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TWO LETTERS

FROM

MR. ADAIR

TO THE

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

IN ANSWER TO THE CHARGE

OF

A high Treasonable Misdemeanour,

BROUGHT BY HIS LORDSHIP AGAINST MR. FOX AND HIMSELF,
IN HIS LIFE OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
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ON the appearance of the Bishop of Winchester's "Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Pitt," the author of the following pages immediately wrote an answer to that part of the book which concerned himself jointly with Mr. Fox. Before sending it to the press, however, as he was sensible that it was written under a strong impression of the injury done to Mr. Fox's memory, he was willing to try the effect of a temperate appeal to the Right Reverend Prelate himself, in order to obtain, if possible, from his justice, a correction of certain errors of fact into which he had been betrayed. With this view, he selected some of the most serious of those errors, and laid them before his Lordship in the following letter.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND THE

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

&c. &c.

May 23, 1821.

MY LORD,

IN the Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Pitt recently printed under your Lordship's name, I find a passage relating to a journey which I made to St. Petersburg in 1791, and in which my conduct is adverted to in a manner that renders it impossible for me to be silent under the imputation which it is calculated to convey.

Professing to give an account of the causes which occasioned the failure of Mr. Pitt's negotiation with Russia in that year, your Lordship has copied from a paper drawn up by Mr. Burke, addressed secretly by him to the heads of the Whig party in 1793, surreptitiously published by a bookseller in 1797, and declared afterwards by

Mr. Burke himself to have been written in anger, and never intended by him to meet the public eye in any shape, a violent personal attack on Mr. Fox and myself; and the facts alleged in this attack you affirm that you can substantiate by authentic documents in Mr. Pitt's correspondence.

This paper of Mr. Burke, charged as it is with the characteristic exaggeration of its author, contains nevertheless three specific averments of fact, in a charge of "treasonable misdemeanor" (as he calls it) against Mr. Fox, and against me also, as his confederate in that offence. It is alleged that Mr. Fox sent me to Petersburg in 1791, as his representative—that he sent me thither for the purpose of frustrating the objects for which the King's ministers were authorised to treat—and that I did actually frustrate some of those objects.

The matter of this article furnishes your Lordship with ground for a comment on the criminal extent to which Mr. Fox pushed his party principles, and for a presumption that he had recourse to this measure "*in the confident hope that he should upset Mr. Pitt's administration, provided the Empress of Russia could be prevailed upon to persevere in her demand.*"

And your Lordship concludes with affirming that you are "not aware that any attempt has ever been made by Mr. Fox, or his friends, to controvert these facts, or to invalidate this reasoning."

Every one of the six important facts either affirmed in, or to be collected from, the above statement, beginning from page 372 of your second volume and ending at page 449, and consequently your Lordship's comment on Mr. Fox's supposed party views, is erroneous. I will take these facts in their order.

First, it is not true that Mr. Fox sent me to St. Petersburg as his representative in 1791.—He did not send me thither at all.—I mean no evasion on his behalf of the substance of this charge when I declare, upon my honour, that I had fully resolved to undertake this journey, and had made my preparations for it, before I even communicated my intentions to him. At this distance of time I cannot affirm that he positively dissuaded my going, but the impression on my mind is that he did; and I am quite confident that he never encouraged it.

Secondly, I did not go for the purpose of frustrating the King's ministers. What my purpose was, or rather my motive, I have not the slightest objection to avow. In addition to the anxiety I felt on public grounds for the issue of a question in which our foreign system was so materially involved, I had a motive which I may call, in some respects, personal, inasmuch as it regarded the rank and estimation, which I shall never be ashamed to acknowledge I was desirous of establishing for myself with my political friends. In

1788, when his late Majesty's illness gave reason to expect that there would be a change of government, Mr. Fox signified his intentions of placing me in the foreign line. From that time I resolved to qualify myself as well as I could for diplomatic offices. The state of Europe in 1791 presented me an opportunity. On the Russian question particularly, the part taken in parliament by the friends to whom I was attached, supported as your Lordship must yourself confess, by the unanimous sentiment of the country, and likewise the known preference of the Empress Catherine for English connexion, gave me advantages for learning the real situation of affairs at that court, and for discovering its future intentions, which rarely fall to the lot of a private gentleman, and which are not often obtained even by an accredited minister. Of these I determined to avail myself.

This was the origin of my journey to Petersburg, and with this, as I have stated above, Mr. Fox had no concern whatsoever.

Your Lordship will not expect me to reveal by what means I obtained, when I got there, a knowledge of events as they were passing, nor to name or designate the persons with whom I conversed, and with whom I discussed, with the openness and freedom which Englishmen are accustomed to use in such discussions, but with no secret view whatever, both the causes and the consequences of the measures then in agitation. Even at the distance

of thirty years it would be both indiscreet and dishonourable in me to divulge these matters; nor is it necessary for my argument. It is enough for me to declare that this, and this only, was the motive of my journey, and that this, and this only, was the character of the communications into which I entered while at St. Petersburg.

It is most true that I freely gave my opinion on the matters then under discussion. I did not feel myself called upon to conceal that I entertained on this subject the same opinions which were both felt and declared by my country, by the House of Commons, by Mr. Fox, and by Mr. Burke himself. It is true, likewise, that in a letter which I wrote, when all was over, to Mr. Fox, I expressed much exultation at a result which, in my conscience I believe, had it been different, would have produced most serious mischief, and made an enemy of Catherine far more formidable than, a few years afterwards, we found her unfortunate son to be.

I have been informed that this letter was opened and read previous to its delivery to Mr. Fox. I will not believe it. I gave it to a gentleman and a man of honour. I gave it to an old school-fellow whom I found at St. Petersburg, and with whom I had renewed one of those friendships so delightful when they seem but to continue the days in which the heart, "a stranger yet to guile," fears no ambush in the smile that accompanies

the proffered hand.—I gave him this letter, at his own solicitation to be the bearer of one *to Mr. Fox*. I will neither believe, therefore, that it was intercepted in its passage, nor that among the adversaries of Mr. Fox any gentleman could be found to break the seal of it. Things, for which I know no name, I cannot imagine. If I am deceived in all this, and that the paper be really among the “authentic documents” you refer to, I can at all events safely defy your Lordship to find a sentence in it that can substantiate any one either of Mr. Burke’s charges, or your own. To the production of this document I have no objection on my own account; satisfied that I can explain every eager, every incautious, every injudicious expression (if such there be) which in the security of my heart, and not calculating my words, I may have poured out unrestrained to my friend.

Thirdly, I deny having, to my knowledge, frustrated *any* of the objects of the King’s ministers. In fact, as your Lordship knows, the object of Mr. Pitt’s armament was given up immediately after the first debate in the House of Commons on the King’s message, and in consequence, as you yourself admit, of the opposition *in* the House of Commons, supported by the country. All that the negotiation really turned upon at St. Petersburg was, how to get the materials for a speech for the meeting of Parliament. If I frustrated any object of this nature, your Lordship will have

the goodness to state what it was, and how I did frustrate it.

I have now done with Mr. Burke's "account of this transaction," as you are pleased to call the article you copy from him. I proceed to your Lordship's; and as you have given your readers to understand that neither Mr. Fox, nor his friends, ever denied these facts, or endeavoured to invalidate Mr. Burke's reasoning upon them, I will recall to your memory some other facts, which you must have known at the time, although now, it seems, you are "not aware" of their existence. They enable me,

Fourthly, to affirm, in direct contradiction to your Lordship, that Mr. Fox did deny this charge, as much as any charge can be denied before it is stated, namely, by a challenge to inquire into it. Every one of the rumours collected and concentrated by Mr. Burke, in 1793, was notoriously in circulation in 1792, when parliament met. There was, indeed, some vague hint from Mr. Pitt, of inquiring into the transaction at a future day, and I well remember Mr. Dundas's sarcastic allusion to the rumours, and Mr. Fox's instant reply. It was a reply containing a direct challenge to inquire into their truth. If you have forgotten a fact so known, and the contrary of which it was so necessary for you to have ascertained before you sat down to write this part of your history, I will recommend your turning to the 226th page of the Parliamentary Register. vol. 31.

To suppose Mr. Fox to have called for inquiry into facts which he was not prepared either to deny if criminal, or to justify if harmless, were to suppose an absurdity. Why, then, was it never instituted? Why was no opportunity given to Mr. Fox to meet the charge in parliament, face to face with his accuser? But I will not now argue this point; I state only the fact, that he did deny the charge, and that he was at all times ready to meet it.

That he did not write a pamphlet in answer to Mr. Burke is certain. Why should he have answered him? What called for his notice of an accusation, acknowledged a few months afterwards by Mr. Burke's literary executors (in their preface to the authentic work published by Rivington) to have been grounded on no other evidence than that of a verbal communication from some person connected with the ministry? or how could he have selected one point to reply to in this malignant paper, without replying to the rest—to the whole of the 54 articles of his alleged misdemeanours?

Fifthly, you say that, to the best of your knowledge, none of Mr. Fox's friends denied the facts.—I was not only his friend, but, in reference to this charge, I stood in a character which the insignificance that might have caused you to overlook me in other circumstances, will not excuse your forgetting in this. I was not only his friend, but by the account you have adopted from Mr.

Burke, and for which you, as a historian, are responsible, I was his accomplice. If my name never yet has reached the high sphere in which you move, you ought to have inquired about it in other places, before deliberately consigning it to the press, accompanied with so gross an error of fact on a matter in which my character was involved. Had you done this, you would have found that, immediately after the appearance of Mr. Burke's pamphlet, I contradicted the calumnious charge in a letter signed with my name, and published in the *Morning Chronicle* of February 14, 1797. The conclusion of that letter is in the following words :

“ How far I am still at liberty, in justice both to Mr. Fox and myself, to continue silent since the partial, but very extensive circulation of this pretended letter, and under all the circumstances of the case as it now stands, is more than I can immediately determine. I must be governed by the degree of credit annexed to the charge in quarters where I wish to stand well, and to its general impression on the public mind. If any better sentiment than curiosity can be gratified by my justification, I am ready to enter upon it without delay. It is enough for me, in the mean time, to affirm that the charge is false.

(Signed) “ ROBERT ADAIR.”

My motives for remaining silent were (with some additional ones needless to mention) the

same as Mr. Fox's. It seemed fighting with the air, to refute reasoning which had not a single established fact for its foundation.

But our motives were not conclusive on our common friends. Time passed, and the story was forgotten. Mr. Burke, who was in a declining state at the time of the bookseller's fraud, died within a few months, and nine years afterwards Mr. Pitt, and then Mr. Fox. On this last occasion, there appeared a variety of well-written characters of Mr. Fox. They were collected in two volumes by Dr. Parr, and published, together with one drawn up by his own powerful hand.— This work authorises me to contradict

Sixthly, The assertion that no attempt was ever made to invalidate Mr. Burke's reasoning. What you call Mr. Burke's "reasoning" is, I suppose, his endeavour to apply some truths which nobody ever denied, to facts which nobody ever attempted to prove. All the reasoning in this endeavour is met and confuted by Dr. Parr in a manner that admits of no answer. That you should never have seen it is a presumption which the literary celebrity of its author does not warrant. Your Lordship can but have forgotten it. Turn then again to page 239 of the first volume; you will there see a complete dissection of Mr. Burke's charge; its flimsy texture torn to rags, and all his fallacies dispersed and annihilated. The whole work itself may be read once more, my Lord; it will refresh

your better feelings. It will prepare you to do that justice to Mr. Fox's memory which I here formally require at your hands.

I have prepared a public letter, containing a full and detailed reply to your Lordship's statement on the points thus shortly brought together, but I prefer appealing in the first instance to your own sense of what is right, in the persuasion that you will be determined by that sense to correct *publicly, explicitly, and immediately*, the errors of fact which I have thus pointed out to you in your work.

It now only remains for me to request from your Lordship an early communication of the course which you may intend to pursue in consequence of this letter.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient and humble servant,

ROBERT ADAIR.

Queen-street, May Fair,
No. 22.

To

The Right Reverend

The Lord Bishop of Winchester,

&c. &c. &c.

After waiting several days for an answer, and having observed the advertisement of a second edition of the Memoirs, the author again wrote to his Lordship as follows :

MY LORD,

On the 23d I addressed a letter to your Lordship, the receipt of which you have not even acknowledged. Am I to understand from your silence that you have no intention of noticing its contents? or have you already done so in your second edition of the Memoirs? I request your Lordship's answer to these questions, as the course I shall follow will depend upon it.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

R. ADAIR.

Queen-street. May 29th, 1821.

To this and to the preceding letter his Lordship, on the 2d instant, sent the following reply :

“ Great George-street.

June 2d, 1821.

“ SIR,

“ I have to lament that many circumstances have concurred to prevent my sending you an earlier answer to the letter, which I had the honour of receiving from you on the 23d of last month. I now beg leave to inform you, that the extract, page 445, &c. of the second volume of my Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Pitt, was taken from an edition of Mr. Burke's

Works, printed by Rivington in 1815, which, as far as the paper in question is concerned, is a copy of the edition published by Dr. Lawrence, one of Mr. Burke's executors. The paper, originally written in 1793, was certainly not designed for publication : it was meant to be 'entirely and strictly confidential,' but on that account it was not less likely to be true. I request your attention to a passage in a letter from Mr. Burke to Dr. Lawrence, dated Bath, Feb. 14th, 1797, soon after he had learned that this paper had 'crept surreptitiously into the world:—' I beg you and my friends to be cautious how you let it be understood that I disclaim any thing but the mere act and intention of publication. I do not retract any one of the sentiments contained in that memorial, which was and is my justification, addressed to the friends for whose use alone I intended it. Had I designed it for the public, I should have been more exact and full. It was written in a tone of *indignation*, in consequence of the resolutions of the Whig Club, which were directly pointed against myself and others, and occasioned our secession from that Club, which is the last act of my life that I shall repent. Many *temperaments* and *explanations* there would have been, if I had ever had a notion that it would meet the public eye." Dr. Lawrence proceeds to tell us, that Mr. Burke finding, upon his return from Bath, that he had not kept a fair copy of the

paper, ‘corrected one of the pamphlets with his own hand ;’ and he adds, ‘from this, which was found preserved with his other papers, his friends afterwards thought it their duty to give an authentic edition.’ Thus it appears that the copy from which I have quoted was corrected by Mr. Burke himself, several years after the paper was written, when he had had full time to inquire into the truth of his statement, and after the publication of your letter in the Morning Chronicle. I feel myself, therefore, justified in inferring that Mr. Burke persevered in considering his statement true and accurate, after mature deliberation, and after seeing what you had said upon the subject. And his executors thought this ‘acknowledged production of Mr. Burke, full of matter likely to interest the future historian,’ worthy of a place among his valuable works.

“ I cannot think, that it makes any substantial difference, whether the idea of your journey to Petersburg originated with yourself or Mr. Fox. You acknowledge that you went with the consent of Mr. Fox ; and you will not deny that, besides other correspondence, you wrote to him in cypher, which is a proof of Mr. Burke’s assertion, that you went ‘with his (Mr. Fox’s) cypher.’ You also admit that you obtained a knowledge of ‘events as they were passing’ at Petersburg, and that you discussed, ‘with openness and freedom, both the causes and the consequences of the

measures then in agitation ;' which open and free discussion must have related to the political situation of the two countries, and to Mr. Fox's conduct and sentiments, which were in direct opposition to those of the King's ministers. You decline naming or designating the persons with whom you communicated ; but they must have been the Empress's ministers, or persons in their confidence. It appears to me, therefore, highly probable, that these communications produced the effect ascribed to them by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke ; and your concessions seem to amount to an admission of the material parts of their charge against Mr. Fox.

“ I do not think it necessary to give any other answer to your questions relative to the objects you frustrated, but by referring you to Mr. Pitt's speeches, of which I have given an abstract. When Mr. Pitt talked of parliamentary inquiry, it was impossible for Mr. Fox to do less than declare his readiness to meet it : but this I cannot admit as any proof that the charge was groundless. To establish, by regular proof, the truth of a transaction alleged to have taken place between a private individual and the sovereign and the ministers of a foreign and distant country—a transaction in which both parties would unquestionably withhold all information—must obviously be extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible ; and yet circumstances might leave no doubt in the

minds of impartial persons of the reality of the transaction, or of the effects it produced.

“ You mention that the Empress Catherine’s known preference for English connexion gave you an advantage for learning ‘ the real situation of affairs at the court of Petersburg, and of discovering its future intentions.’ I must own that I should have thought, that a person avowedly of the party acting in opposition to the English government would not have been very likely to meet with a favourable and confidential reception from the Empress, if she had been really desirous of a friendly connexion with that government. The truth is that, the Empress saw in Mr. Pitt a great obstacle to her ambitious projects, and therefore shewed a predilection in favour of Mr. Fox and his friends.

“ You seem to think, that it was my duty to have made such inquiries concerning you as should have led to the knowledge of your publishing a letter in the Morning Chronicle, in the year 1797. I really do not conceive that I was under any obligation to make that inquiry ; nor do I understand how it could have been instituted. I was bringing no new charge against you ; but was merely transcribing a few pages from a work of a well-known author, which had been originally published more than twenty years, to which Mr. Fox had made no reply whatever, and which you had only noticed in a letter in a newspaper, which I had either

never seen, or totally forgotten. In that letter, a copy of which you have had the goodness to send me, you mentioned some idea of replying, but never did reply, although you afterwards discovered, that what you called a ‘pretended letter’ was really written by Mr. Burke. I apply no epithet in my work to the transaction; and my short ‘comment’ upon it relates solely to Mr. Fox. I do not even mention your name, except in the quotation. In your letter in the Morning Chronicle you ‘affirm that the charge is false;’ but you do not explain the nature of the charge, or point out in what respect it is false. In your letter to me you acknowledge that you did go to Petersburg, for a political purpose, with Mr. Fox’s consent; that you had political communications with certain persons there; that you freely delivered your political opinions, which were those of Mr. Fox, and that from thence you corresponded with Mr. Fox.

“Dr. Parr, after quoting part of the passage quoted by me, says, ‘I am not enough acquainted with the circumstances of this transaction, either to justify or condemn the whole of it.’ This explicit acknowledgement makes it unnecessary for me to add a word concerning Dr. Parr’s observations, unless you will allow me to express my surprise, that after his declaration, that he was not sufficiently acquainted with the transaction to decide whether it ought to be justified or condemned,

you should represent him as having ‘ confuted Mr. Burke’s reasoning in a way that admits of no answer,’ as having ‘ completely dissected Mr. Burke’s charge, torn to rags its flimsy texture, and dispersed and annihilated all his fallacies.’

“ In answer to the question contained in your letter of the 29th of May, I desire to inform you, that your letter of the 23d is not noticed in my second edition, very nearly the whole of which was indeed printed before the 23d.

“ I return the copy of your letter of Feb. 1797, and beg you to accept my thanks for sending it to me.

“ I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

G. WINTON.”

His Lordship having thus declined to correct any of his first allegations, and having given such unsatisfactory reasons for still persisting in them, the author finds himself under the necessity of publishing his original statement; adapting it only, for the sake of avoiding repetition, to that which is already before the reader in the foregoing pages.

THE RIGHT REVEREND THE
LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

&c. &c.

MY LORD,

IT was with no small degree of surprise, as your Lordship must have seen by my former letter, that in a work, purporting to be Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Pitt, I found the ridiculous stories about my journey to St. Petersburg brought once more before the public in all the gravity of history, and attested by the asseverations of a Bishop.

Your book, likewise, accuses Mr. Fox, and myself as his confederate, of an offence arising out of that journey little short of high treason. I sent you my answer to the passage in which this crime is imputed to us, vainly hoping that, in a subsequent edition, you might be induced to correct the several errors which I pointed out to you.

That statement was extracted from one which (as I informed your Lordship at the same time,) I had prepared for the public, at whose bar you had arraigned us. You had it early enough to alter the passages of which I had complained in the name of my friend. You have refused to alter them; and, by a republication, you have re-asserted their truth. Having exhausted all conciliatory means, therefore, I am now under the necessity of printing my original statement. I do it with reluctance.

With your Lordship's qualifications to be the biographer of Mr. Pitt, I have little immediate concern. In general it may be observed, that the instruments employed by great ministers in the lower confidential details of management are not the best fitted to write their lives. The business in which these men are employed, where there is always a great deal to be disavowed, warps them from the truth of history, and utterly disqualifies them for its dignity. What may be bad for posterity, however, may be good for the book-sellers; and a well-authenticated anecdote of government scandal may sometimes make the fortune of a work, which leaves the reader as ignorant as it found him with regard to the true motives and actions of the distinguished individual from whom it happens to be named.

It is with your Lordship in this capacity that I have now to deal. I well remember the piece of

diplomatic gossipry to which you refer, and the noise that was made about it some thirty years ago. I may possibly be indebted also to your Lordship for some of the facetious squibs to which it gave birth. The matter, I own, was fair game for an epigram; but for a history, my Lord, in what but a mere catchpenny compilation should we think of finding it recorded? What would be said, if, by way of retaliation, any of Mr. Pitt's opponents were to write a life of him from materials afforded by the *Rolliad*, or the *Probationary Odes*, or the other light publications of that period? Although such a life, I admit, might be written with as much regard for truth, and with equal advantage to the reputation of that celebrated man from the "*ana*," which bear the name of your Lordship, as from the newspapers which have been collated by your industry.

Since, however, your Lordship has been pleased to make this a subject of more serious interest, and to bring it forward with the advantage of testimony distinct from your own, I will for once depart from the resolution of silence which I had imposed on myself, and relate the whole transaction as correctly as my memory will serve me at so great a distance of time. The task is an irksome one, because he who writes to the public ought to have something to tell it. Now I sit down on this occasion with a sort of malice prepense; and with that certainty of disappointing its curiosity for

which there would be no excuse, if the very circumstance of my having nothing to reveal were not the best of all defences against your attack on me.

My letter of May 23d contains, indeed, in substance, all I have to tell. It contains, likewise, your charge against Mr. Fox and myself, specified in the shortest and the clearest way in which I could state it for the convenience of refutation. What I now offer is but an enlargement of the circle of topics in that letter, with the addition of some animadversions which I omitted in mercy to yourself. For greater perspicuity, therefore, I shall now exhibit a view of your course of proceeding, and begin by a more ample extract from your work.

You promise in your second volume, p. 408, to give an account of the failure of Mr. Pitt's attempt, in 1791, to compel the Empress Catherine of Russia to make peace with the Turks on the terms which he had prescribed to her; and your engagement to do so is expressed in the following terms:

“ Though Mr. Pitt did not succeed in his immediate object, the disposition evinced by the allied powers, and the part they took in the negotiation, were unquestionably of great assistance in procuring for Turkey better terms than, in her vanquished state, she could otherwise have obtained; and these terms would have been still better,

and perhaps his main purpose secured, if his exertions had not been counteracted in the very extraordinary manner which will be hereafter related."

When, in page 445, you come to "relate" this "extraordinary manner," it is in the following words :

"The transaction referred to by Mr. Pitt in this and the former debate respecting the negotiations at Petersburg, was never made the subject of formal inquiry, or of actual discussion in parliament ; but it was of so remarkable a nature, and shows so strongly to what length Mr. Fox carried his party principles, *that I shall transcribe Mr. Burke's account of it*, the accuracy of which I find attested by authentic documents among Mr. Pitt's papers."

In performance of this promise, you transcribe with, I admit, a most exemplary fidelity, the first of the 54 articles in Mr. Burke's letter to the Duke of Portland. For the sake of clearness I will follow your Lordship's example.

"The laws and constitution of the kingdom," says Mr. Burke, "entrust the sole and exclusive right of treating with foreign potentates, to the King. This is an undisputed part of the legal prerogative of the crown. However, notwithstanding this, Mr. Fox, without the knowledge or participation of any one person in the House of Commons, with whom he was bound by every

party principle, in matters of delicacy and importance, confidentially to communicate, thought proper to send Mr. Adair, as his representative, and with his cypher, to St. Petersburg, there to frustrate the objects for which the minister from the crown was authorised to treat. He succeeded in this his design, and did actually frustrate the King's minister in some of the objects of his negotiation.

“ This proceeding of Mr. Fox does not, as I conceive, amount to absolute high treason ; Russia, though on bad terms, not having been then declaredly at war with this kingdom. But such a proceeding is, in law, not very remote from that offence, and is undoubtedly a most unconstitutional act, and a high treasonable misdemeanour.

“ The legitimate and sure mode of communication between this nation and foreign powers is rendered uncertain, precarious, and treacherous, by being divided into two channels, one with the government, one with the head of a party in opposition to that government ; by which means the foreign powers can never be assured of the real authority or validity of any public transaction whatsoever.

“ On the other hand, the advantage taken of the discontent which at that time prevailed in parliament and in the nation, to give to an individual an influence directly against the govern-

ment of his country, in a foreign court, has made a highway into England for the intrigues of foreign courts in our affairs. This is a sore evil; an evil from which, before this time, England was more free than any other nation. Nothing can preserve us from that evil—which connects cabinet factions abroad with popular factions here—but the keeping sacred the crown as the only channel of communication with every other nation.

“ This proceeding of Mr. Fox has given a strong countenance and an encouraging example to the doctrines and practices of the revolution and constitutional societies, and of other mischievous societies of that description, who, without any legal authority, and even without any corporate capacity, are in the habit of proposing and to the best of their power, of forming leagues and alliances with France.

“ This proceeding, which ought to be reprobated on all the general principles of government, is, in a more narrow view of things, not less reprehensible. It tends to the prejudice of the whole of the Duke of Portland’s late party, by discrediting the principles upon which they supported Mr. Fox in the Russian business, as if they of that party also had proceeded in their parliamentary opposition on the same mischievous principles which actuated Mr. Fox in sending Mr. Adair on his embassy.”

With this “ account of the transaction,” as you

are pleased to call it, you are not content. You must likewise give "an account," of the motives of Mr. Fox.

"It is to be presumed," you say, "that Mr. Fox would never have had recourse to such a measure, if he had not entertained a confident hope, that, having already succeeded in rendering the Russian armament unpopular, he should upset Mr. Pitt's administration, *provided the Empress could be prevailed upon to persevere in her demand: that point he accomplished without any difficulty*, but the consequence did not prove what he expected; he defeated Mr. Pitt's plan, without gaining the main object he had himself in view; he brought a certain degree of discredit and danger upon his country by effecting the aggrandizement of an unfriendly and powerful court, while his own personal ambition remained ungratified."

You are then pleased to add the following affirmation in your own person.

"I am not aware that any attempt was ever made by Mr. Fox, or any of his friends, to controvert these facts, or to invalidate this reasoning."

And you conclude the whole by informing us, (with a gentle hint, which some years ago might have alarmed me not a little) that "the transaction was well known in Turkey, *where great surprise was expressed that Mr. Fox had not lost his head for such conduct.*"

Between Mr. Burke and yourself, we have thus the whole matter on the record. The three specific averments in Mr. Burke's article, I denied in my first letter, and gave you my reasons for it. As they did not satisfy your Lordship, and as we are now before another court, I shall enter more at large into my case. First, however, I must observe upon the manœuvre to which you have had recourse in stating your's. You tell us that Mr. Pitt would have obtained better terms in this negotiation had he not been counteracted "in a manner which shall hereafter be related," and when you come to give an account of this counteraction, although you profess to have in your possession certain authentic papers which can prove it, instead of relating it from those papers, you take the relation of another man; and you content yourself with a reference to those papers to sustain that other man's account! A more disingenuous artifice I never heard of. You first say that an offence little short of high treason has been committed by Mr. Fox and myself, and that you can prove it from authentic documents, and then, instead of stating any offence grounded on, or even pretending to be in conformity with, those documents, you hunt into the pages of Mr. Burke, you make yourself heir to his resentments, print an invective against Mr. Fox of the violence of which Mr. Burke was himself ashamed, and, keeping the documents in your pocket, content yourself

with simply telling us that you have seen them! I know nothing equal to this in the history of political unfairness.

I might content myself, therefore, with taking no notice of a charge thus divested in the outset of every title to consideration, were it not that in alleging that you have evidence to substantiate it, you have given me an opportunity, the first I have yet had, of setting this matter at rest, by calling on you to disprove, *by* that evidence, the facts which I adduce in denial of the charge on my part.

That my going to St. Petersburg, or rather I should say to the continent, in the spring of 1791, was my own act, singly and simply, undertaken without any previous consultation with Mr. Fox, and without any communication with him, except that which passes between friends, who are in the daily habits of seeing each other, when one of them is about to absent himself for any time, I have already most fully declared. I have given likewise, unless greatly deceived in my notions of the public judgment, a satisfactory motive for that journey.

In effect, is there to be no way for an English gentleman, desirous of instructing himself in the foreign concerns of his country, to acquire that knowledge except through the medium of office? Must he consent to lose his youth in holy veneration of these mysteries, or must he begin his

career in public life by getting himself a place, in order to entitle him to inquire into them? I was bred in a very different school, my Lord, one in which office was considered as a trust for others, and, as such, was to be the reward of previous diligence, and not the incitement to adventure, or the charity-badge of nursling politicians. In that school, I soon found that to become any thing with the men with whom I was to act, business was to be studied; that it was not a thing to be picked up by the way, especially by one who had his way to make.

Foreign affairs, the line which I had very early chosen, require more than any other branch of the public interests to be learned at their source; but for this there must be opportunities; and above all, for a man who is not in employment, there must be that peculiar conjuncture in great transactions, when the notoriety of their directing principle puts him, in some respects, on even terms with those who are. Such was the state of Europe when I went abroad in 1791.

That I went to Russia "with the design of frustrating the object for which the king's ministers were authorised to treat," is an assertion which, after the explanation I have already given, it rests with you to prove. I have further to declare that, independent of the question then under discussion, and my desire to see to what new continental relations the settlement of it might give

rise, I had a strong inducement for going thither. Europe, it will be remembered, presented at that time a scene of peculiar interest to every man who seriously occupied himself with public affairs. Great matters were in agitation. It was not merely the trifle of a Tartarian town or two that was to be contended for. The French revolution was advancing; and while half the world was lost in wonder at the event, there were others, and I confess myself to have been of the number, who concerned themselves more with its effects on the interests of this country, and with the manner in which it was about to be dealt with by the princes of Europe. A confederacy of kings had already been talked of; the importance of Russia began to be felt; and from the personal character of its sovereign, every body saw that she must have a share, and that no small one, in the determination about to be taken. St. Petersburg, therefore, was likely to become the seat of the most important negotiations; and thither I resolved to proceed.

And here I have a fact to state, of which those who have busied themselves so much with my travels, are, I believe, ignorant, and which will of itself disprove the charge of my having been sent to counteract the King's minister. If such had been my purpose, I set out in my self-appointed diplomatic career with such a blunder as must have disqualified me for ever from that profession; for while Mr. Fawkener was hurrying

on the wings of the wind to the place of negotiation, I was quietly making my way to Vienna! It is true that I did not remain many days at Vienna, for the court, and most of the persons to whom I had letters, were absent; yet I staid long enough to become acquainted with Mr. Stratton, whose regard I do not believe that I have forfeited, to present my letters to the Countess Thun (whom it is honour to have to name), and to lay the foundation for friendships which have been my consolation in many trials, and of which I doubt whether the Holy Alliance itself, re-inforced even by your Lordship, could deprive me. From Vienna I proceeded to Warsaw; nor did I reach St. Petersburg until many days *after* Mr. Fawkener—how many, I cannot now recollect—and, of course, *after* that experienced diplomatist had made all the way he was likely to make with the Empress Catherine or her ministers.

But it will not be enough for your purpose to fix *me* with a blunder of this nature. What shall be said of Mr. Fox, who is said to have sent me on this errand? Would it not have been his object that I should get first to St. Petersburg? Was he likely to tell me to go round by Vienna, where I could have no possible business connected with Mr. Fawkener's mission,—for, let it be remembered, Austria had already made her separate peace? Or was this only a blind? A blind! and for what purpose? To conceal what? To conceal from

the King's ministers at St. Petersburg, *when I should get there*, that I was come to thwart them in a business which, by having recourse to this very blind, I had given them the opportunity of concluding? Was there ever such folly? My Lord, my Lord, your great pupil has been strangely *mystified* (allow me for once the word) in this business, but by Mr. Fox he was only opposed.

But I corresponded with Mr. Fox, and in cypher too! This part of the charge I cannot lightly dismiss, especially after the peculiarly invidious manner in which it appears in the statement from which you have copied it. From that it would seem that Mr. Fox had a regular cypher for carrying on sedition and treason all over Europe.

That I should promise Mr. Fox to write to him; that I should write to him on a subject so materially interesting to this country, and touching so closely the particular relations of continental policy to which he was anxious to see a return, is saying no more than that I was upon terms with him so to do. It is objected, however, that I did this in cypher, and on this ground a presumption has been raised that the purpose must have been criminal, or highly blamable, for which a cypher had been previously concerted between us.

Who writes in cypher, it is asked, except diplomats, or officers on service, or persons, in short, who are regularly employed by their governments? I answer, in the words of our great mo-

ralist and critic, when asked who could write Ossian, "Many men, many women, and many children." For, after all, what is a cypher but a sign? In what does the use of it differ from that of a foreign language before an obtrusive or an indiscreet listener, happily ignorant of that language? On this principle I am perfectly ready to avow my having concerted one with Mr. Fox. My letters were sure to be opened at St. Petersburg, and possibly might be opened at other post-offices. It was probable that I might have to mention the names of gentlemen, who, for even talking on political subjects with me, might be punished. If I had said in any letter to Mr. Fox, for instance, that any of the ministers of Catherine had disapproved her conduct, should I have been justifiable in doing so without making use of a cypher? The same with any other article of intelligence. To protect the persons who might give it me from the consequences of their kindness and confidence was surely the least I could do for them in return. I will go further. Supposing me to foresee the probability of being able to procure for Mr. Fox information necessary for him to know, and to know exclusively, in order to make use of it for the purpose of satisfying the House Commons, that the King's advisers were pursuing an erroneous system of foreign connexion; or, on the other hand, supposing me to foresee a possibility of discovering in the designs of Russia

herself that which, correctly stated to Mr. Fox, might produce an alteration in his own views as to the fitness of continuing to look forward to more intimate relations with her,—in either of these hypotheses, I ask, should I have acted with common prudence not to be prepared with the means of conveying my information to him with certainty, and without subjecting it to the inspection of Russian, or even of English post-masters? Cases of this sort might be put without number were it necessary. If, indeed, we had concerted a cypher with the Russian government for the purpose of furthering our own views against the ministry, then I admit we should have been guilty of a most suspicious and indiscreet proceeding, but where is the evidence, where is even the insinuation of our having done so?

With regard to the actual use of the cypher, at this distance of time, I must be cautious of stating any thing positive upon the subject, but I can safely declare, that I have no memory of my having cyphered any thing of consequence except a matter relating to the eventual conduct of another court, in a contingency, not at all likely then to happen.

On the charge, “*that I did actually frustrate the king’s minister in some of the objects of his negotiation,*” I must enter into more details, and refer more particularly to dates, than in my former letter I thought necessary.

What objects did I frustrate? It is now generally known that the object at first contended for by Mr. Pitt had been renounced by him *before* the negotiation of his minister at St. Petersburg had begun; and that it was so renounced *in consequence of the division in the House of Commons on the King's message of the 29th of March*. Dates in this case are every thing, and although from my having kept no papers about a transaction which appeared to me of such very little consequence I can furnish none except from public documents, your Lordship is in possession of them all, private as well as public, and will contradict me whenever I put a fact in its wrong place. Now you tell us yourself (p. 408), that Mr. Pitt formed this determination "so early, that by sending a second messenger he was able to prevent a strong memorial which he had despatched to Petersburg from being delivered to the Russian ministers." When did he send that second messenger? How many days after the 29th of March? The general belief at the time, a belief acted upon by the opposition in the arrangement of their parliamentary proceedings, was, that he was despatched between that day and the 12th of April, on which day Mr. Grey moved his resolutions against the armament; and in support of this presumption I find the following article in the historical part of Dodsley's Annual Register for that year:

"A messenger having been sent to the court

of Berlin to notify the delivery of the King's message to Parliament, he was, *after the first debate and division of the house, recalled by another messenger*, who proceeded forward with despatches stating the temper and tone of the House of Commons, and the British nation, on the subject of a war with Russia; and the probability that the plan concerted between the courts of London and Berlin, for the settlement of the North and East of Europe, *must be abandoned.*" (Ann. Reg. Vol. XXXIII. p. 260.)

Your Lordship's account of this part of the transaction is more than usually obscure. In the portion of your work dedicated to the first discussions on the Russian armament (namely from page 371 to 376 of the 2d vol.) and including the several motions of Mr. Grey, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Grenville, you say nothing about it. When afterwards you are preparing the reader for the history of its failure, you introduce (p. 409) Mr. Pitt's private letter to Mr. Ewart, dated the 24th of May, and from this you lead him to infer that, up to the 24th of May, Mr. Pitt persevered in his system, and that consequently there was time for the manœuvres of opposition to defeat him. Of an impression so produced you have no right to the benefit. Give us the dates, my Lord, in contradiction to the article I have quoted from the Annual Register, and disprove by them, if you can, the common rumour, then universally current,

as there are those alive who can testify, which fixed Mr. Pitt's renunciation of the objects of his armament to a week or ten days after the 29th of March. Until you do this, you will find it difficult to make out that I frustrated a negotiation, the purposes of which had been renounced more than a month before I left England.

It may be asked—why, then, was Mr. Fawkener sent? It is for your Lordship, and not for me, to answer that question. Mr. Burke once said of Mr. Pitt—(I believe it was on this very occasion) “that he fired the loudest stern-chasers of any man in Europe.” If his object was to retreat from this contest with as little sacrifice of dignity as possible, he could do no better than commission a person of Mr. Fawkener's character and abilities to smooth the way for him by obtaining, if possible, some civil acknowledgments from his opposing party, which might do for a paragraph in a manifesto or a speech. Your Lordship in mentioning Mr. Fawkener has thought proper to say, that he was treated by the Empress “with the utmost contempt.” The expression is an unbecoming one. Never was contempt associated with that gentleman. He was treated by the Empress, and by her ministers, with the highest consideration, which was on every account his due. He was not a man to remain at her court an hour on any other terms. What ulterior object Mr. Pitt may have had in view in sending him thither, it is

not for me to conjecture. There may have been very wise motives of a general nature for so doing. The immediate dispute over, matters of higher import may have succeeded. Mr. Pitt could not have been inattentive to what was going on among the great powers in regard to France. Whether, or no, he had instructed Mr. Fawcener to attend the conferences at Pillnitz, I cannot say; it is certain that he went thither.

To return to this charge. We see how it looks when compared with Mr. Pitt's proceedings immediately after the King's message. Let us now try it by the conduct of Catherine.

The terms on which Catherine II. proposed to make peace with the Turks, were communicated to the British government in May, 1790, and acceded to by the allies in July, 1791. The negotiation which intervened, including these two periods, was distinguished by a very remarkable feature, namely, that, from first to last, the empress never varied from the double pledge which she had given to Europe, first, not to demand more than the terms she originally asked; and, secondly, not to be satisfied with less. Contradict me here, my Lord, if you can. State one moment at which she varied from these conditions. If you cannot, what becomes of your charge? What name shall be given to your assertion, that had it not been for an extraordinary transaction, "*better terms* would have been obtained?" It is your duty

to demonstrate that between her Imperial Majesty's first declaration of May 26, 1790, and the final settlement in July, 1791, there was some period at which she hesitated; that there was a moment in which Mr. Pitt's high language, or his armament, produced in her Majesty a disposition, or something like it, towards a compliance with his demands. This is not all; you must not only prove that there was such a moment, but you must fix that moment to a period subsequent to my arrival at St. Petersburg. Even then, you will but have cleared the ground for laying a foundation for your charge; you will but have prepared the way for me to press you still closer, and to call for an explanation of the means by which I effected all this mischief; through what process, and by whose instrumentality at the Empress's court, I worked these wonders; how I encouraged her timidity; how I wooed her reluctant ambition to resume its pretensions and its tone; through "what conjuration, and what mighty magic," I won her heart back from Mr. Pitt, and blasted the promise of their growing loves.

That during my residence at her court and capital, I should avail myself of the advantages afforded me for frequenting the distinguished persons, from whose intercourse and experience in business I was likely to obtain the information I was seeking, seems to me no less natural than ordering my post-horses to take me thither.

That in my conversations with those persons I should undisguisedly avow my opinions as to the wisdom of that course which the King's advisers were adopting, subject always to the discretion and reserve due to the existing engagements of my country with other powers, I can by no means consider blameable. Had I, indeed, obtained any knowledge of Mr. Pitt's secret designs, or of his means for giving effect to his menaces, and had revealed them to the Russian government, I should have been guilty, undoubtedly, of a most criminal act; but of my having been so guilty, I have never yet heard the insinuation.

That I should have deprecated, when opportunity served, a quarrel about straws; that I should have endeavoured to impress on the minds of considerable men at that court, friendly as they then were in the highest degree to British connexion, the difference between the casual peevishness of office, and a deep, inveterate, national alienation, is a conduct in which I could perceive no impropriety at the time, and which I am now fully prepared to defend.

That by encouraging the hope of a return to more friendly relations, I was mainly counteracting the views of France, which, ever since the American war, had been directed to gain the ascendancy at the court of St. Petersburg, and to inflame into animosity every slight cause of difference between that court and Great Britain,

was, I confess, no objection with me then; and even now seems to me so little like high treason, that, unless better advised, I should be much tempted, under similar circumstances, to act again in the same manner.

But what effect, I pray, could all this have on the negotiation? here is the point. Whatever may have been the nature of my conversations, I ask whether there had appeared the least symptom of obtaining "better terms," *previously* to my having held them? or whether the allied ministers, who opened the negotiation (as it is ridiculously called) with a joint memorial on the 29th of June, had flattered themselves with a favourable result, at any one moment, *previously* to their presenting this memorial? Mr. Fawkener arrived at St. Petersburg on the 24th of May. Was this interval lost by him? Had he not, on the contrary, already ascertained the utter hopelessness of any attempt to shake the Empress's determination? Read what he says himself in this very memorial:

"If it be true that the regular conferences were not begun till this day, it is equally so that the ministers of her Imperial Majesty *have long been made acquainted by confidential conversations, and by other means, with the propositions for peace, which were about to be brought forward. It is, therefore, to be presumed that her Imperial Majesty's resolution, on this important business, is in some degree formed, if not absolutely settled.*"

And on this presumption the allies acted. They took a step perfectly new in the history of diplomacy; they had three proposals to make, each distinct in its kind, and they included them all in the same memorial*.

Against these facts and dates what have you to show?

Will you say that Mr Pitt had *not* renounced his object before he sent Mr. Fawkener, and consequently before the "extraordinary transaction" to which you have ascribed its defeat, could, by possibility, have taken effect?

Will you say that there was any moment at which the Empress of Russia testified a disposition to relax in her demands?

And will you *now* pretend that my conversations, arriving, as I did, many days *after* Mr. Fawkener, had the slightest effect on her Imperial Majesty's determination?

Yet, to the affirmative of these three facts, you, as a historian, are pledged; and it is not only Mr. Burke's charge which you are to prove, you are pledged likewise to make good your own assertion on this point, and to justify your comment upon it. You say "Mr. Fox entertained a confident hope that he should upset Mr. Pitt's administration, provided the Empress of Russia could be prevailed upon to

* Vide Memorial of Messrs. Whitworth, Fawkener, and Goltz, dated St. Petersburg, June 29, 1791.

persevere in her demand. *That point he accomplished without any difficulty.*” Did he so? Tell us in what manner, and prove it. “This is an account,” you say, “the accuracy of which I find attested by authentic documents among Mr. Pitt’s correspondence.” By the word “accuracy,” I suppose you mean truth. Prove it, then, from **that** correspondence. Let us have no surmises or side attacks. Prove that any one object in dispute with Russia was either counteracted or suspended for one instant by Mr. Fox, except through the medium of parliament. If you cannot do this, “**lie upon your justice!**”

The fact is, that Mr. Fawkener’s embassy was thwarted in nothing. The case was the very reverse. He succeeded in all he pressed for. Looking over the accounts of this matter laid before parliament, I find a trifling demand (which struck me, I remember, when I first heard it, as more likely to be disadvantageous to the Turks than to the Empress, if persisted in), namely, that the navigation of the boundary river of the two empires should be free. This point he actually gained! and, as it was the only one he pressed for, so far from a negotiation *thwarted*, his may be numbered, as far as it went, among the most successful efforts of diplomacy ever undertaken!

I come now to that part of the charge against Mr. Fox, on which, as grounded on your own consciousness in one respect, and your immediate

means of observation in another, it would be presumed that you could not but be correct. It relates to his suffering the imputation of a high criminal misdemeanour to rest upon him unrepelled; and to his confessing by his silence that, in the words of your Lordship, "he carried his party principles" to the length of committing it, "*in the confident hope that he should upset Mr. Pitt's administration.*"

You have written as follows :

"I am not aware that any attempt was ever made by Mr. Fox, or his friends, *to controvert these facts, or to invalidate this reasoning.*"

This statement is cautiously worded, and the matter of it artfully put. I will endeavour to expose the fallacy of what it directly asserts, and if I cannot convict its author of an absolute departure from truth, I can shew at least his negligence on ^{the} point requiring the most scrupulous attention to justice.

If the historian himself was not aware of these things, who else was likely to be so? This is the question which, some fifty years hence, if your work shall ever gladden so remote a period, the reader of it will naturally ask; and his inference from what you have asserted as naturally will be, that the rumours, never having been contradicted to the knowledge of so unimpeachable a living witness as your lordship, were admitted to be true *by the parties affected by them.* Against an

inference so positively false, against three such notorious errors of fact, (to say no more) as those which it includes, all of which are supported by the assurance of your not being "aware" of any thing to the contrary, it is high time for me to protest, in the name of Truth and Heaven!

Certainly I will not pretend to contradict the first part of your Lordship's assertion. I will not say that you *were* aware that Mr. Fox or his friends *had* controverted these facts, or invalidated this reasoning. But of one point, and that the most important one in the charge you bring against him, I know that you are most fully aware, and that is, that no opportunity was ever afforded to Mr. Fox to controvert these, or any other facts relative to this business, in the only manner, and in the only place in which his contradiction could avail him, or where it could be satisfactory to the public.

A second matter of which you must also be aware is, that it was Mr. Pitt himself who made it impossible that he should so controvert them. In your report of Mr. Pitt's speech, (p. 442) you represent him to have said distinctly, that better terms might have been obtained had it not been for certain circumstances of notoriety, "*which might, perhaps, give rise to a more serious discussion at another time.*" No man is absurd enough to maintain that a half threat of this nature, an indictment in a parenthesis, called for more from

Mr. Fox than the expression of a readiness to meet it. But on the other hand, you will not yourself deny that there was enough in the notice to reduce him to absolute silence, had he been ever so much inclined to enter into any discussion on the prevailing rumours.

But there is a third point—one absolutely decisive of the credit of your relation in this case, of which it was your duty to make yourself aware before you hazarded the sweeping words which I have copied from your book, and of which, considering the very laudable zeal which carried you so often to the House of Commons, you will not easily persuade the world that you were not aware—and that is, Mr. Fox's denial of the charge, and challenge of inquiry, in this very debate. Not to repeat the passage in my former letter, I ask, how is it that you have forgotten a fact so important? or why have you suppressed it? Why, from first to last, in your account of the proceeding, have you not said one word of Mr. Fox's reply to Mr. Dundas? That minister in his speech had observed, rather sarcastically, *that Mr. Fox took great pains to procure accurate intelligence*; and to this Mr. Fox replied, "That the rumours to which he had alluded had reached him in London, and were matter of notoriety. *It was therefore proper to inquire whether or not they were true.* With respect to taking pains to obtain accurate information, if he, or any man, took pains

to inform himself on subjects in which the interests of his country were materially concerned, *were he even to go abroad for the express purpose of obtaining such a knowledge of the dispositions and intentions of foreign courts as might enable him to give useful advice at home, he would be entitled to thanks instead of blame.*"

What say you to this, my Lord? Here is the menace of an inquiry, met by a demand for it. Here is the punishment impliedly denounced against myself, met by Mr. Fox with a public declaration that I deserved thanks. Did this discover any thing like confession of a crime, or acquiescence under an imputation? And why have you suppressed all this? Do you mean to say that you forgot it? Then what becomes of the value of your work as a history? Who will believe your other facts? Or will you try the subterfuge, forsooth, of alleging that all you meant to say was, that the thing of which you were "not aware," was the denial of the particular facts copied by you from Mr. Burke? Even that will not avail you, for (as I have already observed) all and each of the rumours which Mr. Burke the year afterwards worked up into a charge, existed in full force at the meeting of parliament, when Mr. Fox hurled his defiance in the teeth of the ministry. Mr. Burke added nothing to what he found. In relating, therefore, as you do, that the transaction "never was made

the subject of formal inquiry, or of actual discussion in parliament," your duty as a historian demanded the addition of words to this effect—" although, in justice to Mr. Fox, it must be admitted that when the matter was first mentioned, he declared that, in consequence of the rumours afloat, it ought to be inquired into." But according to your account as it now stands, it would appear that Mr. Fox suffered a very serious menace on the part of Mr. Pitt to pass him without notice; which is, as I have shewn, directly contrary to truth; which is contrary to what the uncharitable world will believe you knew to be the truth, and to what all the world, charitable and uncharitable, will agree, you might and ought to have known to be the truth, before you undertook to write the history of your own times.

And now, having restored the material fact omitted in your statement of this case, namely, Mr. Fox's distinct invitation to inquiry, I should be glad to know what he could do more? Mr. Pitt, you say, made a sort of menace that on a future day he would bring it on. Was not this the very reason why Mr. Fox could enter into no explanation until that day should come? For against *what* could he defend himself except against a charge regularly made? *Where* could he defend himself except in the House of Commons? *When*, except at a time the choice of which lay with his accuser, and not with himself?

Seriously, do you think that he was so completely thrown on the defensive by the sneer of Mr. Dundas, as to make it necessary for him instantly to begin denying facts which he could know only by report, and answering arguments which he would first have had to invent? Why was he to accuse himself? Why was he to deviate from the old road of the law—the shortest always, as well as the surest way to what is right?

But no inquiry took place, you say: and why did it not? Mr. Fox not only invited but provoked one. Ten days after this menace he supported a motion to censure the ministers in a speech full of the bitterest invective, as well as of the most vigorous argument he ever delivered. What said Mr. Pitt in answer? How did he redeem his pledge of inquiry? There is not a word about it in his speech from beginning to end. Even your Lordship is content to accept “an allusion” in its stead. “His object,” you make him to say, “might have been secured, *had it not been for the division and opposition existing in this kingdom, and for the other proceeding to which he had on a former occasion alluded.*”

You well know that not only no inquiry into this matter was ever instituted in the House of Commons, but that no opportunity, whether in argument, or by spirited attack, or by any of those means in use with dexterous debaters to call forth their antagonists, was ever given to Mr. Fox to

enter upon it. Mr. Pitt's threatened investigation seemed to be the signal for dropping the subject every where. Even rumour was dumb. *Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes*; and the whole story appeared to be consigned to everlasting oblivion. Now, really, it is too much to lay the blame of this silence on Mr. Fox. What! when all was ready; the charge prepared; the court sitting; the criminal at the bar, under all the disadvantage of a jury devoted to his adversaries; shall his guilt be inferred, not from his own refusal to plead, but from the refusal of his accuser to arraign? Yet to this preposterous conclusion must he be reduced who blames Mr. Fox for not "contradicting the facts," and for not "invalidating the reasoning" on which you seem so delighted to expatiate.

And now, my Lord, will you continue your attempt to mislead posterity into an inference of Mr. Fox's guilt from his silence? After I have brought all these points within your recollection, will you say, that when you wrote this part of your history you were really—God help you!—aware of nothing but the rumours, and the charge, and the menace of Mr. Pitt, and the acquiescence and endurance of Mr. Fox? Will you declare this *directly*? You cannot. But have you not said as much *impliedly*? I am in the judgment of every reader. Or, rather, will you give up the point as to the House of Commons, and turn for assistance to Mr. Burke? Will you say that in *his* charges,

at least, there was a degree of gravity, of distinctness, and of presumptive truth sufficient to require an answer, or some sort of explanation from Mr. Fox, or his friends?

To such an objection what I have stated in my former letter is at once an answer. Little indeed is wanting to justify Mr. Fox's neglect of that strange performance, consisting of 54 articles of accusation against him for various parts of his political conduct; and it is only to show the spirit and character of that into which its first article is transplanted that I bestow some consideration upon it in this place. The work, we all know, was surreptitiously copied and carried to a printer in February, 1797. It was written by Mr. Burke in 1793, and secretly communicated by him to the Duke of Portland on his own separation from Mr. Fox. It was written in anger, the immediate cause of which was a resolution of the Whig Club, agreed to, among other distinguished members of that club, by the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam. The charges are, many of them, such as would provoke a smile, could we get rid of the sadness produced by such an exhibition of ruin in a vast and splendid mind. Was it, I pray, to a man who could gravely bring forward against an English senator, as a criminal offence, a charge that, in censuring an important act of administration, he had censured it in terms of asperity, in the presence of Lord Titchfield and Lord Edward

Bentinck *—was it in answer to such an accuser, become such (as we have seen) against his own will, and then hastening to the grave, that Mr. Fox was to sit down and write an exculpation of himself against rumours connected with the journey of one of his friends to St. Petersburg? and this too after Mr. Pitt himself had declined his challenge in the House of Commons to inquire into the truth of those very rumours?

Of the value of this article of charge, thus copied and adopted by your Lordship, and made the ground for one of the most calumnious imputations ever invented against a public man, we are enabled further to judge from the friends of Mr. Burke himself. In the authentic edition of the "Two Letters on the Conduct of our Domestic Parties," published by Rivington after Mr. Burke's death, in 1797, the first of which contains these 54 articles of criminatory matter against Mr. Fox, it is said by the editors in their preface, that "had it been possible to have let the paper sleep in total silence, the friends of the author might have hesitated to give a genuine edition; but no man in the least acquainted with the literary history of this country, or even of our own times, could for a moment entertain any such hope." They then, touched, one would almost think, with the fire of prophecy, and as if seeing

* Vide article 6.

in the distant horizon a little, black, sulphureous speck, which was to swell out in after days into “MEMOIRS, BY A BISHOP, OF THE LIFE OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT,” go on to remark, that “after a lapse of years, sometimes *inquisitive malice*, sometimes *officious zeal*, in this instance the cold pedantry of poring curiosity, in that case *the imaginary triumph of discovering some hidden value in things which others had passed over with neglect*, have brought again to light productions which had dropped without a name from the press, which had never excited general attention, and which the mature judgment of the writers had wished for ever to abandon.” This is their justification (a sufficient one, I admit,) for publishing the work itself in a less mutilated form; but even in doing this they assure us, that “The paper itself was of the most private kind. It was not intended to come *at any time*, and *under any circumstances*, to the view of the public. Mr. Burke wrote it as his justification to the two noble heads of his party. *He was sensible that in its style it was not wholly free from the influence of resentment*; he knew that the sharpness of his first impressions was visible on it, *but he knew also to whom it was to be confided*. Nor was the paper to be seen *by them* till a moment *when it could not operate to the injury of any man*.” In confirmation of their own sentiments on this work, they print

an extract from a letter of Mr. Burke himself, by which it appears that he had done all in his power “to suppress the publication;” and in which he owns, that “It was written in a tone of indignation in consequence of the resolutions of the Whig Club*.”

If such be their own account of the history of this charge against Mr. Fox, what estimation was Mr. Fox himself to form of it, and particularly after learning from the same justificatory preface the grounds on which Mr. Burke conceived himself authorized to make it.

“Towards the close of the year 1791,” they say, “*a private friend of Mr. Burke’s, connected with ministry*, first made him acquainted with the residence of Mr. Adair at the court of St. Petersburg. He was sincerely distressed at the intelligence which he received respecting Mr. Adair. *He had no opportunity of checking the account which he had received; but when the spurious edition of his private memorial to the Duke of Portland came*

* The following is the offensive resolution which excited Mr. Burke’s anger. At a distance of thirty years what a picture do most human passions exhibit!

“That the Whig Club think it their duty at this extraordinary juncture to assure the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, that all the arts of misrepresentation which have been so industriously used of late for the purpose of calumniating him, have had no other effect upon them than that of confirming, strengthening, and increasing their attachment to him.”

forth, he watched the public prints with some attention, looking for an explanation, *which was promised*. Had any been given which might have satisfied his mind, it is believed that he meant to have corrected any error of fact."

Of this alleged "promise" hereafter; and, for the present, such thanks as may be due from Mr. Fox and myself for the very gracious assurance of a possible intention in Mr. Burke to rectify any error *of fact* into which he might have been betrayed. In the mean time, let us look a little into dates and circumstances, in order duly to appreciate the above passage. It was towards the end of 1791, that Mr. Burke was first informed of my residence (as my two months' visit is called) at St. Petersburg, by "*a friend of his connected with ministry.*" First, how came he to hold communication with ministry in 1791, while he was acting in a party against them? He had not finally separated from that party until the end of the session of 1793. He had not broken with Mr. Fox himself at the very moment when he was thus receiving confidentially from "*a friend in the ministry*" communications against him of a criminatory nature. I pass over this,—but I may be allowed to ask, since Mr. Burke held intercourse with both, why he never inquired of Mr. Fox himself whether there was any foundation for the prevailing rumours? It is said that "he

had no opportunity of checking the account he had received ;” that may be true in 1797, but in 1791 he had opportunities every day of checking it by asking explanations either of Mr. Fox or of myself. He might even have consulted the Duke of Portland ; for although I had never conversed with his Grace on a matter which appeared to me so trifling, I was just then on the very best terms with him. I was at this very time the channel of confidential communication between the Duke and Mr. Fox respecting the differences which then began to show themselves in the Whig party, and with regard to the mode of healing those differences. I had no secrets from the Duke of Portland.

It is stated that the circumstance (my residence at St. Petersburg) distressed Mr. Burke. If so, why did he continue distressed ? Why did he remain, himself under a painful impression, and suffer “ a man for whom he still cherished the memory of past friendship,” to remain under an injurious imputation, each caused by a story brought him by “ a friend in the ministry ?” Yet so, alas ! it was. Mr. Fox had not approved his book on the French Revolution ; and then began that unhappy tendency in his mind to put Mr. Fox on the defensive in all questions of state conduct, to consider as existing against him a strong presumption of guilt, capable of no explanation, and only to be

cured or expiated by such a repentance as should include the full, unqualified retraction and recantation of his principles, and of his whole plan of conduct.

I can account in no other manner for Mr. Burke's total silence upon this subject during a period when, by a single question in any of the three quarters I have mentioned, he might have been as fully and as circumstantially informed as he could desire, of my journey, of its character, and of every particle belonging to it. But whether this, or any other motive, induced him to decline looking for information concerning a circumstance deemed by him of so criminatory a nature against his former friend, any where except among that former friend's enemies,—what was there to induce Mr. Fox, just risen, I may say, from the seat from whence he had defied those very enemies to inquire into this very charge, to enter into any further defence, or into any apology or explanation of his conduct whatsoever?

I now ask the same question for myself. You have seen the full, the positive, and the clear denial I gave to this charge immediately on the appearance of the surreptitious pamphlet. I then said, that “if any credit should appear to be given to it in quarters where I wished to stand well, or if any general impression on the public mind should require it, or if any better sentiment than

curiosity could be gratified by my doing it, I was ready without delay to enter upon my justification *." No such demand was made upon me.

* The following is the letter already referred to :

To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.

SIR,

The advertisement of Mr. Rivington, whereby he declares that the pretended letter from Mr. Burke to the Duke of Portland is not printed from any copy in his Grace's possession, entitles me to assume, as well as it induces me to hope, that the false and defamatory libel which has appeared in that letter against myself never was written by Mr. Burke to the Noble Duke.

There are, however, some circumstances attending this libel, both with regard to what it states relative to my journey to St. Petersburg in 1791, and to its rapid circulation before an injunction could be obtained from the Court of Chancery to suppress it, which place me in a very embarrassing situation. Several thousand copies of a charge against Mr. Fox and myself, of "a high treasonable misdemeanour," have found their way into the world under the sanction of Mr. Burke's authority and name. The disavowal of Mr. Burke's bookseller of its being printed from a copy in the Duke of Portland's possession, as far as it goes, is satisfactory. For myself, too, as I have already said, I am entitled to put, and actually do put, yet a more large and liberal construction upon that disavowal; conceiving it to mean, that Mr. Burke never stated to the Duke of Portland any circumstance in my journey to St. Petersburg in any way injurious to Mr. Fox. But I am afraid we live in times not quite so charitable, either to that great man or to myself, as I am truly disposed to be towards Mr. Burke. I have heard of this charge before, but always from quarters below my notice.

Not a question was asked by any man. Not a word from any member of parliament! Not a paragraph from your Lordship! The public impression was unfavourable only to him who had been found capable of accrediting such a charge during the continuance of amicable intercourse with many

Paragraphs I have seen in plenty; some bitter, some that fain would be pleasant. To be angry with the one sort, indeed, Sir, was not easier for me than to laugh at the other. Writers so contemptible both in character and ability never moved me to reply, satisfied as I was with reflecting that none of his Majesty's ministers, although fairly invited to the discussion, have ever ventured to say one word about it in the presence of Mr. Fox.

This hitherto has been my way, Sir, of treating a subject once more brought before the public in the very extraordinary manner it has just witnessed. It is for others to adjust the moral precedence between the turpitude of the fraud, and the mendacious treachery of the accusation; but how far I am still at liberty, in justice both to Mr. Fox and myself, to continue silent since the partial, but very extensive, circulation of this pretended letter, and under all the circumstances of the case, as it now stands, is more than I can immediately determine. I must be governed by the degree of credit annexed to the charge in quarters where I wish to stand well, and to its general impression upon the public mind. If any better sentiment than curiosity can be gratified by my justification, I am ready to enter upon it without delay. It is enough for me in the mean time to affirm that the charge is false.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

ROBERT ADAIR.

Upper Grosvenor-street.

February 14, 1797.

individuals of his party, and of sending it to the head of that party under an injunction, as it appeared, which precluded all explanation in that quarter either from Mr. Fox or myself.

It is said, in the preface to which I have referred, that an explanation "was promised." That none was promised by *me*, except in a case which never happened, my letter demonstrates. But if Mr. Burke was so anxious for one, why did he not ask it of me? If my general denial was not satisfactory, nothing was easier for him than to call for an explanation of any of the facts which his charge included. To what facts, other than those which I had already denied, his charge was meant to extend itself, I had not the means of guessing. As it stood, and as it now stands, I am accused of going to St. Petersburg, as Mr. Fox's representative, for a criminal purpose. I had denied all that was capable of denial in this charge, namely, the purpose; for it never could be put upon me either to deny my having gone to St. Petersburg, or to controvert the King's exclusive prerogative to negotiate with foreign powers. As to having been the bearer of assurances from the Opposition that, provided the Empress of Russia would persist in her demands, they would support her—independent of the self-evident inutility of an embassy for such a purpose, Mr. Burke had himself acquitted me of it. Nay, he makes the not having consulted his party on this point a chief branch of

the charge itself against Mr. Fox. It, therefore, Mr. Burke wished for any details, he had only to apply to me for them. The channel was open to him in 1791, in 1793, and so late as 1796. It happened, that, from circumstances needless here to particularize, I had preserved my old footing with Mr. Burke longer than most of my political friends. His letter to the Duke of Bedford, in 1796, broke, indeed, the last chord that attached me to him; but even then, and when I thought it necessary, in the name of the surviving near connexions of Lord Keppel, to vindicate them from the charge of deserting the principles of that illustrious person, I spoke of Mr. Burke with tenderness and respect, and I received his acknowledgements for having done so, in a letter written to me under his directions by Doctor Lawrence. Why, then, when through the fraud of a third person Mr. Burke had *unwillingly* (I am ready to believe) become my accuser; and when in denying the accusation (which I was bound to do) I had brought forward every extenuating circumstance in his favour suggested to me by the treachery which had forced him into that character—why could not Mr. Burke, instead of watching the public papers for a further denial, have specified to me through Dr. Lawrence some one point on which he required to be further satisfied? A word from him would have brought out the simple tale I have already told. He would then have seen that my journey

to St. Petersburg was my own act; and though late, he would have been relieved from any impressions which might have remained with him on that subject, either injurious to Mr. Fox or painful to himself.

If, then, there was so little in Mr. Burke's facts against which I had occasion to arm myself, what was I to do with his reasoning?—What *was* this reasoning? a set of truisms nobody thought of contesting with him, deriving importance only from their authoritative tone and form, taken probably from the rough draft of some unused article of an old impeachment, and fitted to present purposes. Only that it would not have been decorous to disturb the dying hours of a great man, how easily might I have held up to him a mirror in which he would have seen the monstrous absurdity of his accusation! Following his own precedent, and loading my counter-charge of treason with all its appropriate technicalities, I might have set forth—“That whereas in the year 1779, his Majesty was engaged in suppressing a rebellion which had broken out among his subjects in America against his crown and dignity, and the lawful authority of Parliament, and was then likewise involved in a war with France and Spain for the defence of his realms.—And whereas his said rebellious subjects had, with a view still further to endanger his crown, and reduce these kingdoms under the power of a foreign enemy, entered into

a treaty of defensive alliance with the States of Holland, his Majesty's old and faithful Protestant allies.—And whereas a copy of the said treasonable act was found upon the person of President Henry Lawrens, about that time made prisoner by one of his Majesty's ships of war while on his voyage to the States General, with intent to sign and give effect to the purposes of the said treaty.—And whereas, he the aforesaid Henry Lawrens was brought to London and committed to the Tower, there to abide the punishment due to this and his other treasons.—Nevertheless, the said Edmund Burke, against his duty and allegiance to our Sovereign Lord the King, *and without the knowledge or participation of any one member of the House of Commons, with whom he was bound on every party principle in matters of delicacy and importance confidentially to communicate*, did plot and contrive to visit, and did actually visit, him the said Henry Lawrens in his prison, in order to comfort and assist him in his said rebellion and treason.

“ And further, that the said Edmund Burke did in full Parliament call the said Henry Lawrens ‘ a worthy, enlightened, and respectable character,’ thereby approving and justifying all his said treason and rebellion.

“ And further, that the said Edmund Burke boasted of, and read from his seat in Parliament, his correspondence with Dr. Franklin, then one

of the chief rebels carrying on the war against his Majesty in America," &c. &c. &c.

What would have been Mr. Burke's reply to such stuff as this? Why nothing that would not have been an answer to his own charge against Mr. Fox and myself.

The truth is, and from the internal evidence of his whole letter it is manifest, that in laying it before the Duke of Portland Mr. Burke had no further intention than that of persuading his Grace and his connexions to separate from Mr. Fox, and to break up the Whig party, preparatory to a coalition with Mr. Pitt in the war against France. He hoped that by engaging them to take office, they would come in with such a preponderating strength, that, aided by the natural wishes of the Sovereign himself, they would soon be able to force Mr. Pitt's hand, and make the war which he had entered into on no distinct, or in Mr. Burke's mind, sufficiently specified principle, a war for the direct and declared purpose of restoring the old monarchy of France. The wide diversities of opinion which prevailed at that time among some of the oldest members of the Rockingham party as to the mode of considering, and of dealing with, the French Revolution, gave to Mr. Burke, who had differed from Mr. Fox on this question in all its bearings, an opportunity, of which I will not pretend to say that he did not honestly think it his duty to avail himself, of

effecting that purpose; and from this he never desisted, whether within Parliament or without, whether by open or by secret methods, until he had succeeded. The Duke of Portland felt less than others of his noble colleagues, the necessity of a union with Mr. Pitt, and to him, therefore, Mr. Burke addressed his letter, with a view to overcoming the obstacle to such a union which still subsisted in 1793 in the yet undissolved connexion with Mr. Fox: and the violent character of the paper itself is easily accounted for by that unhappy perversion of temper which I have noticed before, and which after their first breach, made him consider all methods fair and justifiable to discredit the character, and to pull down the power of Mr. Fox.

All the above motives, and let me add, the very little interest excited by this mass of invective, kept me silent in 1797, and Mr. Burke's death in the same year closed, I had hoped, this question upon us for ever.

In effect the story died away. Greater wonders were at hand. Mr. Addington became prime minister, and made peace with the one-and-indivisible French Republic. Then came a new war, followed by the discomfiture of another confederacy, and the death of Mr. Pitt. Amidst such mighty interests my journey to St. Petersburg naturally remained in oblivion; and when to the administration of Mr. Pitt succeeded that of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, it found, if I mistake not,

in your Lordship a well-wisher far too discreet to remind the foreign secretary of his former transgressions, or to censure him for appointing his confederate, my unworthy self, to represent his Majesty's government at the court of Vienna.— And yet your Lordship must have known, even from Mr. Pitt's correspondence, what was at that period the nature of the trust committed to me, and the more than usual latitude of discretion which it required. If your tale of me be true, you must have felt that I was likely to abuse that discretion—that I was placed in a dangerous post—that I ought forthwith to be removed to some other (if allowed to occupy any) and not be suffered, under the cover of an official character, to lay the ground for future treasonable intercourse, of a still worse description than even that which the same correspondence, as you pretend, was enabling you to detect. Yet you said nothing of this to your country, which no doubt you dearly loved!—Nothing to the ministry, to whose success and general government you were not unfriendly! But it seems you were not idle all this while.— You were at work in your own way, though out of sight. Little, indeed, did we guess what you were about—little could Mr. Fox imagine, while he was congratulating himself on your silence at least, if not on your support, that you had found out and were sitting snug on the old forsaken nest, to strut forth after an incubation of fifteen years at the head of your own sickly brood of

constructive treasons, and vex, with your querulous cackle, the quiet of the dead and the patience of the living.

I was abroad during the whole of this period. The death of Mr. Fox, and the dismissal soon afterwards of the administration he had formed with Lord Grenville, revived party animosities to a degree scarcely ever exceeded in this country; and I have been informed that during the warm discussions of the session of 1808, the anecdote of my Petersburg embassy was again brought up. There was nothing, however, either in the manner, or in the success of its revival, which gave me the slightest inclination to take it seriously. The reply of Lord Holland to some allusions in the House of Lords by the Earl of Mulgrave, does not appear to have been followed by a repetition of them; and Mr. Canning, if he meant me any injury (which I am confident he never did) by some similar observations in the House of Commons, had repaired it, even before I could have heard of them, by his actions, in a manner at once the most effectual as well as to myself the most flattering. But the circumstance which I confess gratified me more than any other on that occasion, was the conduct of Dr. Lawrence. The breach between our respective chiefs had separated us for some years. His own, had accused me of a crime next to treason; yet it was

from his truth, his justice, and his honour, that I was now to receive my defence from this very charge*. I pay this tribute to his memory with the pride of a grateful heart.

And now, my Lord, I have gone through most of the points connected with your accusation, and the reasons which rendered any vindication from it needless on my part. I had friends, however, in common with Mr. Fox, who were not so patient. Your Lordship has declared, that you are not aware that the facts in it were ever denied, or the reasoning controverted. If you mean by this that they were not contradicted by authority, that is, by the parties attacked, I have already exposed your forgetfulness of the fact.—If you meant that they were not controverted by others, I have already recalled your recollection to the biographical notices of Mr. Fox by Dr. Parr.—Why have you not remarked on these?—That you should have overlooked me, I can concede to the zeal of the historian—but I am yet to learn from what superior eminence of public virtue your Lordship is entitled to look down upon Dr. Parr.

In 1809, Dr. Parr published a reply to the “Account,” which you have followed and made your own. He did this without any concert or communication with me; for long and intimately

* Vid. Cobbett's Parl. Debates, Vol. X. p. 615.

as I have known him, he never asked me a question upon the subject in his life. I copy the passage from his work :—

“ I am not enough acquainted with the circumstances of the transaction, either to justify or to condemn the whole of it. *Scelus illud vocat Tubero* ; and Tubero, as we once heard from many quarters, is ‘ an honourable man.’ But the conduct of the accuser leads me to suspect that the accusation is at once vague and exaggerated.

“ Much as may be said about the awful secrets of cabinets, and the profound contrivances of statesmen, men of reading and observation will sometimes be tempted to apply to them what a great politician once told us of certain “ *Legum Carmina. Dum erant occulta, necessario ab eis, qui ea tenebant, petebantur ; postea vero pervulgata, atque in manibus jactata et excussa, inanissima prudentie reperta sunt, fraudis autem et stultitiæ plenissima* *.” Folly will not be hastily imputed to Mr. Fox ;— but his well-wishers will be anxious to inquire what are the grounds upon which Mr. Burke ventured to charge him with the worst kind of fraud. I remember that about the time when Mr. Adair went to Russia, the storm of war which had been gathering, passed over ;—and I farther remember, that this event did not produce any loud complaints that the country had incurred any loss of

* Vid. Cicero’s speech for Muræna, par. 6.

its honour or its security. Mr. Burke, indeed, tells us in 1797 that Mr. Adair ‘ had frustrated the King’s minister in some of the objects of his negotiation ;’—but he does not tell us that the objects themselves were very salutary or very important. The means of frustrating them he pronounces unconstitutional and illegal.—But how does he know it?—or, at least, how has he proved it if he knew it? His tenderness to Mr. Fox was not always such as to make him very thrifty in imparting this kind of knowledge to other men. If he could have proved it, the anxiety which he professed to feel for his king and country, and the indignation which he avowed against their foes, whether foreign or domestic, were such, that he would have been justified to himself and to the world in producing the whole store of his proofs. In an exuberance of zeal, similar to that he upon a well-known occasion had formerly manifested for impeachment,

‘ Did he appeal our friend on secret malice,
Or worthily, as a good subject should,
On some known ground of treachery in him?’

“ If, to adopt the language of Mr. Burke in another passage, ‘ the intentions of Mr. Adair were pure,’ was Mr. Adair under an error so great as to imagine, that his end being the attainment of peace, would consecrate unconstitutional, and even unlawful means? Did Mr. Fox, after the

return of Mr. Adair, communicate to his friends the measure he is said to have taken without their knowledge? Did he leave them satisfied or dissatisfied with the reasons he assigned for taking it? Did they view his conduct in the same light in which Mr. Burke holds it up to public reprobation? Did Mr. Adair give to the Russian court any false or any dangerous information about the resources of the government, or the temper of the people? Had he discovered the secret designs of the English cabinet, and after discovering, did he betray more of them than a man quite unconnected with the members of administration, and honestly adverse to their measures, had a moral or even legal right to reveal? Did he encourage the court of Petersburg to urge new and unjust demands, or furnish them with new and mischievous reasons to enforce those upon which they had previously insisted? Did he only, as a private individual, point out in conversation to the ministers of Russia such views of the subject in dispute as made peace more desirable to them than war? Did he by mere suggestions turn their attention towards conciliatory and reasonable terms, which the pride or the anger of the contending parties had caused them to overlook, and which, if proposed by one of them, were likely to be adopted by the other after temperate and immediate discussions between the courts of St. Petersburg and St. James's? Did

he presume to answer for the parliamentary support of that very party, with whom Mr. Fox had studiously avoided all direct and even indirect communication upon the subject? Or, did he merely communicate the sentiments and wishes of himself and a few other individuals? Was he contented with mentioning Mr. Fox's name, and producing his cypher for something which the accuser of Mr. Fox has not explained by any circumstantial detail whatsoever, nor by any other specific property than that, in Mr. Burke's opinion, the deed was almost treason, nor by any other visible effect, than that it frustrated some unknown objects which the King's ambassador was endeavouring to attain?

“ The fact, of whatever kind it may have been, is said to have come within the knowledge of administration. But foul as may have been the channel through which intelligence was conveyed to them, could that circumstance diminish the illegality of the transaction? Or, did the intelligence itself throw such doubts upon the whole, that ministers with all the advantages of official situation, and all the suggestions of crown lawyers, were at a loss to find any one political expedient for turning it to any one political account?

“ If for prudential or any other reasons, they did not choose to make the offenders amenable to law, would they have been tardy to assist in lowering the parliamentary and the popular importance of

a man who had not only disappointed them in Russia, but with a charge of treason hanging over his head, had ventured to oppose them about the affairs of France? If their own proceedings had been perfectly right, was it not their interest, as well as their duty, somehow or other to convince the public that Mr. Fox's conduct was entirely and unpardonably wrong? Was their delicacy to Mr. Fox so very great, or their confidence in Mr. Burke so very little, that they would have refused to furnish the latter with information when he was labouring in their cause, and when the odium of employing it, if odium was to be expected rather than praise, would have fallen upon Mr. Burke, not upon themselves? In point of fact, then, ministers, who were acquainted with the whole truth, and who possessed the very amplest powers of proclaiming it with authority, and supporting it by evidence, attempted nothing decisive for the purpose of punishment, and even alleged nothing distinct for the purpose of crimination. But what are we to think of Mr. Burke, who knew probably much less than ministers knew, and yet has said much more than persons better informed upon the subject, and more interested in it, were pleased to say?"

If, from having never communicated with me, or I believe with Mr. Fox, upon the subject, Dr. Parr was unable to enter so circumstantially as I

have done into facts, was there nothing for your Lordship to answer in this reasoning? Was there nothing to “invalidate,” on your part, before you hazarded the assertion, that “the reasoning of Mr. Burke had never been controverted?” Was Dr. Parr’s fame in literature so unworthy of your Lordship, that you disdained to add a conquest over him to your own triumphs? Or was it in your golden anticipation of celebrity, and under the awful consciousness of a meditated quarto, that you declined the offer of battle from a less ponderous antagonist? Was it from this, my Lord, or was it not rather from that refined discretion, that better part of valour itself, which reserves the courage of to-day for the combat of to-morrow?

Whatever may have been the case, I must still repeat, that it was your duty, before giving your readers to understand that the friends of Mr. Fox had admitted, by their silence, the insinuations thrown out against him on the subject of my pretended embassy, to satisfy yourself of the fact of their silence by proper inquiries. Such negligence as you have shown in this instance is censurable even in a journalist; in a historian it is unpardonable. In a historian of Mr. Pitt, it becomes absolutely criminal. In your hands particularly it has been made, as we see, an instrument for converting into spurious fame for your

chief, that portion of character which you detract from his rival, and thus, under the shelter of your own wrong, for carrying on a double deception at the same instant.

I am now come to that part of this subject which distresses me the most, from the necessity it lays me under of speaking of myself. But I cannot help it, and I will be brief.

I grant that notwithstanding Mr. Fox's defiance of his adversary's threats, notwithstanding the answer of my parliamentary friends in 1808, and the annihilating exposition by Dr. Parr of all Mr. Burke's fallacies, if, on my return to England, there had remained on the minds of my countrymen—and not merely of that great body of the people of England, to which I look up as the source of public opinion, but of those also who are invested with the authority of the state—any the smallest impression (except the very just one of my want of ability) unfavourable to the fitness of again employing me in those situations, to which from my services I might have had pretensions, it would have been my duty, long before this time, to come forward with the statement I now offer. If any occasion had demanded it, I trust that I should not have been backward in my own vindication; but in what regards the high misdemeanour imputed to me, I have been anticipated even by my political opponents. My ap-

pointment to Vienna, at Mr. Fox's recommendation, may, in this view, count for nothing; but my remaining at that court after the dismissal of Lords Grenville and Grey, will be some presumption even with your Lordship, that their successors (at whose head was the same Duke of Portland, with whom Mr. Burke had deposited his charge) had no fear of my counteracting their purposes, or that I should abuse my trust, which after the dismissal of my friends had become mine rather by occupancy than by grant, to convey to them improper intelligence.

When I returned to England, in May, 1808, on the suspension of our relations with Austria, I found that, in consequence of some information which I had transmitted to Mr. Canning from Malta, respecting the state of affairs in Turkey, with whom we were then at war, he had (unsolicited by me) sent me out his Majesty's orders to proceed to the Dardanelles, and to endeavour to open a negotiation for peace with that power. The order missed me on the seas, but on my arrival, the proposal was renewed to me by Mr. Canning in a manner which I should be ungrateful indeed if I could forget. Aware of my general sentiments, and of my indissoluble party connexions, Mr. Canning never sought to disturb them; he gave me, on the contrary, full liberty to consult my friends before I engaged in the ser-

vice proposed to me, and equal liberty, in the event of my executing it with success, either to return home, or to remain as ambassador at Constantinople.

Nor was this all; in the spring of 1808, Spain had begun her first efforts to free herself from foreign usurpation. Great and new prospects were opened to the world by this event; and above all other powers, Austria was likely to be the most sensible to it. I had not retired from Vienna without leaving there the means of renewing our intercourse in some happier moment; and as Austria found herself in this very year compelled to resist fresh demands on the part of Napoleon, supported in all his views by Russia,—in that crisis of her fate I was honoured with a second commission to that court, in addition to that of which I was then executing the duties,—still with the option of either resuming my former post, should the success of the new war render it tenable, or of remaining at Constantinople, or of returning home.

These are no marks of a mistrustful spirit in persons who, from their official situations, must for many years have been in possession of the means (if such had existed) of detecting my criminal practices at St. Peter-burgh; nor were they the result of any compromise with men to whose general system of government I have ever been,

and am still, inflexibly opposed. No, my good Lord; my mantle shall never show the stains of treason washed out by apostacy. Adhering to my first intentions, already known to Mr. Canning when I accepted the mission to Constantinople, and after securing the Turkish peace, which had been endangered for a moment by the successes of Napoleon, and the demands of Russia for my dismissal, I returned in the autumn of 1810 to my seat on the opposition benches of the House of Commons.

His late Majesty, however, had expressed himself satisfied with my zeal in his service, and the Marquis of Wellesley, then at the head of the foreign department, signified to me his intention of advising his Royal Master to confer upon me some mark of his favour. At this moment his Majesty's long and last illness had commenced, but the noble person whom I have named will be my witness, that the signification of his Majesty's approbation was all the distinction of which I declared myself ambitious.

On the settlement of the regency, I have reason to believe that the honours of my profession were still within my reach, had I not considered it improper to accept them from a government whose general policy I was opposing, and unfair to encroach upon its patronage.

I believe also that I might have taken my place

at the different congresses for the settlement of the general peace, if my opinions on the system of the confederates had not been fundamentally at variance with those views which the ministers of the Prince Regent thought it expedient to enter into.

Why do I talk of these things? it is because I am on a question where character is all in all; in which a man may, without the imputation of a silly vanity, bear himself loftily; and where, to repel the detraction of less honourable adversaries, he may bring into court the testimony of the chiefs by whom they are disavowed.

From such materials, my Lord, my friends may read without a blush the story of my humble public life. Different indeed are those which you have collected for your imperial theme; and different the use to which you have put them. It is by no means clear that you do not stand criminally responsible to me for the manner in which you have accused me, by name, of an offence little short of high treason. For the present let this pass. You have done it, possibly, for the purpose of injuring Mr. Fox rather than myself. It is for this reason that I am the more peremptory in my demand of justice for him; and if for no other, it is because he was the rival of Mr. Pitt. that, by the courtesy of generous competition, your Lordship would be bound to grant it. You have made yourself the

historian of Mr. Pitt, and of the eventful times in which he governed. You have had access to his papers. Authorized by him in his last moments to look them over with the Earl of Chatham, you had the means of offering a work to the world with unexpected pretensions to veracity. With such materials, it might have been hoped, that you would have felt something of the pride of your task ; that, your mind expanding itself with your subject, you would have cast away with scorn all helps to be derived from the ruin of an adversary's glory. It might have been expected that, in building a temple to Mr. Pitt, you would have consulted the authors you profess to be familiar with for the true Grecian proportions, and have learned from their severe simplicity to reject all paltry eye-traps, and false lines, and sham doors, and showy meretricious contrivances to please a barbarous taste. If this did not square with your scheme, you must have been aware, at least, of the responsibility belonging to the new character in which you were about to appear, and that the same authority which enabled you to stamp the seal of truth on your facts, imposed on you also the duty of advancing none which you should not be ready, as well as able, to substantiate. All these considerations you have passed by in search of the means of injuring Mr. Fox. You have not even disdained for this purpose a partnership with the faithless amanuensis

who first published the charge against him. Yet this man bore no malice to Mr. Fox. What he did was under the keen influence of hunger. Why have you participated in his act? And are you content with that share of its merit which leaves you only what he disclaims in it?

But when documents are to be published, you do not linger in the race with him. Like all ordinary life-writers who get possession of family papers, you have gone on, in the usual routine of book-making, selecting those which, in your judgment, exalt Mr. Pitt; and others which exhibit his opponents as traitors to their king and country. In doing this, you have been touched by no shame, no feeling for the dead or the living; you have been withheld by no doubts of the moral rectitude of what you were about, no sense of constitutional duty, no reverence for stations the most exalted, or for obligations the most binding. Under no provocation from conflicting interests, you have, deliberately and advisedly, brought forth into open day matters which the constitution itself has guarded with the most scrupulous jealousy from the sight, and even from the knowledge, of our state parties. You have dipped your arrows in forbidden venom, and shot them forth at random, to light as they list on a British parliament, on the chiefs of the old nobility of the land, on a band of commoners, in knowledge, in virtue, in disin-

terested public spirit, inferior to none of their predecessors at the proudest hour of their struggles for the independence of their house. You, too, my Lord, like the plunderer of Mr. Burke, have put forward a mighty name, under whose cover you brand all these illustrious individuals in a mass with the galley-slave marks of a DESPERATE AND UNPRINCIPLED FACTION, confederated for their own private ends to subvert the constitution and the laws, and deficient even in the manners of gentlemen. Nor is it the least of your offences, that in this part of your work you have placed public men, to whom honour is every thing, in a situation in which their loyalty is the only security for their silence. For myself, I will not be provoked, by the surreptitious development of these matters, to say one word upon their tendency; sure that the high person in whose name they are so indecently promulgated, never would have written to his confidential servant what he was not convinced would be sacred from the sight of all other men; and equally sure that Mr. Pitt himself, though pressed by hostile majorities to the ground, would have cut off his right hand sooner than he would have divulged what had been so communicated.

Of the value of your history, however, this act is decisive. The dignity of the church of England disappears; the teacher of truth and charity is no more; and we see nothing but the party

secretary, the self-created executor, who rifles the tomb of his friend to get at the secrets of his sovereign, and carries them both to market to the best bidder.

R. ADAIR.

THE END

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