780, while a lawless mob were burning the metropolis, breaking open the *King's castles*, besieging the doors of Parliament, and maltreating many of its members, this unshaken advocate in the cause of Reform, regardless of times, and seasons, and circumstances, brought in his bill for annual parliaments and universal suffrage, as the best means of quieting the raging tempest of popular insurrection; when this is remembered, surely all redress should not be denied to the more consistent Theorists of the present day, who are content to pursue their object at a moment of domestic tranquillity, and when this same Duke of Richmond prevents the possibility of riot by the erection of Barracks throughout the kingdom, and by the additional fortifications of the Tower; much less ought abuse to be lavished upon those who, marking the rapid progress of that party from the time in which the noble Duke was their oracle, wish, earnestly wish, by moderation, by friendship, by conciliatory propositions, to induce them to co-operate upon principles less obnoxious to the ruling powers, and better suited to the present circumstances of the State.

From a comparison of the petitions presented at the close of the American war, praying for a

Reform in the Representation, with those which were presented on a late occasion, it appears, that while a bolder and more decisive tone was assumed by some Bodies, who formerly had declared they would be content with moderate concessions, the most extensive system of redress was claimed even by some who formerly had not petitioned at all; and though the persons petitioning did not constitute a majority of the nation, yet when the numerous impediments to the exercise of that right were remembered, when it was considered how great was the influence of the associated Bodies, the Aristocracy, and the Crown; in preventing such a declaration of public opinion, and how certain it was that where influence could be used the people were not left at full liberty to declare their real sentiments upon the subject, it may be safely conjectured that those who petitioned bore a small proportion to others who were prevented, by the circumstances of their situation, from manifesting the zeal which they felt in the cause of Reform.

This injudicious restraint naturally encreased the force and popularity of those Opinions which it was intended to suppress; penal prohibitions roused the spirit of curiosity, although they made enquiry hazardous; and the whole of the Inquisitorial System, so far from making one convert, soured the aspect of society, and united the adversaries of arbitrary power more firmly in the general cause. These forcible obstructions, thrown in the way of men who would otherwise have declared their wishes for some sub-

substantial yet temperate improvement in the representation, may be considered therefore as one principal reason of the encreasing popularity of this party's opinions.

The Advocates for universal suffrage and annual Parliaments may be divided into three classes : Persons who wish for the immediate introduction of a Republic : *Theoretical* Republicans, who nevertheless think that a total change of the Constitution would be highly disadvantageous in the *present* circumstances of the country ; and persons who, without any partiality whatever for a republican form of government, support this species of Reform as the most safe, efficacious, and constitutional. These different descriptions the Court writers find it their interest to confound ; they allow of no distinction between them, and denounce them all confidently of antimonarchical principles, as Levelers and Jacobines, the sworn Allies of the " Cannibals " of France : Indeed their proscription is more general, for they include within it not only those who profess to support the most temperate as well as extensive plans of Reformation, but all who do not join in their own favorite measures. Of these classes there is no good reason to believe that the first is at present very numerous ; if it is really numerous, the fact must be lamented, because the vexations and discontents naturally arising from a protracted war will considerably reinforce its numbers, unless public grievances are fully and speedily redressed. Men there undoubtedly must be in this, as in all other countries, of sanguine and im-

petuous tempers, unfixed in their principles, desperate in their fortunes, lovers of change rather than of order, who for the sake of confusion alone might wish for the sudden and total subversion of our present Government: To such men the depravity of public Morals, the encreasing corruption of the State, the Revolution in France, and the distresses of War, will be matter of animating encouragement: Others again there may be, possessing as little prudence, but more conscience, who, wrapt in the contemplation of a favourite object, totally overlook the means;—enthusiastic zealots, who are inflamed perhaps by surveying the two greatest Revolutions in the history of man, and convinced that the benefits which posterity would derive from the substitution of a Republic in the room of our present existing Constitution, would infinitely outweigh the calamities which might ensue from the struggle of parties at the moment of its erection. Such men there certainly may be; but that such men should ever have influence in this country (unless a Reform is delayed till times of confusion and distress, as happened in France) is utterly improbable. If the hour of Reformation should become a point not of choice but of necessity, not of compromise but of force; if it should be postponed to a period of great public jealousy and irritation, moderate remedies and moderate men would then be of no avail, and this class of desperate Revolutionists would unquestionably be left to the full accomplishment of their views. When they had overawed all opposition

tion by the severity of their punishments, and had debauched a people (on whom the doctrine of EXTERMINATING their enemies had already been inculcated) by munificent largesses, the rich fruits of plunder and confiscation, a Prussian or an Austrian alliance might not be able to quell them into obedience; a threatened descent of Cossacks or of Hessians would perhaps only irritate a people to acts of vengeance, who are too jealous of their own independence to be subdued by a foreign confederacy. Can the bare possibility of such scenes be contemplated without horror, or without an anxious regard to the means of preventing them? And is not the present moment in every respect the fittest for commencing that scheme of political amendment, which bids fair to consolidate the attachment of the people to their ancient Constitution, and to render it impossible for such a faction at any time, or in any degree, to disturb the tranquility of their country?

The second class, composed of *Theoretical* Republicans, is probably much more numerous, because a Republic has hitherto succeeded so well in America, and because there is no just proof whatever that a Republic may not in time succeed equally well in France; because, moreover, men are naturally fond of civil Equality, and can only be reconciled to artificial distinctions by prejudices of habit, or a real experimental conviction of their good effects.—But to use the language of the acute Author of ‘*Comments on the purposed War,*’ “These
“are men not in the least to be feared, for
“they

“ they confess that every nation is bound to be
 “ governed by its majority; and that to attempt
 “ a change by force against the majority in Eng-
 “ land, is as foolish as it is unjust: That even
 “ should there be success attending an attempt
 “ against the Monarchy here, there would pro-
 “ bably be the utmost disagreement about the
 “ form of Republic which was to succeed it;
 “ that all the possible benefit to arise from a
 “ Revolution, in favour of a Republic, consist-
 “ ed only in the difference between a Govern-
 “ ment *experienced* to be good, and another
 “ only *suspected* to be better; and that, there-
 “ fore, it is their duty, under such circumstan-
 “ ces, to remain contented with the happy Go-
 “ vernment already so fortunately in our posses-
 “ sion. This is the language of men not in
 “ the least disposed to mischief, and to such
 “ language it will be always wise to allow vent,
 “ because men will ever be restless the moment
 “ they feel that their honest intentions are con-
 “ trolled,”—If, therefore, according to the opi-
 “ nion of this judicious observer, no danger need
 “ be apprehended from the body of *Theoretical*
 “ Republicans, much less reason of alarm is there
 “ from those of the third class, who are advocates
 “ for universal suffrage merely because they think
 “ it a right of which no man ought to be de-
 “ prived, and the only remedy which can in their
 “ minds effectually remove the growing corrup-
 “ tions of the State. And if these two descrip-
 “ tions of men are honest and upright in their in-
 “ tentions, (for the holding of such opinions alone
 “ can be no proof of bad intentions) it is the
 “ height

height of folly, as well as of malice, to provoke them to extreme courses by branding them with every foul term of reproach. If, on the contrary, they are factious and turbulent, still their reputed numbers and encreasing popularity render it much more politic to divide and disarm them by giving a reasonable satisfaction to their claims, than to drive them to desperation by calumny and abuse. Whether or not it is expedient in the *actual* circumstances of this country to allow every man his natural right to a vote, is a question upon which the best men may differ in opinion; and nothing can, in our present situation, be more inhuman or more dangerous, than to make a man's opinion upon that, or any other speculative subject, the test of his moral character. No one abandons even a paradoxical notion the sooner, because, in consequence of it, he is traduced by an adversary as a monster of depravity. On the contrary, he supports it the more obstinately, because his pride is wounded, and naturally considers the irritation and malignity of his antagonist a proof that his opinions are not destitute of effect. The more bitterly a man is calumniated for his speculative doctrines by his superiors, the more eagerly also will he endeavour to inculcate them upon his equals: If disgrace is attached to them, he will be desirous that others should share it with him, and will anxiously labour to produce that revolution in public sentiment which will carry his ideas into practice, and at the same time vindicate his private character from unmerited reproach:

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Add to this, that an injured person always succeeds at last in an appeal to the public; and if he can shew that, on account of his speculative notions, he has been made the object of misrepresentation and malevolence, the people at large will lend a more favourable ear to his writings than they otherwise would have done, had those writings been answered by temperate argument rather than by judicial severity or personal invective. Admitting, therefore, in their full force, the objections which have been often urged against Personal Representation, from the unequal distribution of property, from the existence of a depraved and luxurious metropolis, from the extent of our empire, and from the ignorance in which (by a miserable policy of Government) the lowest ranks are unhappily involved, and lastly, from the obstinacy with which this species of Reform would be opposed by a very powerful share of the community; admitting these and other objections as arguments against the present expediency of the measure, yet still it must appear that the measure itself has been combated in a manner the most decidedly impolitic. The Tory party could not have chosen means less likely to blunt the edge of the popular arguments. Throughout the whole contest they have manifested a foreness of temper, and a too exclusive partiality for their own personal interests; and they have roused the spirit of their adversaries by slander, and have encouraged them to proceed by weakly betraying, in every instance, their personal *apprehensions*.—"The people," (as it is happily expressed
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by Mr Wyvill in his Defence of the Reformers) “and their just constitutional claims, “have been the constant objects of their unqualified scorn and derision, their unmitigated abhorrence and execration; and still in each wild and moody change of temper, their alternate excesses of rage and ridicule, of horror and contempt, *have been but the varied expressions of their FEAR.*”—When, therefore, we consider the expansive nature of political opinion in free States, the force it acquires from every attempt to restrain it, the curiosity always excited by doctrines reprobated because they are new, and the fascinating simplicity of theories founded on abstract rights; when we call to mind the high authorities by which these doctrines were once supported, the industry with which they are propagated, the great ability of many writers on that side, and the zeal with which some have almost courted the severest punishments; when, moreover, we reflect upon the existence of great public grievances long and generally acknowledged, upon the certain expences and the possible effects of the present calamitous war, we must think that those who professed a sincere alarm at the rapid progress of these notions, and who now see the inefficacy of the late measures taken for the suppression of them, are bound to try other means for the accomplishment of what they deem to be so desirable an object. After an eager pursuit of harsh and rigorous proceedings for the space of fifteen months, not only without effect, but with notorious disadvantage, they are bound by every

tie of honour, and by every consideration of expediency, to adopt a contrary line of conduct; to make the just experiment of lenient and conciliatory measures; and to revive, if possible, by the well-timed efforts of prudent reformation conceded with an affectionate frankness, the abated though not extinguished regards of one large portion of the people for our present frame of Government. But if it be not possible, by temperate concessions, to regain the alienated affections of these our fellow-countrymen, let us still recollect who these men are; they are Englishmen like ourselves, and it is neither fit for them to endure, nor for us to inflict, what exceeds the measures of justice, or may violate the interests of freedom; should this party, inflexibly firm in their original purpose, disdain to concur in moderate resolutions, yet the effect of such resolutions, if carried, would not be lost; the chief ends to which all reformers of every description direct their attention being procured by them, in all human probability, the advocates of Personal Representation, deprived of their best arguments, would find their numbers decrease.

It is in times of public calamity that a people are driven to investigate the Theory of natural rights; to these subjects the curiosity of a nation is awakened by oppression and restraint, by the corruption or undue administration of their Government. War and Taxes are and ever will be the great causes of discontent, and consequently of political speculation. When a free people *feel* their situation truly

truly happy, their tranquility not hastily violated, their revenues not unprofitably squandered, their blood not wantonly poured forth, their loyalty repaid not by the empty panegyric of a periodical speech, but by a sensible diminution of public burdens, and a fresh security for the privileges they enjoy, it would be plainly monstrous to suppose that they should apply themselves generally to investigate questions of abstract right with a view to subvert their existing Constitution. An equal Government, attached to principles of liberty, œconomy, and peace; laws wisely framed and impartially executed; a faithful and uncorrupt expenditure of public money; a strict attention to public morals; and, lastly, a diligent regard to the comforts and education of the lower ranks, ever will content the great mass of mankind, and render them totally indifferent to political disquisition. On such a people the arguments of Mr Paine will make no impression. Of a country under such circumstances, the happiness of its inhabitants forms the surest defence; and without garrisons, barracks, or a standing army to defend it, sedition will not know where to enter or to erect its standard. No Constitutional Clubs, no Corresponding Societies, no Associations for Reform, would there be found; nor would there be wanted a combination of spies, placemen, and inquisitors, to detect and punish the adversaries of corruption, under pretext of preserving the public peace. History approves and warrants this reasoning. Where is the instance to be found in all its voluminous

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records

records, of a people discontented under a full enjoyment of their rights? Or, in what age did any country become a prey to faction, except from some radical defect in its Government, or from the wilfulness, the tyranny, the treachery, or the prodigality of those who administered its powers. Men are led in search of remedies by the pressure of grievance; disorders in the politic body produced the discovery of political rights, as diseases in the natural body gave rise to the theory and application of medicine: In every department of life, evil felt, or strongly apprehended, is the summons to exertion; and man seems so constituted, as to be roused to the pursuit of speculative perfection chiefly by the sensation of practical inconvenience. It is to be lamented that reflections like these, founded in reason, and confirmed by experience, should have had no salutary influence upon the conduct of the High Monarchical Party. Fundamental maxims of justice and policy demand to be universally applied; and it is always in the end injurious to the community, when they are obstructed by cabal and combination, by futile objections to the time present, or by an exclusive regard (produced by a groundless fear) in certain orders of men, for their private interests and personal dignity.—Fear is an abject, selfish, and cruel passion; it precludes all manly and generous counsels; it degrades the mind and pollutes the heart; under its influence it is impossible to act either with wisdom or justice.

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HAVING stated thus much concerning the two Parties which at present support the opposite extremes of political opinion, we may fairly conclude, that if the nation was divided into these descriptions alone, the most alarming consequences would necessarily follow. One striving to retain, the other to acquire the mastery, no compromise could well take place between them. The ruling party would naturally try to beat down its adversary by the force of power; the aspiring party would endeavour to supplant its oppressor by the diffusion of opinion; and in the end, either a species of absolute Monarchy would be established by the Tories, through an excessive dread and hatred of Republican doctrines, or else the popular leaders, in the moment of victory, would exceed those limits to which by a prudent and timely concession they might have been confined. On the one hand there might be erected a gloomy, hopeless, degrading Despotism, gratifying the higher orders in lieu of their old constitutional privileges with a power of oppressing the lower; preserving internal tranquility by the force of mercenary arms, and superinducing ignorance and bigotry, by shutting up the sources of knowledge, and annihilating the freedom of the press. Grinding as the oppressions of absolute power must always be to the bulk of a nation, yet under a Sovereign of a prudent and pacific disposition, rank and property might be cheerfully enjoyed by their respective possessors, who feared from the extension of liberty a system of massacre and confiscation; and even in the
worst

worst of circumstances the servility of the Courtier might form some security against the caprices of an absolute Prince. Amidst the most ignominious slavery and deplorable ignorance, the higher orders of Spain console themselves with the pleasures purchased by their wealth, and the obeisance commanded by their rank; they least of all men regret the abolition of the Cortes; the liberty, which while it rendered them independent of the Crown made them in some measure depend upon the people, would not perhaps be accepted by them; nor would such men readily exchange their petty despotism and cumbrous magnificence for the constitutional privileges of an English Peer. Men, whose chief object is rank and fortune, will always in turbulent times become the willing slaves of a Power which gilds the chain of vassalage, and allows them to enjoy in safety the splendor and advantages of birth.—Hence, when high notions of liberty and natural rights become popular, and Republican models are held out for imitation, the titled and the rich (with the exception of a few fearless independent minds) will be found ready to create an extraordinary power somewhere for the suppression of the adverse faction. What they lose in essential rights, is amply made up by the security afforded them against the leveling party; while the grandeur and dissipation of an absolute Court are infinitely preferable in their eyes to a State of manners, severe in proportion as a Government is free. But under this dispensation of things, the lot of the people

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at large would necessarily be miserable ; and as the tyranny of their Government would justify a forcible revolution, so in the progress of time the people would seek to throw off the slavish yoke ; and thus a despotism introduced under pretext of saving bloodshed, would infallibly in the end produce more aggravated confusion.

On the other hand, if, in the struggle of parties, the Aristocracy should suffer a defeat, minds overheated with the bitter spirit of hatred and retaliation would not be disposed to that moderation which is essential to the adjustment of political questions. Besides the evils of civil commotion, a foreign war might be the consequence ; England might then suffer from another Convention at Pilnitz ; an English Calonne might intrigue at Petersburgh or Vienna ; and the final settlement of her Constitution be retarded by the officious and concerted interference of foreign Powers, who, denying the right of nations to settle their respective Governments, and asserting the right of royal Juntos to interfere at pleasure, studiously embroil the affairs of neighbouring States, in order to take advantage of their miseries, their follies, or their crimes. After a few years of anarchy and war, some species of Republican Government might be established, perhaps not more generally approved, nor more advantageous to the community, than our present limited Monarchy is capable of becoming by means of a suitable Reform. Thus a revolution would be produced by force, and in the effects of that revolution would be seen whether

ther we really possess all the humanity, justice, and religion to which we daily make such Phariſaical pretensions; and whether the populace of Great-Britain, already accuſtomed to a ſpirit of independence, and poſſeſſed of ſome ſhare of knowledge, would upon the whole conduct themſelves with more generoſity than has been exhibited by the abuſed and degraded populace of France.

From the review of this gloomy Alternative, we muſt deem it fortunate for the country at large, that while ſo many men purſue opinions tending to the exceſs of Liberty and Power, the more numerous diſiſion of the community is as yet content to tread the middle courſe. It is therefore to the body of *Temperate Reformers* alone that this country can look for ſalvation. A band of Patriots ſtanding upon the firm grounds of the Britiſh Conſtitution, attached neither to the military deſpots of the continent, nor to the democratical rulers of France, hating tyranny of every kind, anxious to maintain the legal prerogatives of the Crown, the juſt privileges of the Peerage, and the undoubted rights of the People, and breathing an ardent wiſh for the progreſs of freedom and for the ſyſtematic eſtabliſhment of Peace, ſeem to be eminently entitled in the preſent momentous criſis to public confidence and ſupport. Upon the degree of ſupport given them by their fellow-countrymen, the cauſe of the Conſtitution eſſentially depends; it is therefore important that their views and opinions ſhould be clearly underſtood. Abused they have
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been by writers of the opposite parties, each being willing to lessen their credit by imputing to them the principles of the other. By certain authors on one side, they have been treated as tame, inefficient, and compromising politicians, who make Reform the stalking-horse to private ambition; and the conduct of the Duke of Richmond, Mr Pitt, and many others, is quoted as a proof of this suspicion, as if the apostacy of those men could taint their successors in the cause of Reform. On the other side, they have been most maliciously traduced, as connected with the incendiaries and assassins in France. This ungenerous treatment is a strong evidence of the utility of their conduct, and should be a strong motive for a public declaration in their favour. It forms a presumption that their views are constitutional, and from thence it ought to be inferred that their intentions are upright. Confiding in the rectitude of their motives, and in the salutary tendency of their plans, they are firmly persuaded that an honest and disabused people will at no very distant period of time form a just estimation of their political conduct. Of the principles upon which they ever mean to act, they are proud to make an explicit profession; and if in pledging themselves publicly, without reservation or ambiguity, upon the points in question, they have multiplied the obstacles in the way of desertion, they think it not unreasonable that the people should consider the difficulty of apostacy as some proof of their sincerity, and a presumption that they will persevere

with consistency in the cause. Instructed by the concurrent testimony of historians, that timely reformation is the strongest barrier against revolutionary movements, they are animated in the pursuit of a Reform upon the acknowledged principles of our ancient Constitution; and they press the present moment as the safest for an enquiry into the inadequacy of the Representation, and the causes of the present discontents, because there prevails a very general abhorrence of violent innovation, and because grievances longer continued, perhaps immoderately increased, may gradually dispose the minds of good subjects for the reception of novel Theories. The great object of the Temperate Reformers is to give the people a just confidence in, and a just controul over their own Branch of the Legislature; and by thus increasing and perpetuating their reverence for Parliaments, to place the Constitution beyond the reach of assault. This they conceive might at present be peaceably effected by a scheme of Reformation less theoretically perfect than that of Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments; and if while they propose to themselves the same *ends* with other constitutional Reformers, they are averse from going the same lengths in the application of *means*, it is because (desirous above all things of public harmony) they wish to apply those means only which are likely to be adopted with most general concurrence; which deviate little from the practice, and which are strictly consonant with the spirit of the Constitution. To annihilate all undue influence with the causes of riot, corrup-

corruption, and expence at elections; to commit the choice of candidates to those by whom the trust is least likely to be abused; to collect, according to the expression of Mr Fox, the greatest number of *independent* wills; to obtain such a construction of the popular Branch of the Legislature, that, though not chosen by all, it should have no other interest than to prove itself the Representative of all; and lastly, to shorten the duration of Parliaments, is the final wish of men who, uninfluenced by partial interests or theoretical considerations, regard the principle of General Expediency as the best rule of political conduct.

From a temperate, constitutional, and yet radical improvement of this sort, procuring to the people the advantages of a fair, free, and frequent Representation in Parliament, every other subordinate Reform would peaceably arise. In a regular and gradual method we might expect to see Religion brightened by the establishment of toleration, Morality invigorated by the exclusion of corruption, and in proportion as the comforts and civilization of the lower orders were encreased, an additional tide of prosperity would flow in upon the kingdom; fresh bulwarks would be gained for property, and fresh securities for personal freedom. While, therefore, those men who are known as the Temperate Reformers of England earnestly desire to restore public harmony, and to terminate amicably the differences subsisting between the High Tory and Popular parties, they appeal with confidence to the utility, the necessity of

their conduct, for a just and candid interpretation of the motives from which they act: They call with solicitude upon moderate and independent men of every description to give effect to their labours by a constitutional support; they entreat their fellow-citizens to consider the acknowledged danger of the country, and to cooperate with them cordially and effectually upon the salutary principles of Union and Peace. To satisfy the just grievances of those who are respectable from their numbers, to repress the unjust usurpations of others who are formidable from their power, to mitigate their mutual disgusts, to revive their affection for each other and for their common Constitution, is surely at all times the most consolatory work upon which true patriotism can be employed. It may be expected that upright and disinterested men will come forward to enforce the advantages of mutual compromise, and to effect this desirable work of mediation. If the pacific and constitutional plans of the Temperate Reformers are speedily seconded by a strong declaration of public opinion, might we not entertain a reasonable hope that the majority of the Tory party would at length be content to surrender their invidious privileges, to renounce their unconstitutional doctrines, and to acquiesce in schemes approved by the nation at large, and essential for the general good? It is equally to be hoped, that a majority of the opposite side would, for the sake of tranquility, make some concessions on their part, and relax somewhat of the rigour of abstract speculation. Even those

those of them who have been driven into extreme notions by a continued refusal of moderate redress, are not perhaps so bent upon realising their favourite theories as to oppose more temperate schemes, if adopted soon, and found to produce most of the good effects which they expect from their own enlarged systems. But upon supposition of the reverse, it may be contended, that a substantial Reform of Parliament, effected by a concurrent majority of the nation, would so unite the great body of the people, would remove so many just causes of complaint, and so encrease the reverence of men for a Constitution which they found really capable of correcting its defects in a manner thus exemplary, that however there might still be room, perhaps a wish, left for other gradual and future improvements, yet to produce a sudden change in it under such circumstances would neither be hoped nor attempted by the most sanguine zealot of innovation. That a body of Patriots, powerful and respectable enough to effect these desirable improvements, would be unable to give stability to them when effected, (although this is feared by timid, and objected by interested men) seems contrary to all probability, as far as Reason and Analogy can decide. The necessary tendency of redress is to satisfy complaints. If we dread the consequences of discontents, it behoves us to investigate the evil, and apply a suitable remedy. And if this obvious and prudent conduct is not free from hazard, it is in vain to enquire from what other measures, in the present state of knowledge,

knowledge, of opinions, of public temper, of affairs domestic and European, we can derive any hopes of security to our endangered Constitution.

Without attempting to delineate an overcharged picture of national misfortunes, we may confidently appeal to the general conviction of men respecting our actual situation; diversities of opinion obtain upon this subject, and on either side sanguine writers may have embraced extremes remote from the point of truth; but amongst those who, forgetting party heats, advert to the present state and future consequences of the war, we may observe that the general sentiment which prevails is not a sentiment of confidence, but of depression,—a depression arising from a total uncertainty respecting the dependence to be placed upon our allies, the faithless and rapacious plunderers of Poland; respecting their private views in the continuance of the war, the probable length of hostilities, the political effects of them, whether successful or unfortunate; the consequences of our conduct to the great neutral powers, and the situation we may hereafter find ourselves placed in towards foreign States; some (as for instance, Russia) greatly aggrandized themselves; others (Spain, &c.) extremely jealous of British aggrandizement. Powerful as our resources are, it is impossible for any sincere lover of his country to reflect upon the above circumstances, in connection with the present state of popular opinion, and not to feel considerable anxiety. We are involved in a labyrinth by the
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the artifices and intrigues of the German Powers: France, it is true, may be ruined in the end by the confederacy; but what consolation shall we derive from her fall, if she is to be entombed, like another Sampson, amidst the ruin of her enemies?—Let us then consider our real situation without prejudice, avoid extremes, and endeavour speedily to secure to our native country the blessings of Moderation, Harmony, Peace, and Reform.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X.

Page 8, **R**ESPECTING this plot, the following are the assertions of Mr Reeves and the Committee at the Crown and Anchor:—"It was KNOWN that Emissaries were paid by France to stir up sedition, and Engineers sent to assist in military operations; and that a revolt was planned in the beginning of December, when the Tower was to have been seized; the Agents in these designs, whether French or English, were KNOWN." If these facts were really known, they were capable of proof, and the great importance of them surely required that they should have been substantiated by proof: All the measures of Ministry relative to France since that period have been founded upon a supposition of the existence of these contested facts; what then would Ministers have lost by producing evidence of the designs in question?—The disloyal faction was either weak or powerful; if weak, the calling out of the militia, and other violent measures, were preposterous and absurd; if powerful, it was no discouragement to their designs to pronounce them *notoriously* guilty, and yet to suffer them to escape unpunished. The most probable supposition is, that Ministry found it convenient at that moment to confound the nation into a belief of these circumstances as perfectly well KNOWN, which, nevertheless, they were

were utterly unable to prove. On certain occasions strong asseverations are more useful than weak proofs. Those who can rely on confidence will never submit to enquiry. Mr Sheridan's judicious motion for "evidence of sedition," &c. &c. placed this beyond dispute.

P. 19, l. 3] Copious proofs might here be adduced from ministerial pamphlets, &c. The following extracts are made from Fast Sermons, preached on the 19th April, 1793:

The Reverend J. Gardiner, speaking of the French, &c. exclaims, "*Shall we not labour to bring such persons to a sense of their duty, or EXTERMINATE them and their opinions?*"

The Reverend Mr Bromley expresses an assurance "*that the reckoning which God will make will not long be delayed against a nation which is certainly behind no other, whose measure of iniquities has in any records of time called forth his vengeance to ERASE it from the earth.*"

Bishop Horsley thus confidently denounces the vengeance of God against the whole nation: "*Infatuated and remorseless people! The measure of your iniquities seems at length to be full! the hour of retribution is coming fast upon you! Drunk with the blood of your fellow-citizens, you have dared to spread your ravages abroad; rousing the surrounding nations, in justice to themselves and the common cause of humanity, to confederate against you, in order to execute the WRATH of GOD on your DEVOTED heads.*"

The Reverend Septimus Hodson represents the

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the French as “ *wretches, whose daring infidelity, &c. &c. have released us from the obligation of PITY.*”

The reader’s piety shall not be outraged by any further extracts.

Who should be *pitiful*, if you be not?
Or, who should study to prefer a *peace*,
If HOLY CHURCHMEN thus delight in *broils*?



