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S T R I C T U R E S, &c.

IT is a little remarkable that the first time Mr. Burke publicly censured the proceedings of the National Assembly, and declared himself an enemy to the Revolution in France, was on the occasion of Mr. Flood's motion in the House of Commons the last Session of Parliament, for an enquiry into the state of the representation. Similar motions had been made at different periods by Mr. Sawbridge, and once by Mr. Pitt, which were negatived through the weight of that influence, which, in the opinion of the friends of the constitution, is a growing evil in the state. The violent agitation into which he was thrown on this occasion, plainly indicated the apprehension he was under, that the proceedings in support of the general principles of liberty, and which were daily publishing through the channel of the public papers, would create such strong im-

B pressions

pressions as would pave the way for the removal of the evils which are complained of; to wit, the gradual decrease of the real representation of the people, and the increase of the aristocratic influence, by means of what is called Borough Property; and conscious, perhaps, that his own seat in Parliament might, in an abridgment of that influence, be affected.

Our Author well knowing that an extension of the right of voting on an equitable principle, would extinguish this influence, wisely steps forward and uses his utmost efforts to put a stop to those proceedings, by which the people might recover their former weight in the scale of the constitution. He raises a violent outcry against the popular party in France, and attempts to throw an odium on the Protestant Dissenters at home, representing them as persons of dangerous principles, who would rejoice at an opportunity to injure, if not to destroy, our excellent Constitution.

This mode of proceeding exactly suited our Author's purpose, as he certainly knew, from observation, and from his connections through life, that they possess an inviolable attachment to its principles, and that they lament

to see, with all the friends of liberty, this *noble fabric*, which was erected at an infinite expence by the wisdom of our ancestors, and which has been the envy and admiration of surrounding nations, going to decay, merely for want of reparation.—Surely there can be no just ground to represent those as enemies of the state, who only wish to have the decayed parts of this venerable structure eradicated, and replaced with those excellent materials of which it was originally composed.

Representation, so far as it stands connected with cities and borough towns, must be, as all other human concerns are, in its very nature changeable. Where are many of the great cities and powerful states of antiquity? Time, that brought them into existence, has by its natural but slow operation, gradually extinguished them. On this principle all sublunary things have been invariably conducted, and will so remain, until time itself shall cease.

The above remark is fully applicable to the representation of this country: we have seen large and populous towns go to decay; and others at different periods rise into existence. So that popular representation, if it be supported on a just principle, must change ac-

ording to places and circumstances; and whoever asserts the contrary, or denies the propriety, and even necessity of conducting it on this principle, must either be ignorant of the dispensations of Providence in the government of the world, or an enemy to that universally received maxim, that the people, from whom all power originates, and by whom every state is, and must be supported, are entitled to a share in the government.

The representation in this kingdom, it is well known, continued in a changeable state till the reign of James I. but has undergone no material alteration since that period* ;
for

* The boroughs of New Shoreham and Cricklade have been enlarged, and, which is rather remarkable, during the administration of Lord North, who has been the avowed enemy of Parliamentary reform. No one I presume will say, that increasing the voters for these places, by uniting them to a certain district, comprehending divers towns and villages in the neighbourhood, was a violation of the constitution. The parliament, when they made this small addition to the elective body, did it with a view to remove the evils of corruption and undue influence which we now complain of, and which in a greater or lesser degree prevail in all the small boroughs; and the same remedy might easily be applied to every part of the kingdom; for example, suppose we select the county of Worcester.—This district returns nine members

for want of this, the evil has proceeded so far, that it may be made a question, whether the numbers of boroughs, which are deemed private property, did not return more than a third of the members of the last parliament ;

bers of parliament.—The county two.—The city two.—Droitwich two.—Evesham two, and Bewdly one. The county is properly represented. The city to remain the same, extending only the right of voting to the inhabitants paying scot and lot, together with the freemen. Droitwich, may be united to Bromesgrove, Dudley, and Stourbridge. Evesham with Pershore, Upton, Broadway and Shipston ; and Bewdley, with Kidderminster and Tenbury. By this plan, which is nearly similar to that adopted in the two cases above-mentioned, and which met with universal approbation, the whole county would be fairly represented. And by uniting a part of the boroughs in Cornwall, where the greatest inequality in the representation prevails, provision may be made for Birmingham, Manchester, &c. and an increase of members to London and Westminster. By pursuing this plan of Parliamentary reform, we should have the same House of Commons. No individual, as a voter in the State, would lose his franchise, and we should complete the work, already begun, on a constitutional principle. Satisfaction may be made to individuals who possess borough property, out of the public purse. Whatever our author may suggest to the contrary, was the sense of the public to be taken upon it, nineteen out of twenty of the inhabitants of this kingdom, would, I doubt not, rejoice to see it carried into effect.

and this unconstitutional influence will continue to increase so long as it remains on a fixed principle, more especially if future administrations should continue to introduce into the Upper House so many of the great Commoners, who have acquired an interest and property in the boroughs.

It requires not the gift of prophecy to foretel that the increase of the aristocratic part of the constitution, by the means aboved stated, will, if the present system of representation be continued, eventually abridge the power of the crown as well as the rights of the people.

Our author, no doubt, anxious to preserve that species of property and influence, to which, in a measure he owes his elevation, took the earliest opportunity to exert his talents in its support, by severely reflecting, as before-mentioned, on the National Assembly, in France, and the Dissenters of this country, well knowing, if by the force of his eloquence, and an exaggeration of the excesses of the common people in France, together with a perversion of certain expressions made use of by a popular writer among the Dissenters, he could but create a prejudice against them, the end would be fully answered. I

see not the least reason to impute it to his extreme sensibility, which was supposed to be excited by the enormities committed by the rabble in France, as suggested by some of his friends on a particular occasion in the House of Commons.

Those that pay a proper attention to the doctrine of consequences, and discern the connection between causes and their effects, may easily perceive the wisdom and policy of our author's conduct: to defend the powers from whom he derives his political existence, was perfectly natural, and to commence hostilities in order to defeat the designs of an enemy who threatened that existence, comports with the vigilance and activity by which he is distinguished as a political leader.—Gratitude also is a principle, which in a peculiar manner, on the present occasion, he must feel himself bound to support, under the influence of these considerations—He takes his ground—and opens against the friends of freedom a tremendous battery of hard names and opprobrious epithets; and flatters himself that by this mode of attack, he has entirely vanquished the enemy.—The attempt, it must be acknowledged, was spirited and bold, and the mode of conducting it specious; but neither the powers of sophistry, nor the plea of

“ *ancient inheritance,*” in feeding the ambition of some at the expence of others, nor even church infallibility, for which our author is a warm advocate, can eradicate from the minds of men the immutable principles of right and wrong, or make them bow but with reluctance to the iron hand of oppression. But setting aside interested considerations, and viewing the matter abstractedly on the true principles of the constitution, surely that man can be no real friend to his country, who is endeavouring to lead the people of it into a belief that every change and innovation is dangerous, when it is notorious that their connection with the representative body is rapidly decreasing, and that reverting only to ancient usage in the choice of representatives, would be an effectual and constitutional remedy for this growing evil.

Our ancestors thought it expedient to abolish the feudal system, as a burden too heavy to be borne; by which the exorbitant power of the nobility was destroyed. And shall our author, who professes himself a friend to the rights of men, be encouraged in supporting those measures that have a tendency to create another system, that may prove equally injurious and destructive to their natural and civil rights?

From

From the above remarks, our author may probably charge the writer of this, as he has done Dr. Price, with supporting those leveling principles by which the nobility of France were deprived of their titles: to prevent any such imputation, he is free to declare, that no man, nor any set of men, under any pretence whatever, can lawfully deprive their fellow men of their property or their rights, without their consent, or making an adequate compensation, unless those rights have been forfeited to the state by misconduct; and whatever apprehensions the popular party in France might be under, of the intention of the nobility to overthrow their present system of government, or to re-establish the feudal laws which they had abolished, they could not, on any principle of equity or justice, destroy those hereditary distinctions which they had enjoyed for ages, and probably as long as they have any real traces of a regular government. Neither does he apprehend that the interference of the nobility in popular elections, under certain circumstances is unconstitutional; should it so happen in any place where the right of voting is established on a just principle, that a nobleman possesses a great part of the property where that right is enjoyed, it is but natural and just that he should exercise that

that influence which his extensive property creates: were it not so, a peer of five thousand a year estate, would stand exactly on the same footing, and possess an equal weight in the government with one of fifty thousand, which cannot be just or equitable, as the one possesses so great a property and interest in the kingdom above the other. Besides, I think the exercise of this species of influence is expedient to secure the well being of the Landed Interest, against that inundation of wealth which Trade and Commerce pours in upon us, and which is possessed by many persons who are wholly ignorant of, and perhaps unfriendly to the constitution of this country*.

This he contends for, and he has reason to believe that every real friend to the principles of the British constitution, will join him, although our author may be of a different opinion; that the representation ought to be placed on a just and equitable principle, and then let every person, be his station and rank in the community what it may, exercise that influence which his popularity, his connections, or his property may give him.

* A particular reference is had here to foreigners, and to the English nabobs, many of whom, in consequence of their long residence in India, may have imbibed notions of Government by no means favourable to the British constitution.

The writer of these Strictures has been rather at a loss to conjecture, independent of the considerations before stated, for what reasons our author, after having received favours from the Dissenters*, should fall so unmercifully upon them as to accuse them, in the person of Dr. Price, of propagating principles inimical to Government, unless it may be explained on that principle, that if you confer favours on a man, and do not continue them, he becomes in consequence of it, your enemy. Or perhaps it may be owing to the decided part the Dissenters had taken respecting the famous India Bill, in which our author had a principal concern, and who, had it succeeded, was to have been, as I recollect, one of the parties to be invested with its powers. One would have thought that the conduct of the Dissenters, in that business, had they held the political principles with which our author charges them, would have been directly the reverse of what it was, as that Bill, it is apprehended, went to deprive the King of his just prerogatives, and to in-

* They introduced him into the representation of the second city in the kingdom, by which he became a *real* Representative of the People, and that without expence; and his family, if I mistake not, are now under obligations to them.

vest the people, or some of their representatives, with great power and patronage, and more especially as this power was intended to be placed in the hands of persons who professed themselves friends to the cause of Liberty, and the Rights of the People. According to the insinuation of our author, this Bill must have perfectly coincided with the secret and avowed principles of the Dissenters.

But Britain witnessed the fact, that the Protestant Dissenters unanimously opposed that Bill, and gave their support to the friends of the King at the General Election that took place in consequence of it; although by so doing they risked the loss of the friendship of that party in the House of Commons, (the Whig Interest) with whom they had ever been connected, and by whom they had been always supported.

If this be not a decided proof of their strong attachment to the rights of the Monarch, it is impossible to establish any fact, let the proof of it be ever so plain and self-evident; and whatever their enemies may insinuate to the contrary, the conduct of the Dissenters in that affair will remain as a lasting monument of their sincere and inviolable attachment to our excellent Constitution. They wish

wish not to abridge the King of any of his prerogatives, nor to see his Subjects invested with unconstitutional powers; and the writer of this avers, that so far as he is acquainted with the principles of the Protestant Dissenters, and he has had intercourse and acquaintance with many of them, he knows not an individual but what is sincerely attached to the Government, as consisting of King, Lords and Commons; neither does he know any amongst them that approve of a republican form of government; their enemies, and especially the Clergy, are continually charging them with holding principles which they disavow.

Our author, it seems, cannot forgive the conduct of the Dissenters in deserting their friends on the above memorable occasion, as in consequence of it all those towering and ambitious projects to which that Bill gave rise were entirely defeated; after what has happened, surely, of all men, he should be the last to point out the danger of innovation.

One of his party, a respectable Member of the House of Commons, then assured me, “ that the patronage of the East-Indies, take
“ it throughout, amounted to twelve hun-
“ dred thousand pounds a year, (an immense
“ sum

“ sum) and that the patronage of the King
 “ did not exceed three hundred thousand;
 “ that the party had been offered, by a hun-
 “ dred and seventy young men two thousand
 “ guineas each, to be permitted to go to India
 “ in the capacity of under-writers (which
 “ amounts to three hundred and forty thousand
 “ guineas, a fine beginning in the execution
 “ of this vast project); that the bread had
 “ been long enough at the East-end of the
 “ town, meaning the India-House, and that
 “ they wanted it at the West-end of the town,
 “ and would have it.”

Charge not, ye abettors of unconstitutional
 influence, the Protestant Dissenters of this
 country with holding principles hostile to
 government, as in doing this you do them
 the grossest injustice; nor continue to ring the
 changes in the ears of the Public on the danger
 of Innovation, when *they* only wish to see
 the Constitution restored to the principles on
 which it was established, and to be placed
 on the same footing with other natural-born
 subjects, not being conscious of having, in
 any respect whatever, forfeited their just claim
 to the privilege of Citizens, and that in a
 country, the prosperity of which they feel
 themselves

themselves bound to support on every principle of reason and religion.

Innovation, or a departure from ancient usages, the shadow of which now seems to startle our author, carried a milder face with it when certain persons went to the King in a large body to solicit in effect their continuance in office.

Innovation, had nothing hostile or unconstitutional about it, when the Civil List Bill was drawn up by our author, and passed into a Law*.

Innovation was not that monster, which, in the view of our author it now appears to be, when the intended India Bill was introduced, and the most unconstitutional means pursued, to pass it into a Law.

Was not his interest exerted to obtain the popular resolution of the House of Commons at the close of the American war, that the power of the Crown was increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished†; and this is a country where Liberty is enjoyed, and the power of the king circumscribed

* This is only instanced to shew that he once held different opinions.

† The truth of this is not questioned, but the cause of it reflected no credit on the then House of Commons.

by the laws, and shall he now be applauded for reprobating the friends of Liberty in France, in endeavouring to emancipate themselves from a government founded in tyranny and oppression? Such contradiction and inconsistency of political conduct is seldom to be met with in one man.

But the Dissenters have disobliged our author by opposing the India Bill, who ought, it seems, on the principle of gratitude to their friends, to have given it every support in their power; on this ground, therefore, as well as the former, they are to be followed up with resentment, opposition, and implacability.

Mr. Fox, who is of a very different cast from our author, possesses a noble and a generous spirit, and, in that respect, is worthy the esteem of all men; he, notwithstanding the Dissenters were unfriendly to this Bill, knowing they opposed it from principle, when they applied to Parliament for relief from the disabilities and hardships under which they had long laboured, nobly stood up and pleaded their cause as the cause of justice.

This disinterested and manly conduct, although it met not the approbation of the Clergy and the high church party, has not diminished his popularity; and I hope and trust the Dissenters will ever esteem him for it.

Our

Our author was for many years considered also as a champion in the cause of Liberty—but the tables are turned—from what motives—he best knows.—Liberty seldom rewards her Parliamentary advocates by any other wages than popular favour; perhaps his wishes go to something more substantial; if so, it must be sought by other means, especially as “Sovereigns will now consider those who advise them to place an unlimited confidence in their people, as subverters of their thrones;”* he therefore delays no time in deserting a standard so improvident. For many years splendid and eloquent harangues were made to little or no purpose; now he draws the envenomed pen, and to wound the cause he once upheld. If this attack on the rights of men should introduce him into favour, which I am inclined to doubt, he may take his wonted ease in office. Oratory was then unnecessary. It had its effect.

Our author, referring to the vote of congratulation of the Revolution Society, to the National Assembly of France, remarks †: “Their signatures ought, in my opinion, to have been annexed to their instrument; the

* Page 55.

† Page 7.

“ world would then have the means of know-
 “ ing how many they are, who they are,
 “ and of what value their opinions may be,
 “ from their personal abilities, from their
 “ knowledge, their experience, or their lead
 “ and authority in the State.” A hint is
 here suggested, that the persons who com-
 posed the meeting on that occasion, and who
 thought it right to congratulate their fellow
 men, on their emancipation from Tyranny,
 are a set of low and inconsiderable persons, of
 little or no political importance in the State,
 beneath the notice of the National Assembly,
 and too insignificant even for the notice of our
 author. If he wants information who they are,
 and what “ lead and authority they have” in
 the State, I answer they consist principally
 of *real* and independent Citizens, engaged in
 the commercial lines of business; and although
 many of them possess not the proud distinc-
 tion of *Right Honourable*, or that of *Representa-*
tives of the People, yet the rank they hold
 in society is real and substantial, not ideal
 and fictitious.

Does he enquire “ of what value their
 opinions are?” Their opinions being derived
 from observation, experience, and the love
 of their country, contain of course nothing
 new ;

new; nor do they exceed in value those of other men.—Our author here takes the lead of all others—on this ground he has no competitor. History, whether ancient or modern, may be challenged to produce his equal. In order to explore the region of politics, he ascends to the summit of Parnassus, and from thence makes a visit to the Tartarean Gulf; from such resources he has illuminated, as an aurora borealis, our political horizon. The Revolution Society, in this respect, bow with submission to him—*they* claim only a share of those “personal abilities,” and that “knowledge and experience” that is necessary to make them useful members of society. Does he challenge enquiry in respect to numbers? I am credibly informed they exceeded six hundred, and permit me to say, that it is not a common thing, in this country, to see six hundred respectable Citizens of the State, assembled in one place on any occasion of public festivity. And what probably may be a painful consideration to our author, if he does not already know it, this vote of the Revolution Society, which he so much reprobates, had it passed but a short time before, would have conveyed the genuine sentiments of perhaps three fourths of the people of this

country. The extinction of the Nobility in France appears to have been an unjust, and therefore an unpopular measure here; prior to it, go where you would, or associate with whom you might, it was evident that the bulk of the people rejoiced to hear that mankind were emancipating themselves from the yoke of Tyranny, and resolutely asserting their Liberties—This is a principle which neither the sophistry of our author, nor the abettors of passive obedience and non-resistance can efface from the human mind, it is a principle congenial to its nature, and can never be extinguished.

Our author, referring to the sermon preached by Dr. Price, in commemoration of the Revolution, remarks, “ That it is in a
 “ strain, which I believe, has not been heard
 “ in this Kingdom in any of the Pulpits
 “ which are tolerated or encouraged in it,
 “ since the year 1648, when a predecessor of
 “ Dr. Price, the reverend Hugh Peters, made
 “ the vault of the King’s Chapel, in St.
 “ James’s, ring with the privileges of the
 “ Saints, who with the high praises of God
 “ in their mouths, and a two-edged sword
 “ in their hands, were to execute Judgment
 “ on the Heathen, and punishments on the
 people ;

“ people; to bind their Kings in chains, and
 “ their nobles in fetters of iron :” and sub-
 joins, that “ he seems to have speculated him-
 “ self into no small degree of fervor, when
 “ he addressed his auditory in the following
 “ very remarkable words :” “ I cannot con-
 “ clude without recalling particularly to your
 “ recollection a consideration, which I
 “ have more than once alluded to ; I mean
 “ the favourableness of the present times to
 “ all exertions in the cause of Liberty.”—
 Our author, commenting on this, asks “ what
 “ is the cause of Liberty ? and what are those
 “ exertions in its favour, to which the ex-
 “ ample of France is so singularly auspicious ?
 “ Is our Monarchy to be annihilated with all
 “ the Laws, all the tribunals, and all the an-
 “ cient corporations of the Kingdom ? Is the
 “ House of Lords to be voted useless ? Is
 “ episcopacy to be abolished ? Are the Church
 “ Lands to be sold to Jews and Jobbers ? Are
 “ the taxes to be voted grievances ? If these
 “ are the ends and means of the Revolution
 “ Society, I admit they are well asserted *.”
 Was it not publicly known at the time the
 sermon was delivered, that the Dissenters were

* See page 179.

exerting themselves as peaceful subjects of the State, to obtain a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, whereby they are deprived of their rights as Citizens? Are they to be represented as enemies of the State for so doing? And did not their application to Parliament for redress meet the support of many of our author's friends in the House of Commons? Why then, why does he, in effect, insinuate that they have in contemplation the ruin of the State? This disingenuous conduct, I beg leave to say, is both ungenerous and unjust.

He afterwards remarks, that the Revolution Society are of opinion; "That a representation in the *Legislature of a Kingdom,*" is "not only the basis of all constitutional liberty in it, but of all *legitimate government;*" this position constitutes an essential part, and is a leading principle of the British government, and which no one can deny; but our author is attached to other opinions; and says, "If *popular representation or choice* be necessary "to the *legitimacy of all government,* the "House of Lords is, at one stroke bastar-
"dized and corrupted in blood; and the case "of the crown is altogether as bad." If he had applied this remark to the representatives of the borough of Malton, and others of

the same description, it might have passed unnoticed; as few, I believe, would be much inclined to dispute the fact. In reply to this strange and novel opinion in this country, I will venture to assert, that all those who are friends to the cause of liberty, lay it down as an axiom, that popular representation is essential to *legitimate government*. It has existed in our government for ages, and is necessary to every government founded on just principles. Mr. Pitt, the present Minister, once said in the House of Commons, that “the principle of our constitution is representation.” The English government is considered by all its friends, as a just, as well as an excellent form of government, consisting of three branches, King, Lords, and Commons; and why so? Principally, because the representatives of the people constitute a part of it; which is not the case in the generality of governments: were the people to have no share in it, the government here would be unjust, and of course not *legitimate*. Government being instituted for the benefit of the people, and supported by them, they are entitled of course, to a share in the legislature, and in this country have ever enjoyed it; and as in every government there

must be subjects of whom the state is composed, it follows by necessary consequence, that representation in the legislature of a kingdom is the basis of *legitimate* government—The same will hold good with respect to the King; he also in this kingdom is essential to legitimate government, and also to the House of Lords, who constitute a part of it—but *they* are not so in all governments, because there are republican states, where there is no King, nor House of Lords, and on this ground *they* cannot be said to be the basis of *all* legitimate governments; but as the people constitute every state, the position applies to them universally. What shadow of pretence therefore, can there be for saying, that “The House of Lords are bastardized, &c.” by it, when it cannot in any way be applied to them? Our author, no doubt, had his views in making this ungenerous remark.

After commenting on other parts of the sermon, and misrepresenting the obvious meaning and intentions of the writer, he brings him before the bar of the public as a supposed delinquent, and draws a parallel between him and the famous Hugh Peters, who was executed for high treason, in the last century. Permit me to ask, is this treat-

ment of Dr. Price consistent with fair dealing? Is it right to put a construction on particular expressions, which the writer never intended, and then to comment upon them, in order to prejudice his character in the view of the world, and through him to injure the whole body of Dissenters? As our author has selected quotations, which he thought might serve his purpose from the affairs of the last century, I will take the liberty to add a supplement, and to contrast the accuse of Dr. Price with the famous Judge Jefferys, whose memory will never be forgotten by Englishmen, and if I mistake not, the comparison will not be altogether unjust, nor the cases annexed to it, by way of illustration, dissimilar, otherwise than the one is arraigned before the bar of the public, and the other before the bar of justice.

The governing powers in the reign of James II. were determin'd, at all events, to extirpate the Religion and Liberty of this Country; and, in order to accomplish their design, it was thought necessary to attack the leaders who stood up in the defence of Liberty; accordingly, a prosecution was commenced against Mr. Richard Baxter, an eminent dissenting preacher, and writer of that
time,

time, and who had been offered by Charles II. the Bishoprick of Hereford, which he refused. He was charged with writing a paraphrase on the New Testament, in which were said to be some expressions disrespectful of the Bishops. A few days previous to the trial, Mr. Baxter being indisposed, moved for further time.

Jefferys, the then advocate for tyranny and oppression, denied it, and exclaimed, in a passion, “ I will not give him a minute more
 “ to save his life; we have had to do with
 “ other sorts of persons, but now we have a
 “ Saint to deal with, and I know how to deal
 “ with faints as well as sinners: Yonder stands
 “ Oates in the pillory, (as he actually did
 “ at that time in Old Palace Yard) and he says,
 “ that he suffers for the truth,—and so says
 “ Baxter; but if Baxter did but stand on the
 “ other side of the pillory with him, I would
 “ say two of the greatest rogues and rascals
 “ in the kingdom stood there.” At the trial his Counsel urged, that “ if Mr. Baxter’s book
 “ contained reflections byname on the Church
 “ of Rome, but spoke well of the prelates
 “ of the Church of England, it was to be
 “ presumed, they were intended only against
 “ the prelates of the Church of Rome.” Jef-
 ferys

Jefferys replied, "Baxter is an enemy to the name,
 " the office, and persons of Bishops." Mr. Baxter,
 on his defence, said, "My Lord," I have
 been so moderate with respect to the Church
 " of England, that I have incurred the cen-
 " sure of many of the Dissenters on that ac-
 " count." "Baxter for Bishops," (says
 Jefferys) "that is a merry conceit indeed; a
 " Kidderminster Bishop he means, &c." Mr.
 Baxter attempting to speak, the Chief Justice
 says to him, "Richard, Richard, dost thou
 " think we will hear thee poison the Court,
 " &c. Richard, thou art an old fellow, an
 " old knave; thou hast written a cart-load of
 " books as full of sedition, I might say trea-
 " son, as an egg is full of meat, &c. I know
 " thou hast a mighty party, but, by the
 " grace of God, I'll crush you all." Mr.
 Baxter then offered to clear himself of the
 charge, but Jefferys refused to hear a word,
 and, in summing up the matter, said, "There
 " has been a design to ruin the King and the
 " nation, &c. and this has been the main in-
 " cendiary—he is as modest now as can be,
 " but time was when no man was so ready at
 " *Bind your kings in chains, and your nobles*
 " *in fetters of iron.*" A design no doubt
 there was, and Mr. Baxter probably was con-
 cerned

cerned in it, to defeat the project of the court and the enemies of Liberty to overthrow the constitution ; and God be praised, it was eventually attended with success (which Dr. Price's sermon referred to) as by it, the Brunswick family enjoy the crown of Great Britain, and the people their liberty.

The conduct of Dr. Price's accuser, and Mr. Baxter's judge, may not improperly class together; the one attempts to prejudice the publick, and the other the jury, by means equally improper and unjustifiable, and in an unjust attack on two respectable and useful members of the community, one for congratulating his fellow subjects on their deliverance from tyranny, and the other for assisting in the accomplishment of that deliverance, and whose memory will be revered by those who have any regard for the cause of Liberty and the *rights of men*.

For what reason does our author represent the rights of men as "vague and speculative*," and why does he attempt to prove that the plea of "*inheritance* or ancient patrimony" was the proper ground on which our ancestors supported their claim to Magna Charta—the

* Page 46.

Petition of Right, 3d Charles I. the Bill of Rights at the Revolution, and of course, to the Liberties we now enjoy?—Is it not apparent that the design of our ancestors in referring at those different periods to the rights which their forefathers had enjoyed, was to strengthen their ground of claim to the then governing powers for the restoration of them? It appears by the ancient records of parliament*, that the first thing they usually enacted, was the confirmation of their liberties; “that all corporations and other persons should enjoy their liberties, rights, customs, and franchises,” by which they constantly recognized in effect those original rights, which first laid the foundation of civil society among us; the doing of which was perfectly natural and proper, and is a decided proof of the propriety, as far as their example goes, of a recurrence to first principles, or the rights of men (a phrase at present so very obnoxious to our author) on a subject of this nature. It appears evident by the conduct of our ancestors, that whenever they thought it necessary to assert or to claim the restoration of their rights, they constantly resorted to first prin-

* See Cotton's Abridgement of the Records, &c.

ciples, as originally connected with the government of this country, which furnishes a strong argument, that if the ruling powers shall at any time invade or neglect to preserve the just rights of the people, it is perfectly constitutional to apply to government to have them restored. Our author appears to me to have some latent views in his pretended attachment to “ ancient usage” which he does not like to bring forward; probably he foresees that if the real and self-evident rights of men be admitted or acceded to, it will bear hard on certain unconstitutional privileges that are now enjoyed by a particular class of persons, and that must not, in his opinion, be given up, as they are necessary to support the present political system—and that it is particularly expedient at the present juncture to inculcate in the minds of the people a predilection to “ *ancient rights,*” and a strict adherence to the practice of our forefathers, who, when they asserted their liberties, always grounded their claim on the principle of inheritance, as this argument will, if admitted, secure the present state of the representation, on which so much of our author’s political importance depends.

I am

I am much mistaken if his argument does not defeat the principle which it is intended to support. Let us examine this point—The Government of this kingdom consists of King, Lords, and Commons. The King and the Lords possess nearly the same power, which they have done for ages, except in some inconsiderable restrictions, and drawing a boundary line to the regal authority, and an abolition of the feudal laws, which has done away the dangerous power of the nobility, both of which were deemed necessary for the better security of the rights of the people; but how do matters now stand in respect to the House of Commons? population, within the last century, has greatly increased in many places, and no provision made for it in the representation; many boroughs are gone to decay, and are sent to market for sale, as any other species of property; great numbers of them now belong to the Peers, and many others are entirely supported on account of their connection with the representation; in some places five or ten persons send the same number of members to parliament as five or ten thousand in others. Divers large towns in various parts of the kingdom are not represented at all, and this unequal system is to be supported because it

has

has remained in its present state a century and a half. The plea of antiquity, permit me to remark, cannot apply here, and is an absurdity when applied to the principle of representation.—Does the present *mode of electing* the representative body comport with ancient usage? Have not the people for want of it, in part lost, and are daily losing, their “inheritance,” and a valuable one too, which their forefathers enjoyed for time immemorial? Ought it not to have been carefully watched, and preserved on the principles on which it was founded, and especially by those who profess an attachment to the cause of Liberty? But is the evil gone so far as to be remediless? Perhaps not, although, by the misrepresentation of interested persons, the daily abuse of the friends of Liberty, and the growing corruption of the age, the bulk of the people appear to be asleep on a subject that stands connected with their dearest and most valuable rights. Did they possess the active spirit and vigilance of our ancestors, as before referred to, they would unite in a peaceful manner, and in the joint names of all the people of England, present to Parliament a *Petition of Rights*, stating that they had lost their “ancient patrimony,” and wanted to
 have

have it restored on the principle on which their ancestors enjoyed it for time immemorial. Such a petition must necessarily have its effect, and restore Englishmen to their ancient rights. Has not our author rather overshot his mark? He has certainly chalked out a plain and beaten path, and on a just and constitutional principle for the people to apply for, and recover their “ancient rights” by a real and more equal representation.

He remarks on the subject of the real rights of men, that “they ought to have a fair portion of all which society, with all its combination, skill and force can do in their favour. In this partnership all have equal rights; but, as to the share of power, authority, and direction, which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be among the direct original rights of men; it is a thing to be settled by convention; if civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law, that convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of constitution which are formed under it*.

* See page 87.

This position of our author is admissible so far as such convention is governed by just and equitable principles, and no farther, otherwise it would give a sanction to every species of oppression: to support the truth of this remark, it may not be improper to state a case. Suppose such a convention, or that those persons who possess the supreme authority in a state, should think it necessary to frame a law, that certain persons, say those who admit and subscribe, *ex animo*, that the convention has a divine right to establish in the state, a set of religious opinions, whether Protestant, Popish, Mahometan, Jewish, or Pagan, shall exclusively enjoy the emoluments arising from the collection and receipt of the public revenue, and suppose the profits arising from this employment to amount to a shilling in the pound of every man's expenditure, or two millions sterling in a year, in a country of no greater extent than ours, would not such a law be justly considered in a free state as arbitrary and oppressive, and an infraction of the rights of men in civil society, as it would be depriving a great part of the community of those emoluments, which, as subjects of the state, and contributors to the taxes, they are entitled to enjoy. Would not this

be

be rewarding one description of persons at the expence of another, on an unjust principle? Does a convention possess the power consistent with the rights of men, to frame such a law? Perhaps it may be objected, that the principle of it is so absurd that no such case is ever likely to occur. If the right be admitted, which our author lays down as a maxim in civil society, a case may occur equally absurd and impolitic; and one that bears a striking resemblance to the leading features of it, now actually exists in Europe, and in what is called a free country.

In voluntary societies, and those that exist only for a limited time, men possess a right to institute what laws they please, but in civil society there are original rights, which may with the strictest propriety be deemed the rights of men; these ought to be sacred, and are what no power on earth can, consistent with the trust reposed in them, destroy. Let us put a case of a somewhat different nature, and as our author appears to be particularly partial to the present state of the representation, it shall be on that subject. It has been asserted by those who are well informed, and have made the calculation, that less than ten thousand electors, and many of them of the lowest

elafs, choofe the majority of the Englifh Houfe of Commons, which represents feven millions of people. Suppofe the greater part of thefe, fay fix thoufand, for that number being the majority, will ferve our purpofe, fhould be influenced or corrupted, which is no unufual thing among voters, to inftitute their representatives in parliament (who generally think it their duty to follow the inftitutions of their conftituents) to fupport a Bill, to veft the power of raifing money excluſively in the King and Lords (formerly the Kings of England alone exercifed this power) and as many of the Commons owe their feats to the Lords, it is not impoffible, if our author's political principles fhould become general, but that ſuch a law might at ſome future period take place. If ſuch a law ſhould take place, it would be allowed on all hands, among the friends of liberty, to be an infringement of the rights of the people, and an abuſe of power, but according to our author's opinion, as it originated in a *proper, adequate, and legal* convention of the ſtate, who poſſeſs the power to limit and modify the conſtitution, ſuch a law would be obligatory on the whole community: Of courſe oppoſition againſt it would be rebellion, and

an attempt to overthrow the constitution. It is easy to perceive how far such dangerous and unconstitutional positions will lead men ; they will justify all the tyranny, persecution and oppression that have deluged the whole habitable Globe.

Our author labours to remove the deep impression which the discussion of the rights of men has made on the minds of the people of this country, by making a curious distinction between their natural and real rights*. As men universally, in the civilized part of the world, stand in connection with society, their natural rights are those which attach to them as men, and which they are entitled to possess as members of society, and their *real rights* are precisely the same, unless they are restricted to those rights only, which the governments of the Earth allow men to enjoy, which would be justifying, as above, every species of oppression. We may easily perceive the consequences of taking away the only proper foundation of liberty, the natural rights of men ; it is no less than laying the axe to the root of the tree. It must be admitted, that men necessarily abridge themselves of a part

* See page 86 and 88.

of their natural rights, those of an inferior nature, that are not essential to their happiness, in order to obtain the advantages resulting from society, which are of superior value ; but this will extend no further in a good government than is compatible with strict justice to individuals. A mutual sacrifice for the public good, in which all are concerned, so far from being a grievance, is, on the principle above stated, a benefit to every individual. It should also be considered, on a subject of this nature, that there is a great and necessary distinction between voluntary societies, and that of which a State is composed : In respect to the former, men have their option, in the latter, the case is very different ; perhaps it may be suggested, that those who dislike the laws of one state, may, if they choose it, remove to another. But insuperable difficulties arise here, as the loss of the means of subsistence, desertion of property, friends, and a thousand other considerations ; if it were otherwise, the majority in a state might with propriety frame such laws as they imagined would be most conducive to their interest. Besides, removals from a state would be injurious to its prosperity, and might prove the ruin of it ; migration

gration to foreign countries, therefore on this principle is prohibited by law to all artificers and manufacturers, which comprehend a great part of the community; and as men become subjects of the state, independent of their own choice, it follows by necessary consequence, that those to whom the power is delegated to frame the laws, are bound by every principle of justice, as well as religion, to see that they do not oppress individuals, and also that they are founded on principles of equality, proportioned to cases and circumstances. This observation, although it may press hard on certain laws in this country, that affect a particular class of subjects (the Corporation and Test Acts) is nevertheless true, and is a position, that no man, who is a friend to the rights of men, will controvert. As conscience is said to be God's viceroy in the minds of men, for the regulation of their conduct, so public justice ought to be in a state; on this unalterable principle, the laws of every state ought to be founded; and if they will not bear this test, they ought to be abolished.

Do any of the laws of the National Assembly of France violate this principle? I believe not; the extinction of the order of nobility excepted. Indeed, it must be confessed, that

they have (from motives best known to themselves) unwarrantably abridged the power of the Monarch; but this, it is supposed was done through the effects of fear, and was the King sincerely attached to the National Assembly, and hearty in the reform of the government, they would now, in all probability make him one of the greatest Monarchs upon earth.

As to what the National Assembly has done in new modelling the French Church with respect to the means of its support, and which our author is pleased to term confiscation, plunder, and sacrilege, a short answer will suffice. If the state has a right to form a national Church establishment, it possesses an equal right to appoint the nature and quantum of the provision proper for its support.

Our author, after having accomplished the demolition of the *rights of men*, in imitation, I suppose of Lee, the poet, who threatened to extinguish the stars by a whirlwind, proceeds to the defence of Holy Church, which it seems, has received a blow from the common Enemy, and previously states his ground, and lays before the public (for which they are obliged to him) the principles on which the defence of it has been conducted in all ages, “ *We are afraid,*” he says, “ *to put men to*
“ live

“ live and trade each on his own stock of *rea-*
 “ *son*, because we suspect that this stock in
 “ each man is small, and that individuals
 “ would do better to avail themselves of the
 “ *general Bank and capital of Nations and*
 “ *ages.*” And he adds, “ that many of our *men*
 “ *of speculation*, instead of *exploding general*
 “ *prejudices*, employ their sagacity to find out
 “ the *latent wisdom* which prevails in them, and
 “ when they have discovered it, they think
 “ it more *wise* to continue the prejudice
 “ with the reason involved, than to cast
 “ away the *coat of prejudice*, and to leave no-
 “ thing but the *naked reason* *.” And after-
 wards, speaking of our Church establishment,
 says, “ It is the first of our prejudices.” This
 is truly curious, and contains a full explana-
 tion of the principles which characterize the
 abettors of priestcraft. Is it dangerous to al-
 low men to exercise their reason in matters
 that concern their salvation? Are men to be
 compelled in the present age, to believe and
 practise what artful and interested priests may
 think proper to invent, under pretence that
 it is unsafe for them to be permitted to follow
 the dictates of their reason, although they
 may have the guidance of revelation? Are
 men to be compelled to surrender their reason

* See page 129.

in matters of Religion, to what he calls the general Bank and capital of Nations and ages, (as our author, I suppose, addresses his letter to a Roman Catholic; he, here, no doubt, has an eye to the Church of Rome, as that Bank, in respect to its capital extent and antiquity, far exceeds all others) this would be depriving them of their free-agency, as the subjects of God's moral government, and placing them nearly on a level with the brute creation. If these sentiments had always prevailed, no reformation in Religion could ever have taken place in this country; we must have remained to this day enveloped in superstition, and of course fit subjects for Tyranny, and the artifices of Priestcraft.

Let us for a moment apply our author's reasoning to some religious right, say transubstantiation, which is an offspring of the general Bank. "*Men of speculation,*" as well as the priests, who have the sole management of this Hocus Pocus, * perceive the *reason*, as well as the absurdity of it; but the people must, at all events, be kept in ignorance, and still taught to believe they eat the body of our Lord himself, by which they become from time to time united to the Deity; this consideration alone will preserve the "*coat of*

* Hoc est Corpus.

“*prejudice,*” above referred to, otherwise the priests might lose their influence, and with it that goodly portion of the land which they have enjoyed for ages. They also perceive the “*latent wisdom*” * that prevails in it, as well as the necessity of not “*exploding general prejudices,*” as by doing this they would probably extinguish their own existence.—The same remarks will apply to absolution, and other absurd tenets of the Romish Church.

What pity is it that an English senator, and one who has been long considered as a friend

* The common people of France seem at length to have discovered the “*latent wisdom*” of ecclesiastical policy, which has broke in upon, and threatens utterly to destroy the empire of “*ancient prejudices.*” This gives our author infinite concern—he weeps sorely on account of the sufferings of the church. I wonder he has not recommended a public fast among the hierarchical powers on this melancholy occasion. His advice in this respect, no doubt, would have weight. He imputes the mischief to the opinions and systems of a philosophic cabal, whom he describes as atheists and infidels. Philosophy of any kind can have made but little progress among the bulk of the people, and I rather suspect, that the motive by which they have been actuated, is the consideration that they and their forefathers have been labouring and toiling for that which profited them nothing, and to support a swarm of drones in the state in luxury and idleness. These drones are now unhived, to the great joy of the friends of true religion, and to the unspeakable grief of our author and the faithful sons of the papacy.

to the rights of mankind, should broach such antichristian principles in a protestant country; but this is not the first instance of political or religious apostacy that has happened in this country, neither will it be the last.

Our author, who is always happy in the choice of epithets, introduces the pleasing idea of a general Bank, accessible by all. If those who stand in need of the good things of *this life* could have their wants supplied by drawing on the National Bank, it would be a source of great felicity; and if our author's general Bank could supply the spiritual exigencies of men, and furnish them with that knowledge and faith which is necessary to salvation, it would prove a source of still greater felicity. But, alas! this Bank is established on a very different principle to that of all others, unless it be on the score of profit. Other Banks, whether publick or private, are placed under wise and proper regulations, to render them subservient to the conveniencies and wants of men; but this is under no controul, as it compels kingdoms and empires to lodge their property in it under pain of eternal damnation; it receives a great deal, and pays nothing; instead of contributing to the ease and happiness of those in connection with it, they are compelled,

led, contrary to their inclinations, to support it at an infinite expence, and by the fruits of their industry; and this is not all, it has invaded the prerogative of heaven, has carried fire and sword through great part of the earth, and has proved the destruction of millions of the human race.

The intelligent part of mankind know this, and are growing very sick at the idea of supporting religious banks on such principles, and at such an enormous expence. We see the religious Bank of a neighbouring kingdom has a run upon it, and, in consequence of this, is nearly reduced to a state of bankruptcy, and all the efforts of our author and the supporters of priestcraft to restore its credit and influence will avail but little.

The Bible has been always considered by the true friends of christianity as the only *general religious Bank*; it was established as such by Almighty God, and is on that principle the great boon of heaven to frail mortals: from this Bank mankind are directed to draw their resources; but the head of the Roman church, and others who have derived their authority from him, vainly attempt to assume the place of the Almighty, and to persuade men that they possess the power to constitute
religious

religious banks that may be trusted with greater safety: if infallibility attached to them, this might be true, but this is not the case.

“ The Bible,” as Chillingworth says, “ is the only religion of Protestants,” although our author, in effect, says otherwise. Can it be supposed that the God of nature would reveal to his creature man the path of duty, and those articles of belief which are necessary to salvation, and not permit him to exercise that reason with which he has endowed him in matters of religion? For what purpose were the holy scriptures given us, if they are not to be considered as the rule of our faith and practice? If this be denied, they might as well have remained in an unknown tongue, which is the case in most, if not all, the nations who profess the Roman Catholic faith.

It appears, that our author is assiduously labouring to support his favourite religious bank, the church of Rome, as he severely reflects on the National Assembly, and charges them with injustice in doing what the wisdom of our ancestors thought necessary to be done in part some ages ago, by the suppression of the monasteries; had he existed at that period, he would have stood up, if one may judge by his present conduct, as the champion of the rights

rights of the church and of priestcraft, although church property might comprehend a third part of the kingdom, which it was supposed to do in this country at the period above referred to.

It is rather to be wondered at, amidst all this stir of priests, jesuits, and their followers, in opposing the French revolution, that His Holiness has not, in some way or other, exercised his authority in support of the church. I suspect he has been thrown into a kind of panic himself on account of some displeasing movements among his own subjects *, or possibly he might have done by the National Assembly, that which his predecessors have been accustomed to do on similar occasions; (to wit) have consigned them all to destruction, by issuing bulls, and discharging against them the thunders of the Vatican, as plunderers of the “ *general Bank.*” — I rather wonder also, that our author, who has a fertile imagination, and leaves no expedient untried to accomplish his purpose, has not availed himself of this circumstance, and threatened them with the accumulated vengeance of the church; but spiritual gunpowder seems to have lost its ef-

* Avignon.

ficacy, and therefore elegant diction, fine turned periods, high wrought similitudes, and vehement declamation, have been adopted as substitutes to raise the fallen papal sceptre, and to reinstate in a neighbouring kingdom the scarlet whore of Babylon.

Our author, in a tone of confidence, methinks not perfectly becoming even the leader of a party, unless he fancied his book would create miracles, and extinguish every spark of liberty, boldly comes forward and asserts—
 “ We are resolved to keep an established
 “ church, an established monarchy, an esta-
 “ blished aristocracy, and an *established* demo-
 “ cracy, each in the degree it exists, and in
 “ no greater.” May the monarchy never cease to exist but with time, and may the Kings of England continue to enjoy their prerogatives unfulled. May the House of Lords enjoy the undisturbed possession of their just titles, and the share which the constitution has given them as one of its constituent parts. This is the language, I will venture to say, of ninety-nine in a hundred of the Protestant Dissenters of this country; but, as to an established democracy in the degree, and on the
 principles

principles it now exists *, I must differ in opinion from our author, and for the following reasons:—It will necessarily destroy, through the natural effect of time, if from no other cause, that just equilibrium in the three orders of the state, which is the leading feature in the British constitution, and in which its excellency principally consists. It furnishes the House of Lords with the means of uniting a great part of the representative body to themselves, which is perfectly unconstitutional. It opens a door to undue influence and corruption among the elective body, by which the liberties of the people may, at some future period, through the choice of improper representatives, be destroyed. It makes no provision for those places that necessarily arise in a commercial state, and which are, in consequence of it, excluded from a share in the representation. It supports a nominal representation only, for those places which, by the effects of time or other causes, may go to decay, which not only militates against, but actually destroys, as far as it extends, the spirit and principle of the British

* The cases of New Shoreham and Cricklade prove, that ours is not at present an established democracy on the principle laid down by our author.

constitution. These are, in my opinion, radical defects attendant on an established democracy, the consequences of which are justly to be dreaded in a free state.

As the medium of the public voice, he asserts, that no alteration will be permitted in the established church; it must remain "in the degree it exists, and in no greater," so that its doctrines, discipline, form of worship, and the provision made for its support, must remain unalterable. Notwithstanding this seeming confidence, if the clergy were to pursue that line of conduct, which, in the opinion of many of their friends, would best promote their real interest, probably, in this case, he would find himself mistaken. I am led, by the consideration of this subject, into a wide and fertile field for discussion; but, as I am not much accustomed to tread on consecrated ground, and have no intention to give offence, I shall proceed with caution. I am no stranger to the anxiety which the overthrow of the French church, in respect to its revenue, has occasioned among the clergy of this kingdom, and I am assured from authority, which I cannot question, that the apprehension has been general, pervading every department in the church: thus circumstanced, they are
certainly

certainly indebted to our author for his friendly assistance, and for the assurances which he has given them, as the leader of a party, that all is safe.

Under this impression university honours from a sister kingdom have been already conferred, and similar favours, it is said, were intended here, but, as such a step might excite public attention, and call up discussion on a delicate subject, it was thought unadvisable.

With regard to a perseverance in the present doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church, I have but little to say: this rests with the legislature. I shall only take the liberty to hint, that although perfection does not belong to human institutions, it is desirable, in every case, to render those institutions as perfect as may be, especially in so important a concern as that of religion; and that, if any circumstance relative to doctrine, discipline or worship is really objectionable, it must be consistent with sound policy to remove it. Prepossession in favour of early received opinions, arising from the effect of education or example, are undoubtedly strong, and may generally be trusted to; but, with speculative minds, and there are many of that cast in the

present age, so far as imperfection and defects are perceived, former attachments will abate, and that in proportion to their extent and importance; on this ground, therefore, the removal of them appears to be expedient. I embrace the present opportunity to say, I am no enemy to the established church; I sincerely respect and feel a strong attachment to some of its clergy, and to many of its members; I venerate it, on account of the many great and worthy characters, which it has produced from time to time as defenders of pure christianity; and I respect it, as it has been on various trying occasions, the bulwark of the protestant religion.

In regard to the corruptions of the church of Rome, they were introduced at different periods by the authority of popes and councils, and in such a way as the ignorance and credulity of men would permit, keeping a steady eye to the interests of the priesthood; but when arts and sciences became general, when the thick clouds of ignorance and superstition were dispelled, and men began to think for themselves, it would have been wise in the leaders of that church, before they had been stript of their own power, to have stript the church of its tinsel and trumpery—by neglecting

neglecting to do this, it is now tumbling about their ears, and, in appearance, portends the entire extirpation of popery and priestcraft.

This may be a source of bitter lamentation to our author, but every sincere protestant and friend to true christianity rejoices in the prospect.—I beg leave to drop a hint on the subject of the provision which is set apart for the support of the clergy—Can our author be a stranger to the fact, that there are few gentlemen of landed property but what have felt the inconveniencies and the evils attending it? Tithes have been a perpetual source of litigation between the proprietors of land and the clergy: they are an everlasting bone of contention between ministers and their parishioners: they are the great bar to agricultural improvements in this commercial state, and are little less than a millstone about the neck of the landed interest; and the wisdom of this country will probably, before it be long, perceive the propriety and utility of providing a proper substitute for the support of the clergy. Our author seems to fancy and to flatter himself, that there is but one opinion among the respectable part of the community on this subject. If he was properly informed, I pre-

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fume,

sume he would discover his mistake, and find himself in this case, where he generally is, in a minority.

Our author, referring to the Church establishment, has the following curious remark, which furnishes a good plea for the propriety, in this case at least, of going back to "ancient usage." "It is true, that the whole Church revenue is not always employed, and to every shilling of it, in charity, nor *perhaps* ought it;" and he adds, "it is better to cherish virtue and humanity, by leaving much to free will, even with some loss to the object, than to attempt to make men mere machines and instruments of a political benevolence*." On this principle it seems the Clergy of this kingdom are still to be complimented with a fourth part of the tithes, which was the portion of their revenue formerly allotted to the poor, with a view to cherish among them, as ministers of Jesus Christ, the duty of charity. I beg leave to ask, has any good effect arisen from this indulgence to the Clergy? It must be confessed, that they possess by means of it, a powerful incentive to the exercise of this

* Page 154.

virtue, but are they not as backward, as other men in the practice of it; and is a single shilling of this immense sum applied to its original purpose? It may be necessary, in order fully to explain this matter, to state, that formerly the maintenance of the poor was an ecclesiastical concern, and a fourth part of the tithes in every parish was set apart for that purpose; and there was at that time no other provision made for the poor. So that originally the tithes were designed for two purposes, the support of the Church and the poor. The Clergy have now engrossed the whole, and contribute no more to the poor, than a proportionate share of the parochial assessments. At present nearly the whole of the money collected for that purpose, is raised from the landed property, and it amounts to one million, five hundred thousand pounds annually. Is it reasonable to suffer five hundred thousand pounds a year * to remain

* This sum, I reckon is about a fourth part of the value of the tithes of the kingdom, now in the hands of the Clergy. In a Pamphlet, entitled, "Observations on the Origin and Effects of the Test Act, with some hints for the consideration of the Clergy," I stated the whole of the Church Revenue at between three and four millions. The writers of the Analytical Review (see May 1790 of that

main in the hands of the Clergy, in order to cherish amongst them a principle of benevolence; the experiment has been tried long enough without effect, and as things are at present circumstanced, in my opinion, our author is, on his own principles, in duty bound to exert his influence, to have this immense property restored to the public; and unless the maxim of persevering in the present system of Church policy, right or wrong, warps his understanding, he himself cannot but approve of a speedy call on the Church, to refund this portion of public property. As the people of this country groan under the pressure of taxes, this sum I should think, could not be applied to a better purpose than to the service of government; by doing this, the church could have no just cause of complaint, because a fourth part of

that work) say, “ we have some reasons for believing
 “ this calculation erroneous and over-rated; and would
 “ refer our readers for a more accurate statement to the
 “ pamphlets published a few years ago in the Llandaff
 “ controversy, from which it appeared that the whole
 “ annual income of the church, including the Universi-
 “ ties, did not exceed a million and a half.” I purpose
 shortly to lay such information before the public, as I trust,
 will establish the fact, that the Revenue of the Church
 amounts to between three and four millions a year.

the tithes, was originally the property of the poor, who are now supported by the public. It ought, therefore, to be refunded, on the principle of public justice. The inhabitants of this kingdom, are indebted to our author for this valuable hint on the subject of political benevolence, and probably before it be long, proper attention will be given to it.

At the time Mr. Flood gave notice in the House of Commons of his intended proposition for a reform of the representation of the people in parliament, our author, with all the exterior marks of painful apprehension, exhibits, in the most odious colours, the conduct of our neighbours in their arduous struggle for liberty, and by the most forcible language (I do not say arguments) warns the people of this country of the danger of giving way in the least degree to modern politics, not knowing to what mischief it might lead, or where it might end. By this stroke of policy, he gets the door of the state bolted and barred, to prevent even a look at its situation, and apprizes the public at the same time of his intended reflections on the affairs of France, and the Revolution Society. But perceiving the powerful effect of his exertions in Parliament, and the retreat of the

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enemy

enemy, he wisely makes a reserve for another campaign *. A short, but seasonable time, previous to the meeting of the new Parliament, when he knew the enemy could make no resistance with effect, he announced the day on which he should make the grand attack on the sons of liberty, and in consequence of it falls upon them with the impetuosity and vengeance of a Turk, when he has no enemy to oppose him ; by this means, he has completely blockaded the enemy, as he imagines, for another year. What device he may set on foot, and how he means to conduct his future plan of operation, is hard to say. But as far as policy, industry, and perseverance will go, our author will not be wanting. I have been more particular in my remarks on the present state of the representation, because I have reason to believe our author had a principal view to it in his Letter on the French Revolution. It might be prudent for him to conceal in a degree, which he has done, the object he had in view, for reasons which are evident. The subject of parliamentary reform, although of great magnitude, is at present asleep ; and it may be wise to let

* " His letter was kept back upon prudential considerations." See preface to it.

it so remain, as the present moment, perhaps, is not the most desirable for it to be agitated. Be that as it may, it is of such importance to the well being of this country, that it should never be lost sight of.

I cannot but lament as an individual, that our author's present situation and connections should lead him to desert the standard of liberty. Liberty to Englishmen, is a pearl of great price; her advocates have been the greatest and the best of men in all ages; and although her appearance and address may not be suited to the refined taste of some of our modern politicians, or to gratify the expectations of disappointed courtiers, yet in all respects she is a suitable companion and helpmate to John Bull. She has assisted him in all the active concerns of life. She has secured to him the undisturbed possession of all his rational enjoyments, and has raised him to a pinnacle of wealth and glory, which has made him the envy of the nations, and will never forsake him, unless he forsakes her. For the present I take my leave of our author, dropping a tear at the consideration of the versatility and depravity of man.



