Critical, Historical, and Miscellaneous Essays; Vol. 6 With a Memoir and Index

Thomas Babington Macaulay

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Opening pages

CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

By Lord Macaulay

With a Memoir and Index

In Six Volumes

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[Illustration: 0009]

ESSAYS

THE EARL OF CHATHAM. (1)

(*Edinburgh Review*, October 1844.)

More {1}than ten years ago we commenced a sketch of the political life of the great Lord Chatham. We then stopped at the death of George the Second, with the intention of speedily resuming our task. Circumstances, which it would be tedious to explain, long prevented us from carrying this intention into effect. Nor can we regret the delay. For the materials which were within our reach in 1834 were scanty and unsatisfactory, when compared with those which we at present possess. Even now, though we have had access to some valuable sources of information which have not yet been opened to the public, we cannot but feel that the history of the first ten years of the reign of George the Third is but imperfectly known to us. Nevertheless, we are inclined to think that we are in a condition to lay before our readers a narrative neither uninstructive nor uninteresting. We therefore return with pleasure to our long interrupted labour.

We left Pitt in the zenith of prosperity and glory,

(1) 1.*Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*. 4 vols. 8vo. London: 1840.

2. _Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Horace Mann_. 4 vols. 8vo. London: 1843-4.

{2}the idol of England, the terror of France, the admiration of the whole civilised world. The wind, from whatever quarter it blew, carried to England tidings of battles won, fortresses taken, provinces added to the empire. At home, factions had sunk into a lethargy, such as had never been known since the great religious schism of the sixteenth century had roused the public mind from repose.

In order that the events which we have to relate may be clearly understood, it may be desirable that we should advert to the causes which had for a time suspended the animation of both the great English parties.

If, rejecting all that is merely accidental, we look at the essential characteristics of the Whig and the Tory, we may consider each of them as the representative of a great principle, essential to the welfare of nations. One is, in an especial manner, the guardian of liberty, and the other, of order. One is the moving power, and the other the steadying power of the state. One is the sail, without which society would make no progress, the other the ballast, without which there would be small safety in a tempest. But, during the forty-six years which followed the accession of the House of Hanover, these distinctive peculiarities seemed to be effaced. The Whig conceived that he could not better serve the cause of civil and religious freedom than by strenuously supporting the Protestant dynasty. The Tory conceived that he could not better prove his hatred of revolutions than by attacking a government to which a revolution had given birth. Both came by degrees to attach more importance to the means than to the end. Both were thrown into unnatural situations; and

both, like animals transported to an uncongenial {3}climate, languished and degenerated. The Tory, removed from the sunshine of the court, was as a camel in the snows of Lapland. The Whig, basking in the rays of royal favour, was as a reindeer in the sands of Arabia.

Dante tells us that he saw, in Maleholge, a strange encounter between a human form and a serpent. The enemies, after cruel wounds inflicted, stood for a time glaring on each other. A great cloud surrounded them, and then a wonderful metamorphosis began. Each creature was transfigured into the likeness of its antagonist. The serpent's tail divided itself into two legs; the man's legs intertwined themselves into a tail. The body of the serpent put forth arms; the arms of the man shrank into his body. At length the serpent stood up a man, and spake; the man sank down a serpent, and glided hissing away. Something like this was the transformation which, during the reign of George the First, befell the two English parties. Each gradually took the shape and colour of its foe, till at length the Tory rose up erect the zealot of freedom, and the Whig crawled and licked the dust at the feet of power.

It is true that, when these degenerate politicians discussed questions merely speculative, and, above all, when they discussed questions relating to the conduct of their own grandfathers, they still seemed to differ as their grandfathers had differed. The Whig, who, during three Parliaments, had never given one vote against the court, and who was ready to sell his soul for the Comptroller's staff or for the Great Wardrobe, still professed to draw his political doctrines from Locke and Milton, still worshipped the memory of Pym and Hampden, and would still, on the thirtieth of January, {4}take his class, first to the man in the mask, and then to the man who would do it without a mask. The Tory, on the other hand, while he reviled the mild and temperate Walpole as a deadly enemy of liberty, could see nothing to reprobate in the iron tyranny of Strafford and Laud. But, whatever judgment the Whig or the Tory of that age might pronounce on transactions long past, there can be

no doubt that, as respected the practical questions then pending, the Tory was a reformer, and indeed an intemperate and indiscreet reformer, while the Whig; was conservative even to bigotry. We have ourselves, seen similar effects produced in a neighbouring country by similar causes. Who would have believed, fifteen years ago, that M. Guizot and M. Villemain would have to defend property and social order against the attacks of such enemies as M. Genoude and M. de La Roche Jaquelin?

Thus the successors of the old Cavaliers had turned demagogues; the successors of the old Roundheads had turned courtiers. Yet was it long before their mutual animosity began to abate; for it is the nature of parties to retain their original enmities far more firmly than their original principles. During many years, a generation of Whigs, whom Sidney would have spurned as slaves, continued to wage deadly war with a generation of Tories whom Jeffreys would have hanged for Republicans.

Through the whole reign of George the First, and through nearly half of the reign of George the Second, a Tory was regarded as an enemy of the reigning house, and was excluded from all the favours of the crown. Though most of the country gentlemen were Tories, none but Whigs were created peers and baronets. {5}Though most of the clergy were Tories, none but Whigs were appointed deans and bishops. In every county, opulent and well descended Tory squires complained that their names were left out of the commission of the peace, while men of small estate and mean birth, who were for toleration and excise, septennial parliaments and standing armies, presided at quarter sessions, and became deputy lieutenants.

By degrees some approaches were made towards a reconciliation. While Walpole was at the head of affairs, enmity to his power induced a large and powerful body of Whigs, headed by the heir apparent of the throne, to make an alliance with the Tories, and a truce even with the Jacobites. After Sir Robert’s fall, the ban which lay on the Tory party was taken off.

The chief places in the administration continued to be filled by Whigs, and, indeed, could scarcely have been filled otherwise; for the Tory nobility and gentry, though strong in numbers and in property, had among them scarcely a single man distinguished by talents, either for business or for debate. A few of them, however, were admitted to subordinate offices; and this indulgence produced a softening effect on the temper of the whole body. The first levee of George the Second after Walpole's resignation was a remarkable spectacle. Mingled with the constant supporters of the House of Brunswick, with the Russells, the Cavendishes, and the Pelhams, appeared a crowd of faces utterly unknown to the pages and gentlemen ushers, lords of rural manors, whose ale and fox-hounds were renowned in the neighbourhood of the Mendip hills, or round the Wrekin, but who had never crossed the threshold of the palace since the days when Oxford, with the white staff in his hand, stood behind Queen Anne. {6}During the eighteen years which followed this day, both factions were gradually sinking deeper and deeper into repose. The apathy of the public mind is partly to be ascribed to the unjust violence with which the administration of Walpole had been assailed. In the body politic, as in the natural body, morbid languor generally succeeds morbid excitement. The people had been maddened by sophistry, by calumny, by rhetoric, by stimulants applied to the national pride. In the fulness of bread, they had raved as if famine had been in the land. While enjoying such a measure of civil and religious freedom as, till then, no great society had ever known, they had cried out for a Timoleon or a Brutus to stab their oppressor to the heart. They were in this frame of mind when the change of administration took place; and they soon found that there was to be no change whatever in the system of government. The natural consequences followed. To frantic zeal succeeded sullen indifference. The cant of patriotism had not merely ceased to charm the public ear, but had become as nauseous as the cant of Puritanism after the downfall of the Rump. The hot fit was over: the cold fit had begun: and it was long before seditious arts, or even real

grievances, could bring back the fiery paroxysm which had run its course and reached its termination.

Two attempts were made to disturb this tranquillity. The banished heir of the House of Stewart headed a rebellion; the discontented heir of the House of Brunswick headed an opposition. Both the rebellion and the opposition came to nothing. The battle of Culloden annihilated the Jacobite party. The death of Prince Frederic dissolved the faction which, under his guidance, had feebly striven to annoy his father's government. {7}His chief followers hastened to make their peace with the ministry; and the political torpor became complete.

Five years after the death of Prince Frederic, the public mind was for a time violently excited. But this excitement had nothing to do with the old disputes between Whigs and Tories. England was at war with France. The war had been feebly conducted. Minorca had been torn from us. Our fleet had retired before the white flag of the House of Bourbon. A bitter sense of humiliation, new to the proudest and bravest of nations, superseded every other feeling. The cry of all the counties and great towns of the realm was for a government which would retrieve the honour of the English arms. The two most powerful men in the country were the Duke of Newcastle and Pitt. Alternate victories and defeats had made them sensible that neither of them could stand alone. The interest of the state, and the interest of their own ambition, impelled them to coalesce. By their coalition was formed the ministry which was in power when George the Third ascended the throne.

The more carefully the structure of this celebrated ministry is examined, the more shall we see reason to marvel at the skill or the luck which had combined in one harmonious whole such various and, as it seemed, incompatible elements of force. The influence which is derived from stainless integrity, the influence which is derived from the vilest arts of corruption, the strength of aristocratical connection, the strength of

democratical enthusiasm, all these things were for the first time found together. Newcastle brought to the coalition a vast mass of power, which had descended to him from Walpole and Pelham. The public offices, the church, {8}the courts of law, the army, the navy, the diplomatic service, swarmed with his creatures. The boroughs, which long afterwards made up the memorable schedules A and B, were represented by his nominees. The great Whig families, which, during several generations, had been trained in the discipline of party warfare, and were accustomed to stand together in a firm phalanx, acknowledged him as their captain. Pitt, on the other hand, had what Newcastle wanted, an eloquence which stirred the passions and charmed the imagination, a high reputation for purity, and the confidence and ardent love of millions.

The partition which the two ministers made of the powers of government was singularly happy. Each occupied a province for which he was well qualified; and neither had any inclination to intrude himself into the province of the other. Newcastle took the treasury, the civil and ecclesiastical patronage, and the disposal of that part of the secret service money which was then employed in bribing members of Parliament. Pitt was Secretary of State, with the direction of the war and of foreign affairs. Thus the filth of all the noisome and pestilential sewers of government was poured into one channel. Through the other passed only what was bright and stainless. Mean and selfish politicians, pining for commissionerships, gold sticks, and ribands, flocked to the great house at the corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields. There, at every levee, appeared eighteen or twenty pair of lawn sleeves; for there was not, it was said, a single Prelate who had not owed either his first elevation or some subsequent translation to Newcastle. There appeared those members of the House of Commons in whose silent votes the main strength of the government lay. One wanted a {9}place in the excise for his butler. Another came about a prebend for his son. A third whispered that he had always stood by his Grace and the Protestant succession; that his last

election had been very expensive; that potwallopers had now no conscience; that he had been forced to take up money on mortgage; and that he hardly knew where to turn for five hundred pounds. The Duke pressed all their hands, passed his arms round all their shoulders, patted all their backs, and sent away some with wages, and some with promises. From this traffic Pitt stood haughtily aloof. Not only was he himself incorruptible, but he shrank from the loathsome drudgery of corrupting others. He had not, however, been twenty years in Parliament, and ten in office, without discovering how the government was carried on. He was perfectly aware that bribery was practised on a large scale by his colleagues. Hating the practice, yet despairing of putting it down, and doubting whether, in those times, any ministry could stand without it, he determined to be blind to it. He would see nothing, know nothing, believe nothing. People who came to talk to him about shares in lucrative contracts, or about the means of securing a Cornish corporation, were soon put out of countenance by his arrogant humility. They did him too much honour. Such matters were beyond his capacity. It was true that his poor advice about expeditions and treaties was listened to with indulgence by a gracious sovereign. If the question were, who should command in North America, or who should be ambassador at Berlin, his colleagues would probably condescend to take his opinion. But he had not the smallest influence with the Secretary of the Treasury, and could not venture to ask even for a tidewaiter's place. {10}It may be doubted whether he did not owe as much of his popularity to his ostentatious purity as to his eloquence, or to his talents for the administration of war. It was every where said with delight and admiration that the great Commoner, without any advantages of birth or fortune, had, in spite of the dislike of the Court and of the aristocracy, made himself the first, man in England, and made England the first country in the world; that his name was mentioned with awe in every palace from Lisbon to Moscow; that his trophies were in all the four quarters of the globe; yet that he was still plain William Pitt, without title or riband, without pension or

sinecure place. Whenever he should retire, after saving the state, he must sell his coach horses and his silver candlesticks. Widely as the taint of corruption had spread, his hands were clean. They had never received, they had never given, the price of infamy. Thus the coalition gathered to itself support from all the high and all the low parts of human nature, and was strong with the whole united strength of virtue and of Mammon.

Pitt and Newcastle were co-ordinate chief ministers. The subordinate places had been filled on the principle of including in the government every party and shade of party, the avowed Jacobites alone excepted, nay, every public man who, from his abilities or from his situation, seemed likely to be either useful in office or formidable in opposition.

The Whigs, according to what was then considered as their prescriptive right, held by far the largest share of power. The main support of the administration was what may be called the great Whig connection, a connection which, during near half a century, had {11}generally had the chief sway in the country, and which derived an immense authority from rank, wealth, borough interest, and firm union. To this connection, of which Newcastle was the head, belonged the houses of Cavendish, Lennox, Fitzroy, Bentinck, Manners, Conway, Wentworth, and many others of high note.

There were two other powerful Whig connections, either of which might have been a nucleus for a strong opposition. But room had been found in the government for both. They were known as the Grenvilles and the Bedfords.

The head of the Grenvilles was Richard Earl Temple. His talents for administration and debate were of no high order. But his great possessions, his turbulent and unscrupulous character, his restless activity, and his skill in the most ignoble tactics of faction, made him one of the most formidable enemies that a ministry could have. He was keeper of the privy seal. His brother George was treasurer of the navy.

They were supposed to be on terms of close friendship with Pitt, who had married their sister, and was the most uxorious of husbands.

The Bedfords, or, as they were called by their enemies, the Bloomsbury gang, professed to be led by John Duke of Bedford, but in truth led him wherever they chose, and very often led him where he never would have gone of his own accord. He had many good qualities of head and heart, and would have been certainly a respectable, and possibly a distinguished man, if he had been less under the influence of his friends, or more fortunate in choosing them. Some of them were indeed, to do them justice, men of parts. But here, we are afraid, eulogy must end. {12}Sandwich and Rigby were able debaters, pleasant boon companions, dexterous intriguers, masters of all the arts of jobbing and electioneering, and both in public and private life, shamelessly immoral. Weymouth had a natural eloquence, which sometimes astonished those who knew how little he owed to study. But he was indolent and dissolute, and had early impaired a fine estate with the dice box, and a fine constitution with the bottle. The wealth and power of the Duke, and the talents and audacity of some of his retainers, might have seriously annoyed the strongest ministry. But his assistance had been secured. He was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Rigby was his secretary; and the whole party dutifully supported the measures of the Government.

Two men had, a short time before, been thought likely to contest with Pitt the lead of the House of Commons, William Murray and Henry Fox. But Murray had been removed to the Lords, and was Chief Justice of the Kings Bench. Fox was indeed still in the Commons: but means had been found to secure, if not his strenuous support, at least his silent acquiescence. He was a poor man; he was a doting father. The office of Paymaster-General during an expensive war was, in that age, perhaps the most lucrative situation in the gift of the government. This office was bestowed on Fox. The prospect of making a noble fortune in a few years, and of providing amply for his darling boy Charles, was irresistibly

tempting. To hold a subordinate place, however profitable, after having led the House of Commons, and having been intrusted with the business of forming a ministry, was indeed a great descent. But a punctilious sense of personal dignity was no part of the character of Henry Fox. {13}We have not time to enumerate all the other men of weight who were, by some tie or other, attached to the government. We may mention Hardwicke, reputed the first lawyer of the age; Legge, reputed the first financier of the age; the acute and ready Oswald; the bold and humorous Nugent; Charles Townshend, the most brilliant and versatile of mankind; Elliot, Barrington, North, Pratt. Indeed, as far as we recollect, there were in the whole House of Commons only two men of distinguished abilities who were not connected with the government; and those two men stood so low in public estimation, that the only service which they could have rendered to any government would have been to oppose it. We speak of Lord George Sackville and Bubb Dodington.

Though most of the official men, and all the members of the cabinet, were reputed Whigs, the Tories were by no means excluded from employment. Pitt had gratified many of them with commands in the militia, which increased both their income and their importance in their own counties; and they were therefore in better humour than at any time since the death of Anne. Some of the party still continued to grumble over their punch at the Cocoa Tree; but in the House of Commons not a single one of the malecontents durst lift his eyes above the buckle of Pitt’s shoe.

Thus there was absolutely no opposition. Nay, there was no sign from which it could be guessed in what quarter opposition was likely to arise. Several years passed during which Parliament seemed to have abdicated its chief functions. The Journals of the House of Commons, during four sessions, contain no trace of a division on a party question. The supplies, {14}though beyond precedent great, were voted without discussion. The

most animated debates of that period were on road bills and inclosure bills.

The old King was content; and it mattered little whether he were content or not. It would have been impossible for him to emancipate himself from a ministry so powerful, even if he had been inclined to do so. But he had no such inclination. He had once, indeed, been strongly prejudiced against Pitt, and had repeatedly been ill used by Newcastle; but the vigour and success with which the war had been waged in Germany, and the smoothness with which all public business was carried on, had produced a favourable change in the royal mind.

Such was the posture of affairs when, on the twenty-fifth of October, 1760, George the Second suddenly died, and George the Third, then twenty-two years old, became King. The situation of George the Third differed widely from that of his grandfather and that of his greatgrandfather. Many years had elapsed since a sovereign of England had been an object of affection to any part of his people. The first two Kings of the House of Hanover had neither those hereditary rights which have often supplied the defect of merit, nor those personal qualities which have often supplied the defect of title. A prince may be popular with little virtue or capacity, if he reigns by birthright derived from a long line of illustrious predecessors. An usurper may be popular, if his genius has saved or aggrandised the nation which he governs. Perhaps no rulers have in our time had a stronger hold on the affection of subjects than the Emperor Francis, and his son-in-law the Emperor Napoleon. But imagine a ruler with no better title than Napoleon, and no better understanding {15}than Francis. Richard Cromwell was such a ruler; and, as soon as an arm was lifted up against him, he fell without a struggle, amidst universal derision. George the First and George the Second were in a situation which bore some resemblance to that of Richard Cromwell. They were saved from the fate of Richard Cromwell by the strenuous and able exertions of the Whig party, and by the general conviction that the nation

had no choice but between the House of Brunswick and popery. But by no class were the Guelphs regarded with that devoted affection, of which Charles the First, Charles the Second, and James the Second, in spite of the greatest faults, and in the midst of the greatest misfortunes, received innumerable proofs. Those Whigs who stood by the new dynasty so manfully with purse and sword did so on principles independent of, and indeed almost incompatible with, the sentiment of devoted loyalty. The moderate Tories regarded the foreign dynasty as a great evil, which must be endured for fear of a greater evil. In the eyes of the high Tories, the Elector was the most hateful of robbers and tyrants. The crown of another was on his head; the blood of the brave and loyal was on his hands. Thus, during many years, the Kings of England were objects of strong personal aversion to many of their subjects, and of strong personal attachment to none. They found, indeed, firm and cordial support against the pretender to their throne; but this support was given, not at all for their sake, but for the sake of a religious and political system which would have been endangered by their fall. This support, too, they were compelled to purchase by perpetually sacrificing their private inclinations to the party which had set them on the throne, and which maintained them there. {16}At the close of the reign of George the Second, the feeling of aversion with which the House of Brunswick had long been regarded by half the nation had died away: but no feeling of affection to that house had yet sprung up. There was little, indeed, in the old King’s character to inspire esteem or tenderness. He was not our countryman. He never set foot on our soil till he was more than thirty years old. His speech betrayed his foreign origin and breeding. His love for his native land, though the most amiable part of his character, was not likely to endear him to his British subjects. He was never so happy as when he could exchange St. James’s for Hernhausen. Year after year, our fleets were employed to convoy him to the Continent, and the interests of his kingdom were as nothing to him when compared with the interests of his Electorate. As to the rest, he had neither the qualities which make dulness

respectable, nor the qualities which make libertinism attractive. He had been a bad son and a worse father, an unfaithful husband and an ungraceful lover. Not one magnanimous or humane action is recorded of him; but many instances of meanness, and of a harshness which, but for the strong constitutional restraints under which he was placed, might have made the misery of his people.

He died; and at once a new world opened. The young King was a born Englishman. All his tastes and habits, good or bad, were English. No portion of his subjects had anything to reproach him with. Even the remaining adherents of the House of Stuart could scarcely impute to him the guilt of usurpation. He was not responsible for the Revolution, for the Act of Settlement, for the suppression of the risings of 1715 and of 1745. He was innocent of the blood {17}of Derwentwater and Kilmarnock, of Balmerino and Cameron. Born fifty years after the old line had been expelled, fourth in descent and third in succession of the Hanoverian dynasty, he might plead some show of hereditary right. His age, his appearance, and all that was known of his character, conciliated public favour. He was in the bloom of youth; his person and address were pleasing. Scandal imputed to him no vice; and flattery might, without any glaring absurdity, ascribe to him many princely virtues.

It is not strange, therefore, that the sentiment of loyalty, a sentiment which had lately seemed to be as much out of date as the belief in witches or the practice of pilgrimage, should, from the day of his accession, have begun to revive. The Tories in particular, who had always been inclined to Kingworship, and who had long felt with pain the want of an idol before whom they could bow themselves down, were as joyful as the priests of Apis, when, after a long interval, they had found a new calf to adore. It was soon clear that George the Third was regarded by a portion of the nation with a very different feeling from that which his two predecessors had inspired. They had been merely First Magistrates, Doges, Stadtholders; he was emphatically a King, the anointed of

heaven, the breath of his people's nostrils. The years of the widowhood and mourning of the Tory party were over. Dido had kept faith long enough to the cold ashes of a former lord; she had at last found a comforter, and recognised the vestigus of the old flame. The golden days of Harley would return. The Somersets, the Lees, and the Wyndhams would again surround the throne. The latitudinarian Prelates, who had not been ashamed to correspond with Doddridge and to {18}shake hands with Winston, would he succeeded by divines of the temper of South and Atterbury. The devotion which had been so signally shown to the House of Stuart, which had been proof against defeats, confiscations, and proscriptions, which perfidy, oppression, ingratitude, could not weary out, was now transferred entire to the House of Brunswick. If George the Third would but accept the homage of the Cavaliers and High Churchmen, he should be to them all that Charles the First and Charles the Second had been.

The Prince, whose accession was thus hailed by a great party long estranged from his house, had received from nature a strong will, a firmness of temper to which a harsher name might perhaps be given, and an understanding not, indeed, acute or enlarged, but such as qualified him to be a good man of business. But his character had not yet fully developed itself. He had been brought up in strict seclusion. The detractors of the Princess Dowager of Wales affirmed that she had kept her children from commerce with society, in order that she might hold an undivided empire over their minds. She gave a very different explanation of her conduct. She would gladly, she said, see her sons and daughters mix in the world, if they could do so without risk to their morals. But the profligacy of the people of quality alarmed her. The young men were all rakes; the young women made love, instead of waiting till it was made to them. She could not bear to expose those whom she loved best to the contaminating influence of such society. The moral advantages of the system of education which formed the Duke of York, the Duke of

Cumberland, and the Queen of Denmark, may perhaps be questioned. George the Third was indeed no libertine; but he brought to the {19}throne a mind only half opened, and was for some time entirely under the influence of his mother and of his Groom of the Stole, John Stuart, Earl of Bute.

The Earl of Bute was scarcely known even by name, to the country which he was soon to govern. He had indeed, a short time after he came of age, been chosen to fill a vacancy, which, in the middle of a parliament, had taken place among the Scotch representative peers. He had disobliged the Whig ministers by giving some silent votes with the Tories, had consequently lost his seat at the next dissolution, and had never been reelected. Near twenty years had elapsed since he had borne any part in politics. He had passed some of those years at his seat, in one of the Hebrides, and from that retirement he had emerged as one of the household of Prince Frederic. Lord Bute, excluded from public life, had found out many ways of amusing his leisure. He was a tolerable actor in private theatricals, and was particularly successful in the part of Lothario. A handsome leg, to which both painters and satirists took care to give prominence, was among his chief qualifications for the stage. He devised quaint dresses for masquerades. He dabbled in geometry, mechanics, and botany. He paid some attention to antiquities and works of art, and was considered in his own circle as a judge of painting, architecture, and poetry. It is said that his spelling was incorrect. But though, in our time, incorrect spelling is justly considered as a proof of sordid ignorance, it would be unjust to apply the same rule to people who lived a century ago. The novel of Sir Charles Grandison was published about the time at which Lord Bute made his appearance at Leicester House. Our readers may perhaps remember the account which Charlotte {20}Grandison gives of her two lovers. One of them, a fashionable baronet who talks French and Italian fluently, cannot write a line in his own language without some sin against orthography: the other, who is represented as a

most respectable specimen of the young aristocracy, and something of a virtuoso, is described as spelling pretty well for a lord. On the whole, the Earl of Bute might fairly be called a man of cultivated mind. He was also a man of undoubted honour. But his understanding was narrow, and his manners cold and haughty. His qualifications for the part of a statesman were best described by Frederic, who often indulged in the unprincely luxury of sneering at his dependents. “Bute,” said his Royal Highness, “you are the very man to be envoy at some small proud German court where there is nothing to do.” Scandal represented the Groom of the Stole as the favoured lover of the Princess Dowager. He was undoubtedly her confidential friend. The influence which the two united exercised over the mind of the King was for a time unbounded. The Princess, a woman and a foreigner, was not likely to be a judicious adviser about affairs of state. The Earl could scarcely be said to have served even a noviciate in politics. His notions of government had been acquired in the society which had been in the habit of assembling round Frederic at Kew and Leicester House, That society consisted principally of Tories, who had been reconciled to the House of Hanover by the civility with which the Prince had treated them, and by the hope of obtaining high preferment when he should come to the throne. Their political creed was a peculiar modification of Toryism. It was the creed neither of the Tories of the seventeenth nor of the Tories of {21}the nineteenth century. It was the creed, not of Filmer and Sacheverell, not of Perceval and Eldon, but of the sect of which Bolingbroke may be considered as the chief doctor. This sect deserves commendation for having pointed out and justly reprobated some great abuses which sprang up during the long domination of the Whigs. But it is far easier to point out and reprobate abuses than to propose beneficial reforms: and the reforms which Bolingbroke proposed would either have been utterly inefficient, or would have produced much more mischief than they would have removed.

The Revolution had saved the nation from one class of evils, but had at the same time--such is the imperfection of all things human--engendered or aggravated another class of evils which required new remedies. Liberty and property were secure from the attacks of prerogative. Conscience was respected. No government ventured to infringe any of the rights solemnly recognised by the instrument which had called William and Mary to the throne. But it cannot be denied that, under the new system, the public interests and the public morals were seriously endangered by corruption and faction. During the long struggle against the Stuarts, the chief object of the most enlightened statesmen had been to strengthen the House of Commons. The struggle was over; the victory was won; the House of Commons was supreme in the state: and all the vices which had till then been latent in the representative system were rapidly developed by prosperity and power. Scarcely had the executive government become really responsible to the House of Commons, when it began to appear that the House of Commons was not really responsible to the nation. Many of the constituent bodies were under the absolute control {22}of individuals; many were notoriously at the command of the highest bidder. The debates were not published. It was very seldom known out of doors how a gentleman had voted. Thus, while the ministry was accountable to the Parliament, the majority of the Parliament was accountable to nobody. In such circumstances, nothing could be more natural than that the members should insist on being paid for their votes, should form themselves into combinations for the purpose of raising the price of their votes, and should at critical conjunctures extort large wages by threatening a strike. Thus the Whig ministers of George the First and George the Second were compelled to reduce corruption to a system, and to practise it on a gigantic scale.

If we are right as to the cause of these abuses, we can scarcely be wrong as to the remedy. The remedy was surely not to deprive the House of Commons of its weight in the state. Such a course would undoubtedly

have put an end to parliamentary corruption and to parliamentary factions: for, when votes cease to be of importance, they will cease to be bought; and, when knaves can get nothing by combining, they will cease to combine. But to destroy corruption and faction by introducing despotism would have been to cure bad by worse. The proper remedy evidently was, to make the House of Commons responsible to the nation; and this was to be effected in two ways; first, by giving-publicity to parliamentary proceedings, and thus placing every member on his trial before the tribunal of public opinion; and secondly, by so reforming the constitution of the House that no man should be able to sit in it who had not been returned by a respectable and independent body of constituents. {23}Bolingbroke and Bolingbroke's disciples recommended a very different mode of treating the diseases of the state. Their doctrine was that a vigorous use of the prerogative by a patriot King would at once break all factious combinations, and supersede the pretended necessity of bribing members of Parliament. The King had only to resolve that he would be master, that he would not be held in thraldom by any set of men, that he would take for ministers any persons in whom he had confidence, without distinction of party, and that he would restrain his servants from influencing by immoral means either the constituent bodies or the representative body. This childish scheme proved that those who proposed it knew nothing of the nature of the evil with which they pretended to deal. The real cause of the prevalence of corruption and fiction was that a House of Commons, not accountable to the people, was more powerful than the King. Bolingbroke's remedy could be applied only by a King more powerful than the House of Commons. How was the patriot Prince to govern in defiance of the body without whose consent he could not equip a sloop, keep a battalion under arms, send an embassy, or defray even the charges of his own household? Was he to dissolve the Parliament? And what was he likely to gain by appealing to Sudbury and Old Sarum against the venality of their representatives? Was he to send out privy seals? Was he to levy ship-money? If so, this boasted reform

must commence in all probability by civil war, and, if consummated, must be consummated by the establishment of absolute monarchy. Or was the patriot King to carry the House of Commons with him in his upright designs? By what means? Interdicting himself from the use of corrupt influence, what motive {24}was he to address to the Dodingtons and Winningtons? Was cupidity, strengthened by habit, to be laid asleep by a few fine sentences about virtue and union?

Absurd as this theory was, it had many admirers, particularly among men of letters. It was now to be reduced to practice; and the result was, as any man of sagacity must have foreseen, the most piteous and ridiculous of failures.

On the very day of the young King's accession, appeared some signs which indicated the approach of a great change. The speech which he made to his council was not submitted to the cabinet. It was drawn up by Bute, and contained some expressions which might be construed into reflections on the conduct of affairs during the late reign. Pitt remonstrated, and begged that these expressions might be softened down in the printed copy; but it was not till after some hours of altercation that Bute yielded; and, even after Bute had yielded, the King affected to hold out till the following afternoon. On the same day on which this singular contest took place, Bute was not only sworn of the privy council, but introduced into the cabinet.

Soon after this, Lord Holdernesse, one of the Secretaries of State, in pursuance of a plan concerted with the court, resigned the seals. Bute was instantly appointed to the vacant place. A general election speedily followed, and the new Secretary entered parliament in the only way in which he then could enter it, as one of the sixteen representative peers of Scotland. (1)

(1) In the reign of Anne, the House of Lords had resolved that, under the 23d article of Union, no Scotch peer could be created a peer of Great Britain. This resolution was not annulled till the year 1782.

{25}Had the ministers been firmly united it can scarcely be doubted that they would have been able to withstand the court. The parliamentary influence of the Whig aristocracy, combined with the genius, the virtue, and the firmness of Pitt, would have been irresistible. But there had been in the cabinet of George the Second latent jealousies and enmities, which now began to show themselves. Pitt had been estranged from his old ally Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Some of the ministers were envious of Pitt's popularity. Others were, not altogether without cause, disgusted by his imperious and haughty demeanour. Others, again, were honestly opposed to some parts of his policy. They admitted that he had found the country in the depths of humiliation, and had raised it to the height of glory: they admitted that he had conducted the war with energy, ability, and splendid success; but they began to hint that the drain on the resources of the state was unexampled, and that the public debt was increasing with a speed at which Montague or Godolphin would have stood aghast. Some of the acquisitions made by our fleets and armies were, it was acknowledged, profitable as well as honourable; but, now that George the Second was dead, a courtier might venture to ask why England was to become a party in a dispute between two German powers. What was it to her whether the House of Hapsburg or the House of Brandenburg ruled in Silesia? Why were the best English regiments fighting on the Main? Why were the Prussian battalions paid with English gold? The great minister seemed to think it beneath him to calculate the price of victory. As long as the Tower guns were fired, as the streets were illuminated, as French banners were carried in triumph through London, it was to him matter of indifference to what extent {26}the public burdens were augmented. Nay, he seemed to glory in the magnitude of those sacrifices which the people, fascinated by his

eloquence and success, had too readily made, and would long and bitterly regret. There was no check on waste or embezzlement. Our commissaries returned from the camp of Prince Ferdinand to buy boroughs, to rear palaces, to rival the magnificence of the old aristocracy of the realm. Already had we borrowed, in four years of war, more than the most skilful and economical government would pay in forty years of peace. But the prospect of peace was as remote as ever. It could not be doubted that France, smarting and prostrate, would consent to fair terms of accommodation; but this was not what Pitt wanted. War had made him powerful and popular; with war, all that was brightest in his life was associated: for war his talents were peculiarly fitted. He had at length begun to love war for its own sake, and was more disposed to quarrel with neutrals than to make peace with enemies.

Such were the views of the Duke of Bedford and of the Earl of Hardwicke; but no member of the government held these opinions so strongly as George Grenville, the treasurer of the navy. George Grenville was brother-in-law of Pitt, and had always been reckoned one of Pitt's personal and political friends. But it is difficult to conceive two men of talents and integrity more utterly unlike each other. Pitt, as his sister often said, knew nothing accurately except Spenser's Fairy Queen. He had never applied himself steadily to any branch of knowledge. He was a wretched financier. He never became familiar even with the rules of that House of which he was the brightest ornament. He had never studied public law {27}as a system; and was, indeed, so ignorant of the whole subject, that George the Second, on one occasion, complained bitterly that a man who had never read Vattel should presume to undertake the direction of foreign affairs. But these defects were more than redeemed by high and rare gifts, by a strange power of inspiring great masses of men with confidence and affection, by an eloquence which not only delighted the ear, but stirred the blood, and brought tears into the eyes, by originality in devising plans, by vigour in executing them. Grenville, on

the other hand, was by nature and habit a man of details. He had been bred a lawyer; and he had brought the industry and acuteness of the Temple into official and parliamentary life. He was supposed to be intimately acquainted with the whole fiscal system of the country. He had paid especial attention to the law of Parliament, and was so learned in all things relating to the privileges and orders of the House of Commons that those who loved him least pronounced him the only person competent to succeed Onslow in the Chair. His speeches were generally instructive, and sometimes, from the gravity and earnestness with which he spoke, even impressive, but never brilliant, and generally tedious. Indeed, even when he was at the head of affairs, he sometimes found it difficult to obtain the ear of the House. In disposition as well as in intellect, he differed widely from his brother-in-law. Pitt was utterly regardless of money. He would scarcely stretch out his hand to take it; and, when it came, he threw it away with childish profusion. Grenville, though strictly upright, was grasping and parsimonious. Pitt was a man of excitable nerves, sanguine in hope, easily elated by success and popularity, keenly sensible of injury, but prompt to forgive; {28}Grenville's character was stern, melancholy, and pertinacious. Nothing was more remarkable in him than his inclination always to look on the dark side of things. He was the raven of the House of Commons, always croaking defeat in the midst of triumphs, and bankruptcy with an overflowing exchequer. Burke, with general applause, compared him, in a time of quiet and plenty, to the evil spirit whom Ovid described looking down on the stately temples and wealthy haven of Athens, and scarce able to refrain from weeping because she could find nothing at which to weep. Such a man was not likely to be popular. But to unpopularity Grenville opposed a dogged determination, which sometimes forced even those who hated him to respect him.

It was natural that Pitt and Grenville, being such as they were, should take very different views of the situation of affairs. Pitt could see nothing

but the trophies; Grenville could see nothing but the bill. Pitt boasted that England was victorious at once in America, in India, and in Germany, the umpire of the Continent, the mistress of the sea. Grenville cast up the subsidies, sighed over the army extraordinaries, and groaned in spirit to think that the nation had borrowed eight millions in one year.

With a ministry thus divided it was not difficult for Bute to deal. Legge was the first who fell. He had given offence to the young King in the late reign, by refusing to support a creature of Bute at a Hampshire election. He was now not only turned out, but in the closet, when he delivered up his seal of office, was treated with gross incivility.

Pitt, who did not love Legge, saw this event with indifference. But the danger was now fast approaching {29}himself. Charles the Third of Spain had early conceived a deadly hatred of England. Twenty years before, when he was King of the Two Sicilies, he had been eager to join the coalition against Maria Theresa, But an English fleet had suddenly appeared in the Bay of Naples. An English captain had landed, had proceeded to the palace, had laid a watch on the table, and had told his majesty that, within an hour, a treaty of neutrality must be signed, or a bombardment would commence. The treaty was signed; the squadron sailed out of the bay twenty-four hours after it had sailed in; and from that day the ruling passion of the humbled Prince was aversion to the English name. He was at length in a situation in which he might hope to gratify that passion. He had recently become King of Spain and the Indies. He saw, with envy and apprehension, the triumphs of our navy, and the rapid extension of our colonial Empire. He was a Bourbon, and sympathized with the distress of the house from which he sprang. He was a Spaniard; and no Spaniard could bear to see Gibraltar and Minorca in the possession of a foreign power. Impelled by such feelings, Charles concluded a secret treaty with France. By this treaty, known as the Family Compact, the two powers bound themselves not in express words, but by the clearest implication, to make war on England in common.

Spain postponed the declaration of hostilities only till her fleet, laden with the treasures of America, should have arrived.

The existence of the treaty could not be kept a secret from Pitt. He acted as a man of his capacity and energy might be expected to act. He at once proposed to declare war against Spain, and to intercept {30}the American fleet. He had determined, it is said, to attack without delay both Havanna and the Philippines.

His wise and resolute counsel was rejected. Bute was foremost in opposing it, and was supported by almost the whole cabinet. Some of the ministers doubted, or affected to doubt, the correctness of Pitt's intelligence; some shrank from the responsibility of advising a course so bold and decided as that which he proposed; some were weary of his ascendency, and were glad to be rid of him on any pretext. One only of his colleagues agreed with him, his brother-in-law, Earl Temple.

Pitt and Temple resigned their offices. To Pitt the young King behaved at parting in the most gracious manner. Pitt, who, proud and fiery every where else, was always meek and humble in the closet, was moved even to tears. The King and the favourite urged him to accept some substantial mark of royal gratitude. Would he like to be appointed governor of Canada? A salary of five thousand pounds a year should be annexed to the office. Residence would not be required. It was true that the governor of Canada, as the law then stood, could not be a member of the House of Commons. But a bill should be brought in, authorising Pitt to hold his government together with a seat in Parliament, and in the preamble should be set forth his claims to the gratitude of his country. Pitt answered, with all delicacy, that his anxieties were rather for his wife and family than for himself, and that nothing would be so acceptable to him as a mark of royal goodness which might be beneficial to those who were dearest to him. The hint was taken. The same Gazette which announced the retirement of the Secretary of {31}State announced also that, in

consideration of his great public services, his wife had been created a peeress in her own right, and that a pension of three thousand pounds a year, for three lives, had been bestowed on himself. It was doubtless thought that the rewards and honours conferred on the great minister would have a conciliatory effect on the public mind. Perhaps, too, it was thought that his popularity, which had partly arisen from the contempt which he had always shown for money, would be damaged by a pension; and, indeed, a crowd of libels instantly appeared, in which he was accused of having sold his country. Many of his true friends thought that he would have best consulted the dignity of his character by refusing to accept any pecuniary reward from the court. Nevertheless, the general opinion of his talents, virtues, and services, remained unaltered. Addresses were presented to him from several large towns. London showed its admiration and affection in a still more marked manner. Soon after his resignation came the Lord Mayor's day. The King and the royal family dined at Guildhall. Pitt was one of the guests. The young Sovereign, seated by his bride in his state coach, received a remarkable lesson. He was scarcely noticed. All eyes were fixed on the fallen minister; all acclamations directed to him. The streets, the balconies, the chimney tops, burst into a roar of delight as his chariot passed by. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs from the windows. The common people clung to the wheels, shook hands with the footmen, and even kissed the horses. Cries of "No Bute!"

"No Newcastle salmon!" were mingled with the shouts of "Pitt for ever!" When Pitt entered Guildhall, he was welcomed by loud huzzas and clapping of hands, {32}in which the very magistrates of the city joined. Lord Bute, in the mean time, was hooted and pelted through Cheapside, and would, it was thought, have been in some danger, if he had not taken the precaution of surrounding his carriage with a strong body guard of boxers. Many persons blamed the conduct of Pitt on this occasion as disrespectful to the King. Indeed, Pitt himself afterwards owned that he

had done wrong. He was led into this error, as he was afterwards led into more serious errors, by the influence of his turbulent and mischievous brother-in-law, Temple.

The events which immediately followed Pitt's retirement raised his fame higher than ever. War with Spain proved to be, as he had predicted, inevitable. News came from the West Indies that Martinique had been taken by an expedition which he had sent forth. Havanna fell; and it was known that he had planned an attack on Havanna. Manilla capitulated; and it was believed that he had meditated a blow against Manilla. The American fleet, which he had proposed to intercept, had unloaded an immense cargo of bullion in the haven of Cadiz, before Bute could be convinced that the Court of Madrid really entertained hostile intentions.

The session of Parliament which followed Pitt's retirement passed over without any violent storm. Lord Bute took on himself the most prominent part in the House of Lords. He had become Secretary of State, and indeed prime minister, without having once opened his lips in public except as an actor. There was, therefore, no small curiosity to know how he would acquit himself. Members of the House of Commons crowded the bar of the Lords, and covered the steps of the throne. It was generally expected {33}that the orator would break down; but his most malicious hearers were forced to own that he had made a better figure than they expected. They, indeed, ridiculed his action as theatrical, and his style as tumid. They were especially amused by the long pauses which, not from hesitation, but from affectation, he made at all the emphatic words, and Charles Townshend cried out, "Minute guns!" The general opinion however was, that, if Bute had been early practised in debate, he might have become an impressive speaker.

In the Commons, George Grenville had been intrusted with the lead. The task was not, as yet, a very difficult one: for Pitt did not think fit to raise the standard of opposition. His speeches at this time were distinguished,

not only by that eloquence in which he excelled all his rivals, but also by a temperance and a modesty which had too often been wanting to his character. When war was declared against Spain, he justly laid claim to the merit of having foreseen what had at length become manifest to all, but he carefully abstained from arrogant and acrimonious expressions; and this abstinence was the more honourable to him, because his temper, never very placid, was now severely tried, both by gout and by calumny. The courtiers had adopted a mode of warfare, which was soon turned with far more formidable effect against themselves. Half the inhabitants of the Grub Street garrets paid their milk scores, and got their shirts out of pawn, by abusing Pitt. His German war, his subsidies, his pension, his wife's peerage, were shin of beef and gin, blankets and baskets of small coal, to the starving poetasters of the Fleet. Even in the House of Commons, he was, on one occasion during {34}this session, assailed with an insolence and malice which called forth the indignation of men of all parties; but he endured the outrage with majestic patience. In his younger days he had been but too prompt to retaliate on those who attacked him; but now, conscious of his great services, and of the space which he filled in the eyes of all mankind, he would not stoop to personal squabbles. "This is no season," he said, in the debate on the Spanish war, "for altercation and recrimination. A day has arrived when every Englishman should stand forth for his country. Arm the whole; be one people; forget every thing but the public. I set you the example. Harassed by slanderers, sinking under pain and disease, for the publie I forget both my wrongs and my infirmities!" On a general review of his life, we are inclined to think that his genius and virtue never shone with so pure an effulgence as during the session of 1762.

The session drew towards the close; and Bute, emboldened by the acquiescence of the Houses, resolved to strike another great blow, and to become first minister in name as well as in reality. That coalition, which a few months before had seemed all powerful, had been dissolved. The

retreat of Pitt had deprived the government of popularity. Newcastle had exulted in the fall of the illustrious colleague whom he envied and dreaded, and had not foreseen that his own doom was at hand; he still tried to flatter himself that he was at the head of the government; but insults heaped on insults at length undeceived him. Places which had always been considered as in his gift, were bestowed without any reference to him. His expostulations only called forth significant hints that it was time for him to retire. {35}One day he pressed on Bute the claims of a Whig Prelate to the archbishopric of York. “If your grace thinks so highly of him,” answered Bute, “I wonder that you did not promote him when you had the power.” Still the old man clung with a desperate grasp to the wreck. Seldom, indeed, have Christian meekness and Christian humility equalled the meekness and humility of his patient and abject ambition. At length he was forced to understand that all was over. He quitted that Court where he had held high office during forty-five years, and hid his shame and regret among the cedars of Claremont. Bute became first lord of the treasury.

The favourite had undoubtedly committed a great error. It is impossible to imagine a tool better suited to his purposes than that which he thus threw away, or rather put into the hands of his enemies. If Newcastle had been suffered to play at being first minister, Bute might securely and quietly have enjoyed the substance of power. The gradual introduction of Tories into all the departments of the government might have been effected without any violent clamour, if the chief of the great Whig connection had been ostensibly at the head of affairs. This was strongly represented to Bute by Lord Mansfield, a man who may justly be called the father of modern Toryism, of Toryism modified to suit an order of things under which the House of Commons is the most powerful body in the state. The theories which had dazzled Bute could not impose on the fine intellect of Mansfield. The temerity with which Bute provoked the hostility of powerful and deeply rooted interests, was displeasing to

Mansfield's cold and timid nature. Expostulation, however, was vain. Bute was impatient of advice, {36}drunk with success, eager to he, in show as well as in reality, the head of the government. He had engaged in an undertaking in which a screen was absolutely necessary to his success, and even to his safety. He found an excellent screen ready in the very place where it was most needed; and he rudely pushed it away.

And now the new system of government came into full operation. For the first time since the accession of the House of Hanover, the Tory party was in the ascendant. The prime minister himself was a Tory. Lord Egremont, who had succeeded Pitt as Secretary of State, was a Tory, and the son of a Tory. Sir Francis Dashwood, a man of slender parts, of small experience, and of notoriously immoral character, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, for no reason that could be imagined, except that he was a Tory, and had been a Jacobite. The royal household was filled with men whose favourite toast, a few years before, had been the King over the water. The relative position of the two great national seats of learning was suddenly changed. The University of Oxford had long been the chief seat of disaffection. In troubled times, the High Street had been lined with bayonets; the colleges had been searched by the King's messengers. Grave doctors were in the habit of talking very Ciceronian treason in the theatre; and the undergraduates drank bumpers to Jacobite toasts, and chanted Jacobite airs. Of four successive Chancellors of the University, one had notoriously been in the Pretender's service; the other three were fully believed to be in secret correspondence with the exiled family. Cambridge had therefore been especially favoured by the Hanoverian Princes, and had shown herself grateful {37}for their patronage. George the First had enriched her library; George the Second had contributed munificently to her Senate House. Bishoprics and deaneries were showered on her children. Her Chancellor was Newcastle, the chief of the Whig aristocracy; her High Steward was Hardwicke, the Whig head of the law. Both her burgesses had held office under the Whig ministry.

Times had now changed. The University of Cambridge was received at St. James's with comparative coldness. The answers to the addresses of Oxford were all graciousness and warmth.

The watchwords of the new government were prerogative and purity. The sovereign was no longer to be a puppet in the hands of any subject, or of any combination of subjects. George the Third would not be forced to take ministers whom he disliked, as his grandfather had been forced to take Pitt. George the Third would not be forced to part with any whom he delighted to honour, as his grandfather had been forced to part with Carteret. At the same time, the system of bribery which had grown up during the late reigns was to cease. It was ostentatiously proclaimed that, since the accession of the young King, neither constituents nor representatives had been bought with the secret service money. To free Britain from corruption and oligarchical cabals, to detach her from continental connections, to bring the bloody and expensive war with France and Spain to a close, such were the specious objects which Bute professed to procure.

Some of these objects he attained. England withdrew, at the cost of a deep stain on her faith, from her German connections. The war with France and Spain was terminated by a peace, honourable indeed and advantageous {38}to our country, yet less honourable and less advantageous than might have been expected from a long and almost unbroken series of victories, by land and sea, in every part of the world. But the only effect of Bute's domestic administration was to make faction wilder, and corruption fouler than ever.

The mutual animosity of the Whig and Tory parties had begun to languish after the fall of Walpole, and had seemed to be almost extinct at the close of the reign of George the Second. It now revived in all its force. Many Whigs, it is true, were still in office. The Duke of Bedford had signed the treaty with France. The Duke of Devonshire, though much

out of humour, still continued to be Lord Chamberlain. Grenville, who led the House of Commons, and Fox, who still enjoyed in silence the immense gains of the Pay Office, had always been regarded as strong Whigs. But the bulk of the party throughout the country regarded the new minister with abhorrence. There was, indeed, no want of popular themes for invective against his character. He was a favourite; and favourites have always been odious in this country. No mere favourite had been at the head of the government since the dagger of Felton had reached the heart of the Duke of Buckingham. After that event the most arbitrary and the most frivolous of the Stuarts had felt the necessity of confiding the chief direction of affairs to men who had given some proof of parliamentary or official talent. Strafford, Falkland, Clarendon, Clifford, Shaftesbury, Lauderdale, Dauby, Temple, Halifax, Rochester, Sunderland, whatever their faults might be, were all men of acknowledged ability. They did not owe their eminence merely to the favour of the sovereign. On the contrary, they owed the favour of the {39}sovereign to their eminence. Most of them, indeed, had first attracted the notice of the court by the capacity and vigour which they had shown in opposition. The Revolution seemed to have for ever secured the state against the domination of a Carr or a Villiers. Now, however, the personal regard of the King had at once raised a man who had seen nothing of public business, who had never opened his lips in parliament, over the heads of a crowd of eminent orators, financiers, diplomatists. From a private gentleman, this fortunate minion had at once been turned into a Secretary of State. He had made his maiden speech when at the head of the administration. The vulgar resorted to a simple explanation of the phenomenon, and the coarsest ribaldry against the Princess Mother was scrawled on every wall and sung in every alley.

This was not all. The spirit of party, roused by impolitic provocation from its long sleep, roused in turn a still fiercer and more malignant Fury, the spirit of national animosity. The grudge of Whig against Tory was

mingled with the grudge of Englishman against Scot. The two sections of the great British people had not yet been indissolubly blended together. The events of 1715 and of 1745 had left painful and enduring traces. The tradesmen of Cornhill had been in dread of seeing their tills and warehouses plundered by barelegged mountaineers from the Grampians. They still recollected that Black Friday, when the news came that the rebels were at Derby, when all the shops in the city were closed, and when the Bank of England began to pay in sixpences. The Scots, on the other hand, remembered, with natural resentment, the severity with which the insurgents had been chastised, the military outrages, the humiliating laws, the heads {40}fixed on Temple Bar, the fires and quartering blocks on Kennington Common. The favourite did not suffer the English to forget from what part of the island he came. The cry of all the south was that the public offices, the army, the navy, were filled with highcheeked Drummonds and Erskines, Macdonalds and Macgillivrays, who could not talk a Christian tongue, and some of whom had but lately begun to wear Christian breeches. All the old jokes on hills without trees, girls without stockings, men eating the food of horses, pails emptied from the fourteenth story, were pointed against these lucky adventurers. To the honour of the Scots it must be said, that their prudence and their pride restrained them from retaliation. Like the princess in the Arabian tale, they stopped their ears tight, and, unmoved by the shrillest notes of abuse, walked on, without once looking round, straight towards the Golden Fountain.

Bute, who had always been considered as a man of taste and reading, affected, from the moment of his elevation, the character of a Mæcenas. If he expected to conciliate the public by encouraging literature and art, he was grievously mistaken. Indeed, none of the objects of his munificence, with the single exception of Johnson, can be said to have been well selected; and the public, not unnaturally, ascribed the selection of Johnson rather to the Doctor’s political prejudices than to his literary

merits: for a wretched scribbler named Shebbeare, who had nothing in common with Johnson except violent Jacobitism, and who had stood in the pillory for a libel on the Revolution, was honoured with a mark of royal approbation, similar to that which was bestowed on the author of the English Dictionary, and of the Vanity of Human Wishes. It {41}was remarked that Adam, a Scotchman, was the court architect, and that Ramsay, a Scotchman, was the court painter, and was preferred to Reynolds. Mallet, a Scotchman, of no high literary fame, and of infamous character, partook largely of the liberality of the government. John Home, a Scotchman, was rewarded for the tragedy of Douglas, both with a pension and with a sinecure place. But, when the author of the Bard, and of the Elegy in a Country Churchyard, ventured to ask for a Professorship, the emoluments of which he much needed, and for the duties of which he was, in many respects, better qualified than any man living, he was refused; and the post was bestowed on the pedagogue under whose care the favourite's son-in-law, Sir James Lowther, had made such signal proficiency in the graces and in the humane virtues.

Thus, the first lord of the treasury was detested by many as a Tory, by many as a favourite, and by many as a Scot. All the hatred which flowed from these various sources soon mingled, and was directed in one torrent of obloquy against the treaty of peace. The Duke of Bedford, who had negotiated that treaty, was hooted through the streets. Bute was attacked in his chair, and was with difficulty rescued by a troop of the guards. He could hardly walk the streets in safety without disguising himself. A gentleman who died not many years ago used to say that he once recognised the favourite Earl in the piazza of Covent Garden, muffled in a large coat, and with a hat and wig drawn down over his brows. His lordship's established type with the mob was a jack boot, a wretched pun on his Christian name and title. A jack boot, generally accompanied by a petticoat, was sometimes fastened on a {42}gallows, and sometimes committed to the flames. Libels on the court, exceeding in audacity and

rancour any that had been published for many years, now appeared daily, both in prose and verse. Wilkes, with lively insolence, compared the mother of George the Third to the mother of Edward the Third, and the Scotch minister to the gentle Mortimer. Churchill, with all the energy of hatred, deplored the fate of his country, invaded by a new race of savages, more cruel and ravenous than the Picts or the Danes, the poor, proud children of Leprosy and Hunger. It is a slight circumstance, but deserves to be recorded, that in this year pamphleteers first ventured to print at length the names of the great men whom they lampooned. George the Second had always been the K------. His ministers had been Sir R------W------, Mr. P------, and the Duke of N------. But the libellers of George the Third, of the Princess Mother, and of Lord Bute did not give quarter to a single vowel.

It was supposed that Lord Temple secretly encouraged the most scurrilous assailants of the government. In truth, those who knew his habits tracked him as men track a mole. It was his nature to grub underground. Whenever a heap of dirt was flung up it might well be suspected that he was at work in some foul crooked labyrinth below. Pitt turned away from the filthy work of opposition, with the same scorn with which he had turned away from the filthy work of government. He had the magnanimity to proclaim every where the disgust which he felt at the insults offered by his own adherents to the Scottish nation, and missed no opportunity of extolling the courage and fidelity which the Highland regiments had displayed through the whole war. But, though he disdained to {43}use any but lawful and honourable weapons, it was well known that his fair blows were likely to be far more formidable than the privy thrusts of his brother-in-law’s stiletto.

Bute’s heart began to fail him. The Houses were about to meet. The treaty would instantly be the subject of discussion. It was probable that Pitt, the great Whig connection, and the multitude, would all be on the same side. The favourite had professed to hold in abhorrence those

means by which preceding ministers had kept the House of Commons in good humour. He now began to think that he had been too scrupulous. His Utopian visions were at an end. It was necessary, not only to bribe, but to bribe more shamelessly and flagitiously than his predecessors, in order to make up for lost time. A majority must be secured, no matter by what means. Could Grenville do this? Would he do it? His firmness and ability had not yet been tried in any perilous crisis. He had been generally regarded as a humble follower of his brother Temple, and of his brother-in-law Pitt, and was supposed, though with little reason, to be still favourably inclined towards them. Other aid must be called in. And where was other aid to be found?

There was one man, whose sharp and manly logic had often in debate been found a match for the lofty and impassioned rhetoric of Pitt, whose talents for jobbing were not inferior to his talents for debate, whose dauntless spirit shrank from no difficulty or danger, and who was as little troubled with scruples as with fears. Henry Fox, or nobody, could weather the storm which was about to burst. Yet was he a person to whom the court, even in that extremity, was unwilling to have recourse. He had always been regarded {44}as a Whig of the Whigs. He had been the friend and disciple of Walpole. He had long been connected by close ties with William Duke of Cumberland. By the Tories he was more hated than any man living. So strong was their aversion to him that when, in the late reign, he had attempted to form a party against the Duke of Newcastle, they had thrown all their weight into Newcastle's scale. By the Scots, Fox was abhorred as the confidential friend of the conqueror of Culloden. He was, on personal grounds, most obnoxious to the Princess Mother. For he had, immediately after her husband's death, advised the late King to take the education of her son, the heir apparent, entirely out of her hands. He had recently given, if possible, still deeper offence; for he had indulged, not without some ground, the ambitious hope that his beautiful sister-in-law, the Lady Sarah Lennox, might be queen of

England. It had been observed that the King at one time rode every morning by the grounds of Holland House, and that, on such occasions, Lady Sarah, dressed like a shepherdess at a masquerade, was making hay close to the road, which was then separated by no wall from the lawn. On account of the part which Fox had taken in this singular love affair, he was the only member of the Privy Council who was not summoned to the meeting at which his Majesty announced his intended marriage with the Princess of Mecklenburg. Of all the statesmen of the age, therefore, it seemed that Fox was the last with whom Bute the Tory, the Scot, the favourite of the Princess Mother, could, under any circumstances, act. Yet to Fox Bute was now compelled to apply.

Fox had many noble and amiable qualities, which in private life shone forth in full lustre, and made him {45}dear to his children, to his dependents, and to his friends; but as a public man he had no title to esteem. In him the vices which were common to the whole school of Walpole appeared, not perhaps in then-worst, but certainly in their most prominent form; for his parliamentary and official talents made all his faults conspicuous. His courage, his vehement temper, his contempt for appearances, led him to display much that others, quite as unscrupulous as himself, covered with a decent veil. He was the most unpopular of the statesmen of his time, not because he sinned more than many of them, but because he canted less.

He felt his unpopularity; but he felt it after the fashion of strong minds. He became, not cautious, but reckless, and faced the rage of the whole nation with a scowl of inflexible defiance. He was born with a sweet and generous temper; but he had been goaded and baited into a savageness which was not natural to him, and which amazed and shocked those who knew him best. Such was the man to whom Bute, in extreme need, applied for succour.

That succour Fox was not unwilling to afford. Though by no means of an envious temper, he had undoubtedly contemplated the success and popularity of Pitt with bitter mortification. He thought himself Pitt's match as a debater, and Pitt's superior as a man of business. They had long been regarded as well-paired rivals. They had started fair in the career of ambition. They had long run side by side. At length Fox had taken the lead, and Pitt had fallen behind. Then had come a sudden turn of fortune, like that in Virgil's foot-race. Fox had stumbled in the mire, and had not only been defeated, but befouled. Pitt had reached the goal, and received the prize. The emoluments {46}of the Pay Office might induce the defeated statesman to submit in silence to the ascendency of his competitor, but, could not satisfy a mind conscious of great powers, and sore from great vexations. As soon, therefore, as a party arose adverse to the war and to the supremacy of the great war minister, the hopes of Fox began to revive. His feuds with the Princess Mother, with the Scots, with the Tories, he was ready to forget, if, by the help of his old enemies, he could now regain the importance which he had lost, and confront Pitt on equal terms.

The alliance was, therefore, soon concluded. Fox was assured that, if he would pilot the government out of its embarrassing situation, he should be rewarded with a peerage, of which he had long been desirous. He undertook on his side to obtain, by fair or foul means, a vote in favour of the peace. In consequence of this arrangement he became leader of the House of Commons; and Grenville, stifling his vexation as well as he could, sullenly acquiesced in the change.

Fox had expected that his influence would secure to the court the cordial support of some eminent Whigs who were his personal friends, particularly of the Duke of Cumberland and of the Duke of Devonshire. He was disappointed, and soon found that, in addition to all his other difficulties, he must reckon on the opposition of the ablest prince of the blood, and of the great house of Cavendish.

But he had pledged himself to win the battle; and he was not a man to go back. It was no time for squeamishness. Bute was made to comprehend that the ministry could be saved only by practising the tactics of Walpole to an extent at which Walpole {47}himself would have stared. The Pay Office was turned into a mart for votes. Hundreds of members were closeted there with Fox, and, as there is too much reason to believe, departed carrying with them the wages of infamy. It was affirmed by persons who had the best opportunities of obtaining information, that twenty-five thousand pounds were thus paid away in a single morning. The lowest bribe given, it was said, was a bank-note for two hundred pounds.

Intimidation was joined with corruption. All ranks, from the highest to the lowest, were to be taught that the King would be obeyed. The Lords Lieutenants of several counties were dismissed. The Duke of Devonshire was especially singled out as the victim by whose fate the magnates of England were to take warning. His wealth, rank, and influence, his stainless private character, and the constant attachment of his family to the House of Hanover did not secure him from gross personal indignity. It was known that he disapproved of the course which the government had taken; and it was accordingly determined to humble the Prince of the Whigs, as he had been nicknamed by the Princess Mother. He went to the palace to pay his duty. “Tell him,” said the King to a page, “that I will not see him.” The page hesitated. “Go to him,” said the King, “and tell him those very words.” The message was delivered. The Duke tore off his gold key, and went away boiling with anger. His relations who were in office instantly resigned. A few days later, the King called for the list of Privy Councillors, and with his own hand struck out the Duke’s name.

In this step there was at least courage, though little wisdom or good nature. But, as nothing was too high {48} for the revenge of the court, so also was nothing too low. A persecution, such as had never been known before, and has never been known since, raged in every public

department. Great numbers of humble and laborious clerks were deprived of their bread, not because they had neglected their duties, not because they had taken an active part against the ministry, but merely because they had owed their situations to the recommendation of some nobleman or gentleman who was against the peace. The proscription extended to tidewaiters, to gaugers, to doorkeepers. One poor man to whom a pension had been given for his gallantry in a fight with smugglers, was deprived of it because he had been befriended by the Duke of Grafton. An aged widow, who, on account of her husband's services in the navy, had, many years before, been made housekeeper to a public office, was dismissed from her situation, because it was imagined that she was distantly connected by marriage with the Cavendish family. The public clamour, as may well be supposed, grew daily louder and louder. But the louder it grew, the more resolutely did Fox go on with the work which he had begun. His old friends could not conceive what had possessed him. "I could forgive," said the Duke of Cumberland, "Fox's political vagaries; but I am quite confounded by his inhumanity. Surely he used to be the best-natured of men."

At last Fox went so far as to take a legal opinion on the question, whether the patents granted by George the Second were binding on George the Third. It is said, that, if his colleagues had not flinched, he would at once have turned out the Tellers of the Exchequer and Justices in Eyre.

Meanwhile the Parliament met. The ministers, more {49}hated by the people than ever, were secure of a majority, and they had also reason to hope that they would have the advantage in the debates as well as in the divisions; for Pitt was confined to his chamber by a severe attack of gout. His friends moved to defer the consideration of the treaty till he should be able to attend: but the motion was rejected. The great day arrived. The discussion had lasted some time, when a loud huzza was heard in Palace Yard. The noise came nearer and nearer, up the stairs, through the lobby. The door opened, and from the midst of a shouting multitude came forth

Pitt, borne in the arms of his attendants. His face was thin and ghastly, his limbs swathed in flannel, his crutch in his hand. The bearers set him down within the bar. His friends instantly surrounded him, and with their help he crawled to his seat near the table. In this condition he spoke three hours and a half against the peace. During that time he was repeatedly forced to sit down and to use cordials. It may well be supposed that his voice was faint, that his action was languid, and that his speech, though occasionally brilliant and impressive, was feeble when compared with his best oratorical performances. But those who remembered what he had done, and who saw what he suffered, listened to him with emotions stronger than any that mere eloquence can produce. He was unable to stay for the division, and was carried away from the House amidst shouts as loud as those which had announced his arrival.

A large majority approved the peace. The exultation of the court was boundless. “Now,” exclaimed the Princess Mother, “my son is really King.” The young sovereign spoke of himself as freed from the {50}bondage in which his grandfather had been held. On one point, it was announced, his mind was unalterably made up. Under no circumstances whatever should those Whig grandees, who had enslaved his predecessors and endeavoured to enslave himself, be restored to power.

This vaunting was premature. The real strength of the favourite was by no means proportioned to the number of votes which he had, on one particular division, been able to command. He was soon again in difficulties. The most important part of his budget was a tax on cider. This measure was opposed, not only by those who were generally hostile to his administration, but also by many of his supporters. The name of excise had always been hateful to the Tories. One of the chief crimes of Walpole in their eyes, had been his partiality for this mode of raising money. The Tory Johnson had in his Dictionary given so scurrilous a definition of the word Excise, that the Commissioners of Excise had

seriously thought of prosecuting him. The counties which the new impost particularly affected had always been Tory counties. It was the boast of John Philips, the poet of the English vintage, that the Cider-land had ever been faithful to the throne, and that all the pruning-hooks of her thousand orchards had been beaten into swords for the service of the ill fated Stuarts. The effect of Bute's fiscal scheme was to produce an union between the gentry and yeomanry of the Cider-land and the Whigs of the capital. Herefordshire and Worcestershire were in a flame. The city of London, though not so directly interested, was, if possible, still more excited. The debates on this question irreparably damaged the government. Dashwood's financial statement {51}had been confused and absurd beyond belief, and had been received by the House with roars of laughter. He had sense enough to be conscious of his unfitness for the high situation which he held, and exclaimed in a comical fit of despair, "What shall I do? The boys will point at me in the street, and cry, 'There goes the worst Chancellor of the Exchequer that ever was.'" George Grenville came to the rescue, and spoke strongly on his favourite theme, the profusion with which the late war had been carried on. That profusion, he said, had made taxes necessary. He called on the gentlemen opposite to him to say where they would have a tax laid, and dwelt on this topic with his usual prolixity. "Let them tell me where," he repeated in a monotonous and somewhat fretful tone. "I say, sir, let them tell me where. I repeat it, sir; I am entitled to say to them, Tell me where." Unluckily for him, Pitt had come down to the House that night, and had been bitterly provoked by the reflections thrown on the war. He revenged himself by murmuring, in a whine resembling Grenville's, a line of a well known song, "Gentle Shepherd, tell me where."

"If," cried Grenville, "gentlemen are to be treated in this way----"

Pitt, as was his fashion, when he meant to mark extreme contempt, rose deliberately, made his bow, and walked out of the House, leaving his brother-in-law in convulsions of rage, and every body else in convulsions

of laughter. It was long before Grenville lost the nickname of the Gentle Shepherd.

But the ministry had vexations still more serious to endure. The hatred which the Tories and Scots bore to Fox was implacable. In a moment of extreme peril, they had consented to put themselves under his guidance. {52}But the aversion with which they regarded him broke forth as soon as the crisis seemed to be over. Some of them attacked him about the accounts of the Pay Office. Some of them rudely interrupted him when speaking, by laughter and ironical cheers, he was naturally desirous to escape from so disagreeable a situation, and demanded the peerage which had been promised as the reward of his services.

It was clear that there must be some change in the composition of the ministry. But scarcely any, even of those who, from their situation, might be supposed to be in all the secrets of the government, anticipated what really took place. To the amazement of the Parliament and the nation, it was suddenly announced that Bute had resigned.

Twenty different explanations of this strange step were suggested. Some attributed it to profound design, and some to sudden panic. Some said that the lampoons of the opposition had driven the Earl from the field; some that he had taken office only in order to bring the war to a close, and had always meant to retire when that object had been accomplished. He publicly assigned ill health as his reason for quitting business, and privately complained that he was not cordially seconded by his colleagues, and that Lord Mansfield, in particular, whom he had himself brought into the cabinet, gave him no support in the House of Peers. Mansfield was, indeed, far too sagacious not to perceive that Bute’s situation was one of great peril, and far too timorous to thrust himself into peril for the sake of another. The probability, however, is that Bute’s conduct on this occasion, like the conduct of most men on most occasions, was determined by mixed motives. We suspect that he was

sick of office; for {53}this is a feeling much more common among ministers than persons who see public life from a distance are disposed to believe; and nothing could be more natural than that this feeling should take possession of the mind of Bute. In general, a statesman climbs by slow degrees. Many laborious years elapse before he reaches the topmost pinnacle of preferment. In the earlier part of his career, therefore, he is constantly lured on by seeing something above him. During his ascent he gradually becomes inured to the annoyances which belong to a life of ambition. By the time that he has attained the highest point, he has become patient of labour and callous to abuse. He is kept constant to his vocation, in spite of all its discomforts, at first by hope, and at last by habit. It was not so with Bute. His whole public life lasted little more than two years. On the day on which he became a politician he became a cabinet minister. In a few months he was, both in name and in show, chief of the administration. Greater than he had been he could not be. If what he already possessed was vanity and vexation of spirit, no delusion remained to entice him onward. He had been cloyed with the pleasures of ambition before he had been seasoned to its pains. His habits had not been such as were likely to fortify his mind against obloquy and public hatred. He had reached his forty-eighth year in dignified ease, without knowing, by personal experience, what it was to be ridiculed and slandered. All at once, without any previous initiation, he had found himself exposed to such a storm of invective and satire as had never burst on the head of any statesman. The emoluments of office were now nothing to him; for he had just succeeded to a princely property by the death of his father-in-law. All the honours {54}which could be bestowed on him he had already secured. He had obtained the Garter for himself, and a British peerage for his son. He seems also to have imagined that by quitting the treasury he should escape from danger and abuse without really resigning power, and should still be able to exercise in private supreme influence over the royal mind.

Whatever may have been his motives, he retired. Fox at the same time took refuge in the House of Lords; and George Grenville became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

We believe that those who made this arrangement fully intended that Grenville should be a mere puppet in the hands of Bute; for Grenville was as yet very imperfectly known even to those who had observed him long. He passed for a mere official drudge; and he had all the industry, the minute accuracy, the formality, the tediousness, which belong to the character. But he had other qualities which had not yet shown themselves, devouring ambition, dauntless courage, selfconfidence amounting to presumption, and a temper which could not endure opposition. He was not disposed to be any body's tool; and he had no attachment, political or personal, to Bute. The two men had, indeed, nothing in common, except a strong propensity towards harsh and unpopular courses. Their principles were fundamentally different. Bute was a Tory. Grenville would have been very angry with any person who should have denied his claim to be a Whig. He was more prone to tyrannical measures than Bute; but he loved tyranny only when disguised under the forms of constitutional liberty. He mixed up, after a fashion then not very unusual, the theories of the republicans of the seventeenth century with the technical maxims {55}of English law, and thus succeeded in combining anarchical speculation with arbitrary practice. The voice of the people was the voice of God; but the only legitimate organ through which the voice of the people could be uttered was the Parliament. All power was from the people; but to the Parliament the whole power of the people had been delegated. No Oxonian divine had ever, even in the years which immediately followed the Restoration, demanded for the King so abject, so unreasoning a homage, as Grenville on what he considered as the purest Whig principles, demanded for the Parliament. As he wished to see the Parliament despotic over the nation, so he wished to see it also despotic over the court. In his view the prime

minister, possessed of the confidence of the House of Commons, ought to be Mayor of the Palace. The King was a mere Childeric or Chilperic, who might well think himself lucky in being permitted to enjoy such handsome apartments at St. James's, and so fine a park at Windsor.

Thus the opinions of Bute and those of Grenville were diametrically opposed. Nor was there any private friendship between the two statesmen. Grenville's nature was not forgiving; and he well remembered how, a few months before, he had been compelled to yield the lead of the House of Commons to Fox.

We are inclined to think, on the whole, that the worst administration which has governed England since the Revolution was that of George Grenville. His public acts may be classed under two heads, outrages on the liberty of the people, and outrages on the dignity of the crown.

He began by making war on the press. John Wilkes, member of Parliament for Aylesbury, was singled out {56}for persecution. Wilkes had, till very lately, been known chiefly as one of the most profane, licentious, and agreeable rakes about town. He was a man of taste, reading, and engaging manners. His sprightly conversation was the delight of green rooms and taverns, and pleased even grave hearers when he was sufficiently under restraint to abstain from detailing the particulars of his amours, and from breaking jests on the New Testament. His expensive debaucheries forced him to have recourse to the Jews. He was soon a ruined man, and determined to try his chance as a political adventurer. In parliament he did not succeed. His speaking, though pert, was feeble, and by no means interested his hearers so much as to make them forget his face, which was so hideous that the caricaturists were forced, in their own despite, to flatter him. As a writer, he made a better figure. He set up a weekly paper, called the North Briton. This journal, written with some pleasantry, and great, audacity and impudence, had a considerable number of readers. Forty-four numbers had been published

when Bute resigned; and, though almost every number had contained matter grossly libellous, no prosecution had been instituted. The forty-fifth number was innocent when compared with the majority of those which had preceded it, and indeed contained nothing so strong as may in our time be found daily in the leading articles of the Times and Morning Chronicle. But Grenville was now at the head of affairs. A new spirit had been infused into the administration. Authority was to be upheld. The government was no longer to be braved with impunity. Wilkes was arrested under a general warrant, conveyed to the Tower, and confined there with circumstances of unusual severity. His papers were {57}seized, and carried to the Secretary of State. These harsh and illegal measures produced a violent outbreak of popular rage, which was soon changed to delight and exultation. The arrest was pronounced unlawful by the Court of Common Pleas, in which Chief Justice Pratt presided, and the prisoner was discharged. This victory over the government was celebrated with enthusiasm both in London and in the cider counties.

While the ministers were daily becoming more odious to the nation, they were doing their best to make themselves also odious to the court. They gave the King plainly to understand that they were determined not to be Lord Bute’s creatures, and exacted a promise that no secret adviser should have access to the royal ear. They soon found reason to suspect that this promise had not been observed. They remonstrated in terms less respectful than their master had been accustomed to hear, and gave him a fortnight to make his choice between his favourite and his cabinet.

George the Third was greatly disturbed. He had but a few weeks before exulted in his deliverance from the yoke of the great Whig connection. He had even declared that his honour would not permit him ever again to admit the members of that connection into his service. He now found that he had only exchanged one set of masters for another set still harsher and more imperious. In his distress he thought on Pitt. From Pitt it was

possible that better terms might be obtained than either from Grenville, or from the party of which Newcastle was the head.

Grenville, on his return from an excursion into the country, repaired to Buckingham House. He was astonished to find at the entrance a chair, the shape of which {58}was well known to him, and indeed to all London. It was distinguished by a large boot, made for the purpose of accommodating the great Commoner's gouty leg. Grenville guessed the whole. His brother-in-law was closeted with the King. Bute, provoked by what he considered as the unfriendly and ungrateful conduct of his successors, had himself proposed that Pitt should be summoned to the palace.

Pitt had two audiences on two successive days. What passed at the first interview led him to expect that the negotiation would be brought to a satisfactory close; but on the morrow he found the King less complying. The best account, indeed the only trustworthy account of the conference, is that which was taken from Pitt's own mouth by Lord Hardwicke. It appears that Pitt strongly represented the importance of conciliating those chiefs of the Whig party who had been so unhappy as to incur the royal displeasure. They had, he said, been the most constant friends of the House of Hanover. Their power was great; they had been long versed in public business. If they were to be under sentence of exclusion, a solid administration could not be formed. His Majesty could not bear to think of putting himself into the hands of those whom he had recently chased from his court with the strongest marks of anger. "I am sorry, Mr. Pitt," he said, "but I see this will not do. My honour is concerned. I must support my honour." How his Majesty succeeded in supporting his honour, we shall soon see.

Pitt retired, and the King was reduced to request the ministers, whom he had been on the point of discarding to remain in office. During the two years which followed, Grenville, now closely leagued with the

{59}Bedfords, was the master of the court; and a hard master he proved. He knew that he was kept in place only because there was no choice except between himself and the Whigs. That under any circumstances the Whigs would be forgiven, he thought impossible. The late attempt to get rid of him had roused his resentment; the failure of that attempt had liberated him from all fear. He had never been very courtly. He now begun to hold a language, to which, since the days of Cornet Joyce and President Bradshaw, no English King had been compelled to listen.

In one matter, indeed, Grenville, at the expense of justice and liberty, gratified the passions of the court while gratifying his own. The persecution of Wilkes was eagerly pressed. He had written a parody on Pope's Essay on Man, entitled the Essay on Woman, and had appended to it notes, in ridicule of Waburton's famous Commentary. This composition was exceedingly profligate, but not more so, we think, than some of Pope's own works, the imitation of the second satire of the first book of Horace, for example; and, to do Wilkes justice, he had not, like Pope, given his ribaldry to the world. He had merely printed at a private press a very small number of copies, which he meant to present to some of his boon companions, whose morals were in no more danger of being corrupted by a loose book than a negro of being tanned by a warm sun. A tool of the government, by giving a bribe to the printer, procured a copy of this trash, and placed it in the hands of the ministers. The ministers resolved to visit Wilkes's offence against decorum with the utmost rigour of the law. What share piety and respect for morals had in dictating this resolution, our readers may judge from the fact that no person was more {60}eager for bringing the libertine poet to punishment than Lord March, afterwards Duke of Queensberry.

On the first day of the session of Parliament, the book, thus disgracefully obtained, was laid on the table of the Lords by the Earl of Sandwich, whom the Duke of Bedford's interest had made Secretary of State. The unfortunate author had not the slightest suspicion that his licentious poem

had ever been seen, except by his printer and by a few of his dissipated companions, till it was produced in full Parliament. Though he was a man of easy temper, averse from danger, and not very susceptible of shame, the surprise, the disgrace, the prospect of utter ruin, put him beside himself. He picked a quarrel with one of Lord Bute's dependents, fought a duel, was seriously wounded, and when half recovered, fled to France. His enemies had now their own way both in the Parliament and in the King's Bench. He was censured, expelled from the House of Commons, outlawed. His works were ordered to be burned by the common hangman. Yet was the multitude still true to him. In the minds even of many moral and religious men, his crime seemed light when compared with the crime of his accusers. The conduct of Sandwich, in particular, excited universal disgust. His own vices were notorious; and, only a fortnight before he laid the Essay on Woman before the House of Lords, he had been drinking and singing loose catches with Wilkes at one of the most dissolute clubs in London. Shortly after the meeting of Parliament, the Beggar's Opera was acted at Covent Garden theatre. When Macheath uttered the words--"That Jemmy Twitcher should peach me I own surprised me,"--pit, boxes, and galleries, burst into a roar which seemed likely to bring the roof down.

From {61}that day Sandwich was universally known by the nickname of Jemmy Twitcher. The ceremony of burning the North Briton was interrupted by a riot. The constables were beaten; the paper was rescued; and, instead of it, a jack boot and a petticoat were committed to the flames. Wilkes had instituted an action for the seizure of his papers against the Undersecretary of State. The jury gave a thousand pounds damages. But neither these nor any other indications of public feeling had power to move Grenville. He had the Parliament with him: and, according to his political creed, the sense of the nation was to be collected from the Parliament alone.

Soon, however, he found reason to fear that even the Parliament might fail him. On the question of the legality of general warrants, the Opposition, having on its side all sound principles, all constitutional authorities, and the voice of the whole nation, mustered in great force, and was joined by many who did not ordinarily vote against the government. On one occasion the ministry, in a very full House, had a majority of only fourteen votes. The storm, however, blew over. The spirit of the Opposition, from whatever cause, began to flag at the moment when success seemed almost certain. The session ended without any change. Pitt, whose eloquence had shone with its usual lustre in all the principal debates, and whose popularity was greater than ever, was still a private man. Grenville, detested alike by the court and by the people, was still minister.

As soon as the Houses had risen, Grenville took a step which proved, even more signally than any of his past acts, how despotic, how acrimonious, and how fearless his nature was. Among the gentlemen not ordinarily {62}opposed to the government, who, on the great constitutional question of general warrants, had voted with the minority was Henry Conway, brother of the Earl of Hertford, a brave soldier, a tolerable speaker, and a well-meaning, though not a wise or vigorous politician, he was now deprived of his regiment, the merited reward of faithful and gallant service in two wars. It was confidently asserted that in this violent measure the King heartily concurred.

But whatever pleasure the persecution of Wilkes, or the dismissal of Conway, may have given to the royal mind, it is certain that his Majesty’s aversion to his ministers increased day by day. Grenville was as frugal of the public money as of his own, and morosely refused to accede to the King’s request, that a few thousand pounds might be expended in buying some open fields to the west of the gardens of Buckingham House. In consequence of this refusal, the fields were soon covered with buildings, and the King and Queen were overlooked in their

most private walks by the upper windows of a hundred houses. Nor was this the worst. Grenville was as liberal of words as he was sparing of guineas. Instead of explaining himself in that clear, concise, and lively manner, which alone could win the attention of a young mind new to business, he spoke in the closet just as he spoke in the House of Commons. When he had harangued two hours, he looked at his watch, as he had been in the habit of looking at the clock opposite the Speaker's chair, apologised for the length of his discourse, and then went on for an hour more. The members of the House of Commons can cough an orator down, or can walk away to dinner; and they were by no means sparing in the use of these privileges when Grenville was {63}on his legs. But the poor young King had to endure all this eloquence with mournful civility. To the end of his life he continued to talk with horror of Grenville's orations.

About this time took place one of the most singular events in Pitt's life. There was a certain Sir William Pynsent, a Somersetshire baronet of Whig politics, who had been a Member of the House of Commons in the days of Queen Anne, and had retired to rural privacy when the Tory party, towards the end of her reign, obtained the ascendency in her councils. His manners were eccentric. His morals lay under very odious imputations. But his fidelity to his political opinions was unalterable. During fifty years of seclusion he continued to brood over the circumstances which had driven him from public life, the dismissal of the Whigs, the peace of Utrecht, the desertion of our allies. He now thought that he perceived a close analogy between the well remembered events of his youth and the events which he had witnessed in extreme old age; between the disgrace of Marlborough and the disgrace of Pitt; between the elevation of Harley and the elevation of Bute; between the treaty negotiated by St. John and the treaty negotiated by Bedford; between the wrongs of the House of Austria in 1712 and the wrongs of the House of Brandenburgh in 1762.

This fancy took such possession of the old man's mind that he determined to leave his whole property to Pitt. In this way Pitt unexpectedly came into possession of near three thousand pounds a year. Nor could all the malice of his enemies find any ground for reproach in the transaction. Nobody could call him a legacy hunter. Nobody could accuse him of seizing that to which others had a better claim.

For {64}he had never in his life seen Sir William; and Sir William had left no relation so near as to be entitled to form any expectations respecting the estate.

The fortunes of Pitt seemed to flourish; but his health was worse than ever. We cannot find that, during the session which began in January 1760, he once appeared in parliament. He remained some months in profound retirement at Hayes, his favourite villa, scarcely moving except from his armchair to his bed, and from his bed to his armchair, and often employing his wife as his amanuensis in his most confidential correspondence. Some of his detractors whispered that his invisibility was to be ascribed quite as much to affectation as to gout. In truth his character, high and splendid as it was, wanted simplicity. With genius which did not need the aid of stage tricks, and with a spirit which should have been far above them, he had yet been, through life, in the habit of practising them. It was, therefore, now surmised that, having acquired all the consideration which could be derived from eloquence and from great services to the state, he had determined not to make himself cheap by often appearing in public, but, under the pretext of ill health, to surround himself with mystery, to emerge only at long intervals and on momentous occasions, and at other times to deliver his oracles only to a few favoured votaries, who were suffered to make pilgrimages to his shrine. If such were his object, it was for a time fully attained. Never was the magic of his name so powerful, never was he regarded by his country with such superstitious veneration, as during this year of silence and seclusion.

While Pitt was thus absent from Parliament, Grenville proposed a measure destined to produce a great revolution, {65}the effects of which will long be felt by the whole human race. We speak of the act for imposing stamp duties on the North American colonies. The plan was eminently characteristic of its author. Every feature of the parent was found in the child. A timid statesman would have shrunk from a step, of which Walpole, at a time when the colonies were far less powerful, had said--"He who shall propose it will be a much bolder man than I." But the nature of Grenville was insensible to fear. A statesman of large views would have felt that to lay taxes at Westminster on New England and New York, was a course opposed, not indeed to the letter of the Statute Book, or to any decision contained in the Term Reports, but to the principles of good government, and to the spirit of the constitution. A statesman of large views would also have felt, that ten times the estimated produce of the American stamps would have been dearly purchased by even a transient quarrel between the mother country and the colonies. But Grenville knew of no spirit of the constitution distinct from the letter of the law, and of no national interests except those which are expressed by pounds, shillings, and pence. That his policy might give birth to deep discontents in all the provinces, from the shore of the Great Lakes to the Mexican sea; that France and Spain might seize the opportunity of revenge; that the empire might be dismembered; that the debt, that debt with the amount of which he perpetually reproached Pitt, might, in consequence of his own policy, be doubled; these were possibilities which never occurred to that small, sharp mind.

The Stamp Act will be remembered as long as the globe lasts. But, at the time, it attracted much less notice in this country than another Act which is now almost {66}utterly forgotten. The King fell ill, and was thought to be in a dangerous state. His complaint, we believe, was the same which, at a later period, repeatedly incapacitated him for the performance of his regal functions. The heir apparent was only two years old. It was clearly

proper to make provision for the administration of the government, in case of a minority. The discussions on this point brought the quarrel between the court and the ministry to a crisis. The King wished to be intrusted with the power of naming a regent by will. The ministers feared, or affected to fear, that, if this power were conceded to him, he would name the Princess Mother, nay, possibly the Earl of Bute. They, therefore, insisted on introducing into the bill words confining the King's choice to the royal family. Having thus excluded Bute, they urged the King to let them, in the most marked manner, exclude the Princess Dowager also. They assured him that the House of Commons would undoubtedly strike her name out, and by this threat they wrung from him a reluctant assent. In a few days, it appeared that the representations by which they had induced the King to put this gross and public affront on his mother were unfounded. The friends of the Princess in the House of Commons moved that her name should be inserted. The ministers could not decently attack the parent of their master. They hoped that the Opposition would come to their help, and put on them a force to which they would gladly have yielded. But the majority of the Opposition, though hating the Princess, hated Grenville more, beheld his embarrassment with delight, and would do nothing to extricate him from it. The Princess's name was accordingly placed in the list of persons qualified to hold the regency.

The {67}King's resentment was now at the height. The present evil seemed to him more intolerable than any other. Even the junta of Whig grandees could not treat him worse than he had been treated by his present ministers. In his distress, he poured out his whole heart to his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland. The Duke was not a man to be loved; but he was eminently a man to be trusted. He had an intrepid temper, a strong understanding, and a high sense of honour and duty. As a general, he belonged to a remarkable class of captains, captains, we mean, whose fate it has been to lose almost all the battles which they have fought, and

yet to be reputed stout and skilful soldiers. Such captains were Coligni and William the Third. We might, perhaps, add Marshal Soult to the list. The bravery of the Duke of Cumberland was such as distinguished him even among the princes of his brave house. The indifference with which he rode about amidst musket balls and cannon balls was not the highest proof of his fortitude. Hopeless maladies, horrible surgical operations, far from unmanning him, did not even discompose him. With courage, he had the virtues which are akin to courage. He spoke the truth, was open in enmity and friendship, and upright in all his dealings. But his nature was hard; and what seemed to him justice was rarely tempered with mercy. He was, therefore, during many years one of the most unpopular men in England. The severity with which he had treated the rebels after the battle of Culloden, had gained for him the name of the Butcher. His attempts to introduce into the army of England, then in a most disorderly state, the rigorous discipline of Potsdam, had excited still stronger disgust. Nothing was too bad to be believed of him. Many honest people were {68}so absurd as to fancy that, if he were left Regent during the minority of his nephews, there would be another smothering in the Tower. These feelings, however, had passed away. The Duke had been living, during some years, in retirement. The English, full of animosity against the Scots, now blamed his Royal Highness only for having left so many Camerons and Macphersons to be made gaugers and customhouse officers. He was, therefore, at present, a favourite with his countrymen, and especially with the inhabitants of London.

He had little reason to love the King, and had shown clearly, though not obtrusively, his dislike of the system which had lately been pursued. But he had high and almost romantic notions of the duty which, as a prince of the blood, he owed to the head of his house. He determined to extricate his nephew from bondage, and to effect a reconciliation between the Whig party and the throne, on terms honourable to both.

In this mind he set off for Hayes, and was admitted to Pitt's sick room; for Pitt would not leave his chamber, and would not communicate with any messenger of inferior dignity. And now began a long series of errors on the part of the illustrious statesman, errors which involved his country in difficulties and distresses more serious even than those from which his genius had formerly rescued her. His language was haughty, unreasonable, almost unintelligible. The only thing which could be discerned through a cloud of vague and not very gracious phrases, was that he would not at that moment take office. The truth, we believe, was this. Lord Temple, who was Pitt's evil genius, had just formed a new scheme of politics. Hatred of Bute and {69}of the Princess had, it should seem, taken entire possession of Temple's soul. He had quarrelled with his brother George, because George had been connected with Bute and the Princess. Now that George appeared to be the enemy of Bute and of the Princess, Temple was eager to bring about a general family reconciliation. The three brothers, as Temple, Grenville, and Pitt, were popularly called, might make a ministry, without leaning for aid either on Bute or on the Whig connection. With such views, Temple used all his influence to dissuade Pitt from acceding to the propositions of the Duke of Cumberland. Pitt was not convinced. But Temple had an influence over him such as no other person had ever possessed. They were very old friends, very near relations. If Pitt's talents and fame had been useful to Temple, Temple's purse had formerly, in times of great need, been useful to Pitt. They had never been parted in politics. Twice they had come into the cabinet together; twice they had left it together. Pitt could not bear to think of taking office without his chief ally. Yet he felt that he was doing wrong, that he was throwing away a great opportunity of serving his country. The obscure and unconciliatory style of the answers which he returned to the overtures of the Duke of Cumberland, may be ascribed to the embarrassment and vexation of a mind not at peace with itself. It is said that he mournfully exclaimed to Temple,

“Exstinxti te meque, soror, populumque, patresque

Sidonios, urbemque tuam.”

The prediction was but too just.

Finding Pitt impracticable, the Duke of Cumberland advised the King to submit to necessity, and to keep Grenville and the Bedfords. It was, indeed, not a {70}time at which offices could safely be left vacant. The unsettled state of the government had produced a general relaxation through all the departments of the public service. Meetings, which at another time would have been harmless, now turned to riots, and rapidly rose almost to the dignity of rebellions. The Houses of Parliament were blockaded by the Spitalfields weavers.

Bedford House was assailed on all sides by a furious rabble, and was strongly garrisoned with horse and foot. Some people attributed these disturbances to the friends of Bute, and some to the friends of Wilkes. But, whatever might be the cause, the effect was general insecurity. Under such circumstances the King had no choice. With bitter feelings of mortification, he informed the ministers that he meant to retain them.

They answered by demanding from him a promise on his royal word never more to consult Lord Bute.

The promise was given. They then demanded something more. Lord Bute’s brother, Mr. Mackenzie, held a lucrative office in Scotland. Mr. Mackenzie must be dismissed. The King replied that the office had been given under very peculiar circumstances, and that he had promised never to take it away while he lived. Grenville was obstinate; and the King, with a very bad grace, yielded.

The session of Parliament was over. The triumph of the ministers was complete. The King was almost as much a prisoner as Charles the First had been, when in the Isle of Wight. Such were the fruits of the policy

which, only a few months before, was represented as having for ever secured the throne against the dictation of insolent subjects.

His Majesty's natural resentment showed itself in every {71}look and word. In his extremity he looked wistfully towards that Whig connection, once the object of his dread and hatred. The Duke of Devonshire, who had been treated with such unjustifiable harshness, had lately died, and had been succeeded by his son, who was still a boy. The King condescended to express his regret for what had passed, and to invite the young Duke to court. The noble youth came, attended by his uncles, and was received with marked graciousness.

This and many other symptoms of the same kind irritated the ministers. They had still in store for their sovereign an insult which would have provoked his grandfather to kick them out of the room. Grenville and Bedford demanded an audience of him, and read him a remonstrance of many pages, which they had drawn up with great care. His Majesty was accused of breaking his word, and of treating his advisers with gross unfairness. The Princess was mentioned in language by no means eulogistic. Hints were thrown out that Bute's head was in danger. The King was plainly told that he must not continue to show, as he had done, that he disliked the situation in which he was placed, that he must frown upon the Opposition, that he must carry it fair towards his ministers in public. He several times interrupted the reading, by declaring that he had ceased to hold any communication with Bute. But the ministers, disregarding his denial, went on; and the King listened in silence, almost choked by rage. When they ceased to read, he merely made a gesture expressive of his wish to be left alone. He afterwards owned that he thought he should have gone into a fit.

Driven to despair, he again had recourse to the Duke of {72}Cumberland; and the Duke of Cumberland again had recourse to Pitt. Pitt was really desirous to undertake the direction of affairs, and

owned, with many dutiful expressions, that the terms offered by the King were all that any subject could desire. But Temple was impracticable; and Pitt, with great regret, declared that he could not, without the concurrence of his brother-in-law, undertake the administration.

The Duke now saw only one way of delivering his nephew. An administration must be formed of the Whigs in opposition, without Pitt's help. The difficulties seemed almost insuperable. Death and desertion had grievously thinned the ranks of the party lately supreme in the state. Those among whom the Duke's choice lay might be divided into two classes, nun too old for important offices, and men who had never been in any important office before. The cabinet must be composed of broken invalids or of raw recruits.

This was an evil, yet not an unmixed evil. If the new Whig statesmen had little experience in business and debate, they were, on the other hand, pure from the taint of that political immorality which had deeply infected their predecessors. Long prosperity had corrupted that great party which had expelled the Stuarts, limited the prerogatives of the Crown, and curbed the intolerance of the Hierarchy. Adversity had already produced a salutary effect. On the dav of the accession of George the Third, the ascendency of the Whig party terminated; and on that day the purification of the Whig party began. The rising chiefs of that party were men of a very different sort from Sandys and Wilmington, from Sir William Yonge and Henry Fox. They were men worthy to have charged by the side of Hampden {73}at Chalgrove, or to have exchanged the last embrace with Russell on the scaffold in Lincoln's Inn Fields. They carried into politics the same high principles of virtue which regulated their private dealings, nor would they stoop to promote even the noblest and most salutary ends by means which honour and probity condemn. Such men were Lord John Cavendish, Sir George Savile, and others whom we hold in honour as the second founders of the Whig party, as the

restorers of its pristine health and energy after half a century of degeneracy.

The chief of this respectable band was the Marquess of Rockingham, a man of splendid fortune, excellent sense, and stainless character. He was indeed nervous to such a degree that, to the very close of his life, he never rose without great reluctance and embarrassment to address the House of Lords. But, though not a great orator, he had in a high degree some of the qualities of a statesman. He chose his friends well; and he had, in an extraordinary degree, the art of attaching them to him by ties of the most honourable kind. The cheerful fidelity with which they adhered to him through many years of almost hopeless opposition was less admirable than the disinterestedness and delicacy which they showed when he rose to power.

We are inclined to think that the use and the abuse of party cannot be better illustrated than by a parallel between two powerful connections of that time, the Rockinghams and the Bedfords. The Rockingham party was, in our view, exactly what a party should be. It consisted of men bound together by common opinions, by common public objects, by mutual esteem. That they desired to obtain, by honest and constitutional means, the direction of affairs they openly avowed. {74}But, though often invited to accept the honours and emoluments of office, they steadily refused to do so on any conditions inconsistent with their principles. The Bedford party, as a party, had, as far as we can discover, no principle whatever. Rigby and Sandwich wanted public money, and thought that they should fetch a higher price jointly than singly. They therefore acted in concert, and prevailed on a much more important and a much better man than themselves to act with them.

It was to Rockingham that the Duke of Cumberland now had recourse. The Marquess consented to take the treasury. Newcastle, so long the recognized chief of the Whigs, could not well be excluded from the

ministry. He was appointed keeper of the privy seal. A very honest clear-headed country gentleman, of the name of Dowdeswell, became Chancellor of the Exchequer. General Conway, who had served under the Duke of Cumberland, and was strongly attached to his royal highness, was made Secretary of State, with the lead in the House of Commons. A great Whig nobleman, in the prime of manhood, from whom much was at that time expected, Augustus Duke of Grafton, was the other Secretary.

The oldest man living could remember no government so weak in oratorical talents and in official experience. The general opinion was, that the ministers might hold office during the recess, but that the first day of debate in Parliament would be the last day of their power. Charles Townshend was asked what he thought of the new administration. “It is,” said he, “mere lutestring; pretty summer wear. It will never do for the winter.”

At this conjuncture Lord Rockingham had the wisdom {75}to discern the value, and secure the aid, of an ally, who, to eloquence surpassing the eloquence of Pitt, and to industry which shamed the industry of Grenville, united an amplitude of comprehension to which neither Pitt nor Grenville could lay claim. A young Irishman had, some time before, come over to push his fortune in London. He had written much for the booksellers; but he was best known by a little treatise, in which the style and reasoning of Bolingbroke were mimicked with exquisite skill, and by a theory, of more ingenuity than soundness, touching the pleasures which we receive from the objects of taste. He had also attained a high reputation as a talker, and was regarded by the men of letters who supped together at the Turk’s Head as the only match in conversation for Dr. Johnson. He now became private secretary to Lord Rockingham, and was brought into Parliament by his patron’s influence. These arrangements, indeed, were not made without some difficulty. The Duke of Newcastle, who was always meddling and chattering, adjured the first lord of the treasury to be on his guard against this adventurer, whose real name was

O'Rourke, and whom his grace knew to be a wild Irishman, a Jacobite, a Papist, a concealed Jesuit. Lord Rockingham treated the calumny as it deserved; and the Whig party was strengthened and adorned by the accession of Edmund Burke.

The party, indeed, stood in need of accessions; for it sustained about this time an almost irreparable loss. The Duke of Cumberland had formed the government, and was its main support. His exalted rank and great name in some degree balanced the fame of Pitt. As mediator between the Whigs and the Court, he held a place {76}which no other person could fill. The strength of his character supplied that which was the chief defect of the new ministry. Conway, in particular, who, with excellent intentions and respectable talents, was the most dependent, and irresolute of human beings, drew from the counsels of that masculine mind a determination not his own. Before the meeting of Parliament the Duke suddenly died. His death was generally regarded as the signal of great troubles, and on this account, as well as from respect for his personal qualities, was greatly lamented. It was remarked that the mourning in London was the most general ever known, and wars both deeper and longer than the Gazette had prescribed.

In the mean time, every mail from America brought alarming tidings. The crop which Grenville had sown his successors had now to reap. The colonies were in a state bordering on rebellion. The stamps were burned. The revenue officers were tarred and feathered. All traffic between the discontented provinces and the mother country was interrupted. The Exchange of London was in dismay. Half the firms of Bristol and Liverpool were threatened with bankruptcy. In Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, it was said that three artisans out of every ten had been turned adrift. Civil war seemed to be at hand; and it could not be doubted that, if once the British nation were divided against itself, France and Spain would soon take part in the quarrel.

Three courses were open to the ministers. The first was to enforce the Stamp Act by the sword. This was the course on which the King, and Grenville, whom the King hated beyond all living men, were alike bent. The natures of both were arbitrary and stubborn. {77}They resembled each other so much that they could never be friends; but they resembled each other also so much that they saw almost all important practical questions in the same point of view. Neither of them would bear to be governed by the other; but they were perfectly agreed as to the best way of governing the people.

Another course was that which Pitt recommended. He held that the British Parliament was not constitutionally competent to pass a law for taxing the colonies. He therefore considered the Stamp Act as a nullity, as a document of no more validity than Charles's writ of shipmoney, or James's proclamation dispensing with the penal laws. This doctrine seems to us, we must own, to be altogether untenable.

Between these extreme courses lay a third way. The opinion of the most judicious and temperate statesmen of those times was that the British constitution had set no limit whatever to the legislative power of the British King, Lords, and Commons, over the whole British Empire. Parliament, they held, was legally competent to tax America, as Parliament was legally competent to commit any other act of folly or wickedness, to confiscate the property of all the merchants in Lombard Street, or to attaint any man in the kingdom of high treason, without examining witnesses against him, or hearing him in his own defence. The most atrocious act of confiscation or of attainder is just as valid an act as the Toleration Act or the Habeas Corpus Act. But from acts of confiscation and acts of attainder lawgivers are bound, by every obligation of morality, systematically to refrain. In the same manner ought the British legislature to refrain from taxing the American colonies. The Stamp Act {78}was indefensible, not because it was beyond the constitutional competence of Parliament, but because it was

unjust and impolitic, sterile of revenue, and fertile of discontents. These sound doctrines were adopted by Lord Rockingham and his colleagues, and were, during a long course of years, inculcated by Burke, in orations, some of which will last as long as the English language.

The winter came; the Parliament met; and the state of the colonies instantly became the subject of fierce contention. Pitt, whose health had been somewhat restored by the waters of Bath, reappeared in the House of Commons, and, with ardent and pathetic eloquence, not only condemned the Stamp Act, but applauded the resistance of Massachusetts and Virginia, and vehemently maintained, in defiance, we must say, of all reason and of all authority, that, according to the British constitution, the supreme legislative power does not include the power to tax. The language of Grenville, on the other hand, was such as Strafford might have used at the council table of Charles the First, when news came of the resistance to the liturgy at Edinburgh. The colonists were traitors; those who excused them were little better. Frigates, mortars, bayonets, sabres, were the proper remedies for such distempers.

The ministers occupied an intermediate position; they proposed to declare that the legislative authority of the British Parliament over the whole Empire was in all cases supreme; and they proposed, at the same time, to repeal the Stamp Act. To the former measure Pitt objected; but it was carried with scarcely a dissentient voice. The repeal of the Stamp Act Pitt strongly supported; but against the Government was arrayed {79}a formidable assemblage of opponents. Grenville and the Bedfords were furious. Temple, who had now allied himself closely with his brother, and separated himself from Pitt, was no despicable enemy. This, however, was not the worst. The ministry was without its natural strength. It had to struggle, not only against its avowed enemies, but against the insidious hostility of the King, and of a set of persons who, about this time, began to be designated as the King’s friends.

The character of this faction has been drawn by Burke with even more than his usual force and vivacity. Those who know how strongly, through his whole life, his judgment was biassed by his passions, may not unnaturally suspect that he has left us rather a caricature than a likeness; and yet there is scarcely, in the whole portrait, a single touch of which the fidelity is not proved by facts of unquestionable authenticity.

The public generally regarded the King's friends as a body of which Bute was the directing soul. It was to no purpose that the Earl professed to have done with politics, that he absented himself year after year from the levee and the drawing-room, that he went to the north, that he went to Rome. The notion that, in some inexplicable manner, he dictated all the measures of the court, was fixed in the minds, not only of the multitude, but of some who had good opportunities of obtaining information, and who ought to have been superior to vulgar prejudices. Our own belief is that these suspicions were unfounded, and that he ceased to have any communication with the King on political matters some time before the dismissal of George Grenville. The supposition of Bute's influence is, indeed, by {80}no means necessary to explain the phænomena. The King in 1765, was no longer the ignorant and inexperienced boy who had, in 1760, been managed by his mother and his Groom of the Stole. He had, during several years, observed the struggles of parties, and conferred daily on high questions of state with able and experienced politicians. His way of life had developed his understanding and character. He was now no longer a puppet, but had very decided opinions both of men and things. Nothing could be more natural than that he should have high notions of his own prerogatives, should be impatient of opposition, and should wish all public men to be detached from each other and dependent on himself alone; nor could anything be more natural than that, in the state in which the political world then was, he should find instruments fit for his purposes.

Thus sprang into existence and into note a reptile species of politicians never before and never since known in our country. These men disclaimed all political ties, except those which bound them to the throne. They were willing to coalesce with any party, to abandon any party, to undermine any party, to assault any party, at a moment's notice. To them, all administrations, and all oppositions were the same. They regarded Bute, Grenville, Rockingham, Pitt, without one sentiment either of predilection or of aversion. They were the Kings friends. It is to be observed that this friendship implied no personal intimacy. These people had never lived with their master as Dodington at one time lived with his father, or as Sheridan afterwards lived with his son. They never hunted with him in the morning, or played cards with him in the evening, never shared his mutton or walked {81}with him among his turnips. Only one or two of them ever saw his face, except on public days. The whole band, however, always had early and accurate information as to his personal inclinations. These people were never high in the administration. They were generally to be found in places of much emolument, little labour, and no responsibility; and these places they continued to occupy securely while the cabinet was six or seven times reconstructed. Their peculiar business was not to support the ministry against the opposition, but to support the King against the ministry. Whenever his Majesty was induced to give a reluctant assent to the introduction of some bill which his constitutional advisers regarded as necessary, his friends in the House of Commons were sure to speak against it, to vote against it, to throw in its way every obstruction compatible with the forms of Parliament. If his Majesty found it necessary to admit into his closet a Secretary of State or a First Lord of the Treasury whom he disliked, his friends were sure to miss no opportunity of thwarting and humbling the obnoxious minister. In return for these services, the King covered them with his protection. It was to no purpose that his responsible servants complained to him that they were daily betrayed and impeded by men who were eating the bread of the government. He sometimes justified the offenders, sometimes

excused them, sometimes owned that they were to blame, but said that he must take time to consider whether he could part with them. He never would turn them out; and, while every thing else in the state was constantly changing, these sycophants seemed to have a life estate in their offices.

It {82}was well known to the King's friends that, though his Majesty had consented to the repeal of Stamp Aet, he had consented with a very bad grace, and that though he had eagerly welcomed the Whigs, when, in his extreme need and at his earnest entreaty, they had undertaken to free him from an insupportable yoke, he had by no means got over his early prejudices against his deliverers. The ministers soon found that, while they were encountered in front by the whole force of a strong opposition, their rear was assailed by a large body of those whom they had regarded as auxiliaries.

Nevertheless, Lord Rockingham and his adherents went on resolutely with the bill for repealing the Stamp Act. They had on their side all the manufacturing and commercial interests of the realm. In the debates the government was powerfully supported. Two great orators and statesmen, belonging to two different generations, repeatedly put forth all their powers in defence of the bill. The House of Commons heard Pitt for the last time, and Burke for the first time, and was in doubt to which of them the palm of eloquence should be assigned. It was indeed a splendid sunset and a splendid dawn.

For a time the event seemed doubtful. In several divisions the ministers were hard pressed. On one occasion, not less than twelve of the King's friends, all men in office, voted against the government. It was to no purpose that Lord Rockingham remonstrated with the King. His Majesty confessed that there was ground for complaint, but hoped that gentle means would bring the mutineers to a better mind. If they persisted in their misconduct, he would dismiss them.

At length the decisive day arrived. The gallery, the lobby, the Court of Requests, the staircases, were crowded {83}with merchants from all the great ports of the island. The debate lasted till long after midnight. On the division the ministers had a great majority. The dread of civil war, and the outcry of all the trading towns of the kingdom, had been too strong for the combined strength of the court and the opposition.

It was in the first dim twilight of a February morning that the doors were thrown open, and that the chiefs of the hostile parties showed themselves to the multitude. Conway was received with loud applause. But, when Pitt appeared, all eyes were fixed on him alone. All hats were in the air. Loud and long huzzas accompanied him to his chair, and a train of admirers escorted him all the way to his home. Then came forth Grenville. As soon as he was recognised, a storm of hisses and curses broke forth. He turned fiercely on the crowd, and caught one man by the throat. The bystanders were in great alarm. If a scuffle began, none could say how it might end. Fortunately the person who had been collared only said, “If I may not hiss, sir, I hope I may laugh,” and laughed in Grenville’s face.

The majority had been so decisive, that all the opponents of the ministry, save one, were disposed to let the bill pass without any further contention. But solicitation and expostulation were thrown away on Grenville.

His indomitable spirit rose up stronger and stronger under the load of public hatred. He fought out the battle obstinately to the end. On the last reading he had a sharp altercation with his brother-in-law, the last of their many sharp altercations. Pitt thundered in his loftiest tones against the man who had wished to dip the ermine of a British King in the blood of the British people. Grenville replied with his wonted intrepidity {84}and asperity. “If the tax,”’ he said, “were still to be laid on, I would lay it on. For the evils which it may produce my accuser is answerable. His

profusion made it necessary. His declarations against the constitutional powers of Kings, Lords, and Commons, have made it doubly necessary. I do not envy him the huzza. I glory in the hiss. If it were to be done again, I would do it."

The repeal of the Stamp Act was the chief measure of Lord Rockingham's government. But that government is entitled to the praise of having put a stop to two oppressive practices, which, in Wilkes's case, had attracted the notice and excited the just indignation of the public. The House of Commons was induced by the ministers to pass a resolution condemning the use of general warrants, and another resolution condemning the seizure of papers in cases of libel.

It must be added, to the lasting honour of Lord Rockingham, that his administration was the first which, during a long course of years, had the courage and the virtue to refrain from bribing members of Parliament. His enemies accused him and his friends of weakness, of haughtiness, of party spirit; but calumny itself never dared to couple his name with corruption.

Unhappily his government, though one of the best that has ever existed in our country, was also one of the weakest. The King's friends assailed and obstructed the ministers at every turn. To appeal to the King was only to draw forth new promises and new evasions. His Majesty was sure that there must be some misunderstanding. Lord Rockingham had better speak to the gentlemen. They should be dismissed on the next fault. The next fault was soon committed, and his Majesty {85}still continued to shuffle. It was too bad. It was quite abominable; but it mattered less as the prorogation was at hand. He would give the delinquents one more chance. If they did not alter their conduct next session, he should not have one word to say for them. He had already resolved that, long before the commencement of the next session, Lord Rockingham should cease to be minister.

We have now come to a part of our story which, admiring as we do the genius and the many noble qualities of Pitt, we cannot relate without much pain. We believe that, at this conjuncture, he had it in his power to give the victory either to the Whigs or to the King's friends. If he had allied himself closely with Lord Rockingham, what could the court have done? There would have been only one alternative, the Whigs or Grenville; and there conld be no doubt what the King's choice woidd be. He still remembered, as well he might, with the uttermost bitterness, the thraldom from which his uncle had freed him, and said about this time, with great vehemence, that he would sooner see the Devil come into his closet than Grenville.

And what was there to prevent Pitt from allying himself with Lord Rockingham? On all the most important questions their views were the same. They had agreed in condemning the peace, the Stamp Act, the general warrant, the seizure of papers. The points on which they differed were few and unimportant. In integrity, in disinterestedness, in hatred of corruption, they resembled each other. Their personal interests could not clash. They sat in different Houses, and Pitt had always declared that nothing should induce him to be first lord of the treasury.

If the opportunity of forming a coalition beneficial to {86}the state, and honourable to all concerned, was suffered to escape, the fault was not with the Whig ministers. They behaved towards Pitt with an obsequiousness which, had it not been the effect of sincere admiration and of anxiety for the public interests, might have been justly called servile. They repeatedly gave him to understand that, if he chose to join their ranks, they were ready to receive him, not as an associate, but as a leader. They had proved their respect for him by bestowing a peerage on the person who, at that time, enjoyed the largest share of his confidence, Chief Justice Pratt. What then was there to divide Pitt from the Whigs? What, on the other hand, was there in common between him and the King's friends, that he should lend himself to their purposes, he who had

never owed any thing to flattery or intrigue, he whose eloquence and independent spirit had overawed two generations of slaves and jobbers, he who had twice been forced by the enthusiasm of an admiring nation on a reluctant Prince?

Unhappily the court had gained Pitt, not, it is true, by those ignoble means which were employed when such men as Rigby and Wedderburn were to be won, but by allurements suited to a nature noble even in its aberrations. The King set himself to seduce the one man who could turn the Whigs out without letting Grenville in. Praise, caresses, promises, were lavished on the idol of the nation. He, and he alone, could put an end to faction, could bid defiance to all the powerful connections in the land united, Whigs and Tories, Rockinghams, Bedfords, and Grenvilles. These blandishments produced a great effect. For though Pitt's spirit was high and manly, though his eloquence was often exerted with formidable effect against the court, {87}and though his theory of government had been learned in the school of Locke and Sydney, he had always regarded the person of the sovereign with profound veneration. As soon as he was brought face to face with royalty, his imagination and sensibility were too strong for his principles. His Whiggism thawed and disappeared; and he became, for the time, a Tory of the old Ormond pattern. Nor was he by any means unwilling to assist in the work of dissolving all political connections. His own weight in the state was wholly independent of such connections. He was therefore inclined to look on them with dislike, and made far too little distinction between gangs of knaves associated for the mere purpose of robbing the public, and confederacies of honourable men for the promotion of great public objects. Nor had he the sagacity to perceive that the strenuous efforts which he made to annihilate all parties tended only to establish the ascendency of one party, and that the basest and most hateful of all.

It may be doubted whether he would have been thus misled, if his mind had been in full health and vigour. But the truth is that he had for some

time been in an unnatural state of excitement. No suspicion of this sort had yet got abroad. His eloquence had never shone with more splendour than during the recent debates. But people afterwards called to mind many things which ought to have roused their apprehensions. His habits were gradually becoming more and more eccentric. A horror of all loud sounds, such as is said to have been one of the many oddities of Wallenstein, grew upon him. Though the most affectionate of fathers, he could not at this time bear to hear the voices of his own children, and laid out great {88}sums at Hayes in buying up houses contiguous to his own, merely that he might have no neighbours to disturb him with their noise. He then sold Hayes, and took possession of a villa at Hampstead, where he again began to purchase houses to right and left. In expense, indeed, he vied, during this part of his life, with the wealthiest of the conquerors of Bengal and Tanjore. At Burton Pynsent, he ordered a great extent of ground to be planted with cedars. Cedars enough for the purpose were not to be found in Somersetshire. They were therefore collected in London, and sent down by land carriage. Relays of labourers were hired; and the work went on all night by torchlight. No man could be more abstemious than Pitt: yet the profusion of his kitchen was a wonder even to epicures. Several dinners were always dressing; for his appetite was capricious and fanciful; and at whatever moment he felt inclined to eat, he expected a meal to be instantly on the table. Other circumstances might be mentioned, such as separately are of little moment, but such as, when taken together, and when viewed in connection with the strange events which followed, justify us in believing that his mind was already in a morbid state.

Soon after the close of the session of Parliament, Lord Rockingham received his dismissal. He retired, accompanied by a firm body of friends, whose consistency and uprightness enmity itself was forced to admit. None of them had asked or obtained any pension or any sinecure, either in possession or in reversion. Such disinterestedness was then rare

among politicians. Their chief, though not a man of brilliant talents, had won for himself an honourable fame, which he kept pure to the last. He had, in spite of difficulties which seemed {89}almost insurmountable, removed great abuses and averted a civil war. Sixteen years later, in a dark and terrible day, he was again called upon to save the state, brought to the very brink of ruin by the same perfidy and obstinacy which had embarrassed, and at length overthrown, his first administration.

Pitt was planting in Somersetshire when he was summoned to court by a letter written by the royal hand. He instantly hastened to London. The irritability of his mind and body were increased by the rapidity with which he travelled; and when he reached his journey's end he was suffering from fever. Ill as he was, he saw the King at Richmond, and undertook to form an administration.

Pitt was scarcely in the state in which a man should be who has to conduct delicate and arduous negotiations. In his letters to his wife, he complained that the conferences in which it was necessary for him to bear a part heated his blood and accelerated his pulse. From other sources of information we learn, that his language, even to those whose co-operation he wished to engage, was strangely peremptory and despotic. Some of his notes written at this time have been preserved, and are in a style which Lewis the Fourteenth would have been too well bred to employ in addressing any French gentleman.

In the attempt to dissolve all parties, Pitt met with some difficulties. Some Whigs, whom the court would gladly have detached from Lord Rockingham, rejected all offers. The Bedfords were perfectly willing to break with Grenville; but Pitt would not come up to their terms. Temple, whom Pitt at first meant to place at the head of the treasury, proved intractable. A coldness indeed had, during some months, been fast growing {90}between the brothers-in-law, so long and so closely allied in politics. Pitt was angry with Temple for opposing the repeal of the

Stamp Act. Temple was angry with Pitt for refusing to accede to that family league which was now the favorite plan at Stowe. At length the Earl proposed an equal partition of power and patronage, and offered, on this condition, to give up his brother George. Pitt thought the demand exorbitant, and positively refused compliance. A bitter quarrel followed. Each of the kinsmen was true to his character. Temple's soul festered with spite, and Pitt's swelled into contempt. Temple represented Pitt as the most odious of hypocrites and traitors. Pitt held a different and perhaps a more provoking tone. Temple was a good sort of man enough, whose single title to distinction was, that he had a large garden, with a large piece of water, and a great many pavilions and summer-houses. To his fortunate connection with a great, orator and statesman he was indebted for an importance in the state which his own talents could never have gained for him. That importance had turned his head. He had begun to fancy that he could form administrations, and govern empires. It was piteous to see a well meaning man under such a delusion.

In spite of all these difficulties, a ministry was made such as the King wished to see, a ministry in which all his Majesty's friends were comfortably accommodated, and which, with the exception of his Majesty's friends, contained no four persons who had ever in their lives been in the habit of acting together. Men who had never concurred in a single vote found themselves seated at the same board. The office of paymaster was divided between two persons who had never {91}exchanged a word. Most of the chief posts were filled either by personal adherents of Pitt, or by members of the late ministry, who had been induced to remain in place after the dismissal of Lord Rockingham. To the former class belonged Pratt, now Lord Camden, who accepted the great seal, and Lord Shelburne, who was made one of the Secretaries of State. To the latter class belonged the Duke of Grafton, who became First Lord of the Treasury, and Conway, who kept his old position both in the government and in the House of Commons. Charles Townshend, who

had belonged to every party, and cared for none, was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pitt himself was declared prime minister, but refused to take any laborious office. He was created Earl of Chatham, and the privy seal was delivered to him.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that the failure, the complete and disgraceful failure, of this arrangement, is not to be ascribed to any want of capacity in the persons whom we have named. None of them was deficient in abilities; and four of them, Pitt himself, Shelburne, Camden, and Townshend, were men of high intellectual eminence. The fault was not in the materials, but in the principle on which the materials were put together. Pitt had mixed up these conflicting elements, in the full confidence that he should be able to keep them all in perfect subordination to himself, and in perfect harmony with each other. We shall soon see how the experiment succeeded.

On the very day on which the new prime minister kissed hands, three fourths of that popularity which he had long enjoyed without a rival, and to which he owed the greater part of his authority, departed from him. A violent outcry was raised, not against that part {92}of his conduct which really deserved severe condemnation, but against a step in which we can see nothing to censure. His acceptance of a peerage produced a general burst of indignation. Yet surely no peerage had ever been better earned; nor was there ever a statesman who more needed the repose of the Upper House. Pitt was now growing old. He was much older in constitution than in years. It was with imminent risk to his life that he had, on some important occasions, attended his duty in Parliament. During the session of 1764, he had not been able to take part in a single debate. It was impossible that he should go through the nightly labour of conducting the business of the government in the House of Commons. His wish to be transferred, under such circumstances, to a less busy and a less turbulent assembly, was natural and reasonable. The nation, however, overlooked all these considerations. Those who had most loved and honoured the

great Commoner were loudest in invective against the new made Lord. London had hitherto been true to him through every vicissitude. When the citizens learned that he had been sent for from Somersetshire, that he had been closeted with the King at Richmond, and that he was to be first minister, they had been in transports of joy. Preparations were made for a grand entertainment and for a general illumination. The lamps had actually been placed round the monument, when the Gazette announced that the object of all this enthusiasm was an Earl. Instantly the feast was countermanded. The lamps were taken down. The newspapers raised the roar of obloquy. Pamphlets, made up of calumny and scurrility, filled the shops of all the booksellers; and of those pamphlets, the most galling were written under {93}the direction of the malignant Temple. It was now the fashion to compare the two Williams, William Pulteney and William Pitt. Both, it was said, had, by eloquence and simulated patriotism, acquired a great ascendency in the House of Commons and in the country. Both had been intrusted with the office of reforming the government. Both had, when at the height of power and popularity, been seduced by the splendour of the coronet. Both had been made earls, and both had at once become objects of aversion and scorn to the nation which a few hours before had regarded them with affection and veneration.

The clamour against Pitt appears to have had a serious effect on the foreign relations of the country. His name had till now acted like a spell at Versailles and Saint Ildefonso. English travellers on the Continent had remarked that nothing more was necessary to silence a whole room full of boasting Frenchmen than to drop a hint of the probability that Mr. Pitt would return to power. In an instant there was deep silence: all shoulders rose, and all faces were lengthened. Now, unhappily, every foreign court, in learning that he was recalled to office, learned also that he no longer possessed the hearts of his countrymen. Ceasing to be loved at home, he

ceased to be feared abroad. The name of Pitt had been a charmed name. Our envoys tried in vain to conjure with the name of Chatham.

The difficulties which beset Chatham were daily increased by the despotic manner in which he treated all around him. Lord Rockingham had, at the time of the change of ministry, acted with great moderation, had expressed a hope that the new government would act on the principles of the late government, and had even interfered to prevent many of his friends from quitting {94}office. Thus Saunders and Keppel, two naval commanders of great eminence, had been induced to remain at the Admiralty, where their services were much needed. The Duke of Portland was still Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Besborough Postmaster. But within a quarter of a year, Lord Chatham had so deeply affronted these men, that they all retired in disgust. In truth, his tone, submissive in the closet, was at this time insupportably tyrannical in the cabinet. His colleagues were merely his clerks for naval, financial, and diplomatic business. Conway, meek as he was, was on one occasion provoked into declaring that such language as Lord Chatham's had never been heard west of Constantinople, and was with difficulty prevented by Horace Walpole from resigning, and rejoining the standard of Lord Rockingham.

The breach which had been made in the government by the defection of so many of the Rockinghams, Chatham hoped to supply by the help of the Bedfords. But with the Bedfords he could not deal as he had dealt with other parties. It was to no purpose that he bade high for one or two members of the faction, in the hope of detaching them from the rest. They were to be had; but they were to be had only in the lot. There was indeed for a moment some wavering and some disputing among them. But at length the counsels of the shrewd and resolute Rigby prevailed. They determined to stand firmly together, and plainly intimated to Chatham that he must take them all, or that he should get none of them. The event proved that they were wiser in their generation than any other

connection in the state. In a few months they were able to dictate their own terms.

The most important public measure of Lord Chatham's {95}administration was his celebrated interference with the corn trade. The harvest had been bad; the price of food was high; and he thought it necessary to take on himself the responsibility of laying an embargo on the exportation of grain. When Parliament met, this proceeding was attacked by the opposition as unconstitutional, and defended by the ministers as indispensably necessary. At last an act was passed to indemnify all who had been concerned in the embargo.

The first words uttered by Chatham, in the House of Lords, were in defence of his conduct on this occasion. He spoke with a calmness, sobriety, and dignity, well suited to the audience which he was addressing. A subsequent speech which he made on the same subject was less successful. He bade defiance to aristocratical connections, with a superciliousness to which the Peers were not accustomed, and with tones and gestures better suited to a large and stormy assembly than to the body of which he was now a member. A short altercation followed, and he was told very plainly that he should not be suffered to browbeat the old nobility of England.

It gradually became clearer and clearer that he was in a distempered state of mind. His attention had been drawn to the territorial acquisitions of the East India Company, and he determined to bring the whole of that great subject before Parliament. He would not, however, confer on the subject with any of his colleagues. It was in vain that Conway, who was charged with the conduct of business in the House of Commons, and Charles Townshend, who was responsible for the direction of the finances, begged for some glimpse of light as to what was in contemplation.

Chatham's {96}answers were sullen and mysterious. He must decline any discussion with them; he did not want their assistance; he had fixed

on a person to take charge of his measure in the House of Commons. This person was a member who was not connected with the government, and who neither had, nor deserved to have, the ear of the House, a noisy, purse-proud, illiterate demagogue, whose Cockney English and scraps of mispronounced Latin were the jest of the newspapers, Alderman Beckford. It may well be supposed that these strange proceedings produced a ferment through the whole political world. The city was in commotion. The East India Company invoked the faith of charters. Burke thundered against the ministers. The ministers looked at each other, and knew not what to say. In the midst of the confusion, Lord Chatham proclaimed himself gouty, and retired to Bath. It was announced, after some time, that he was better, that he would shortly return, that he would soon put every thing in order. A day was fixed for his arrival in London. But when he reached the Castle inn at Marlborough, he stopped, shut himself up in his room, and remained there some weeks. Every body who travelled that road was amazed by the number of his attendants. Footmen and grooms, dressed in his family livery, filled the whole inn, though one of the largest in England, and swarmed in the streets of the little town. The truth was, that the invalid had insisted that, during his stay, all the waiters and stable-boys of the Castle should wear his livery.

His colleagues were in despair. The Duke of Grafton proposed to go down to Marlborough in order to consult the oracle. But he was informed that Lord Chatham must decline all conversation on business.

In {97}the mean time, all the parties which were out of office, Bedfords, Grenvilles, and Rockinghams, joined to oppose the distracted government on the vote for the land tax. They were reinforced by almost all the county members, and had a considerable majority. This was the first time that a ministry had been beaten on an important division in the House of Commons since the fall of Sir Robert Walpole. The administration, thus furiously assailed from without, was torn by internal dissensions. It had been formed on no principle whatever. From the very

first, nothing but Chatham's authority had prevented the hostile contingents which made up his ranks from going to blows with each other. That authority was now withdrawn, and every thing was in commotion. Conway, a brave soldier, but in civil affairs the most timid and irresolute of men, afraid of disobliging the King, afraid of being abused in the newspapers, afraid of being thought factious if he went out, afraid of being thought interested if he stayed in, afraid of every thing, and afraid of being known to be afraid of any thing, was beaten backwards and forwards like a shuttlecock between Horace Walpole who wished to make him prime minister, and Lord John Cavendish who wished to draw him into opposition. Charles Townshend, a man of splendid eloquence, of lax principles, and of boundless vanity and presumption, would submit to no control. The full extent of his parts, of his ambition, and of his arrogance, had not yet been made manifest; for he had always quailed before the genius and the lofty character of Pitt. But now that Pitt had quitted the House of Commons, and seemed to have abdicated the part of chief minister, Townshend broke loose from all restraint.

While {98}things were in this state, Chatnam at length returned to London. He might as well have remained at Marlborough. He would see nobody. He would give no opinion on any public matter. The Duke of Grafton begged piteously for an interview, for an hour, for half an hour, for five minutes. The answer was, that it was impossible. The King himself repeatedly condescended to expostulate and implore. "Your duty," he wrote, "your own honour, require you to make an effort." The answers to these appeals were commonly written in Lady Chatham's hand, from her lord's dictation; for he had not energy even to use a pen. He flings himself at the King's feet. He is penetrated by the royal goodness so signally shown to the most unhappy of men. He implores a little more indulgence. He cannot as yet transact business. He cannot see

his colleagues. Least of all can he bear the excitement of an interview with majesty.

Some were half inclined to suspect that he was, to use a military phrase, malingering. He had made, they said, a great blunder, and had found it out. His immense popularity, his high reputation for statesmanship, were gone for ever. Intoxicated by pride, he had undertaken a task beyond his abilities. He now saw nothing before him but distresses and humiliations; and he had therefore simulated illness, in order to escape from vexations which he had not fortitude to meet. This suspicion, though it derived some colour from that weakness which was the most striking blemish of his character, was certainly unfounded. His mind, before he became first minister, had been, as we have said, in an unsound state; and physical and moral causes now concurred to make the derangement of his faculties complete. The gout, which had been the torment {99}of his whole life, had been suppressed by strong remedies. For the first time since he was a boy at Oxford, he had passed several months without a twinge. But his hand and foot had been relieved at the expense of his nerves. He became melancholy, fanciful, irritable. The embarrassing state of public affairs, the grave responsibility which lay on him, the consciousness of his errors, the disputes of his colleagues, the savage clamours raised by his detractors, bewildered his enfeebled mind. One thing alone, he said, could save him. He must repurchase Hayes. The unwilling consent of the new occupant was extorted by Lady Chatham’s entreaties and tears; and her lord was somewhat easier. But if business were mentioned to him, he, once the proudest and boldest of mankind, behaved like a hysterical girl, trembled from head to foot, and burst into a flood of tears.

His colleagues for a time continued to entertain the expectation that his health would soon be restored, and that he would emerge from his retirement. But month followed month, and still he remained hidden in mysterious seclusion, and sunk, as far as they could learn, in the deepest dejection of spirits. They at length ceased to hope or to fear any thing

from him; and though he was still nominally Prime Minister, took without scruple steps which they knew to be diametrically opposed to all his opinions and feelings, allied themselves with those whom he had proscribed, disgraced those whom he most esteemed, and laid taxes on the colonies, in the face of the strong declarations which he had recently made.

When he had passed about a year and three quarters in gloomy privacy, the King received a few lines in Lady Chatham's hand. They contained a request, dictated {100}by her lord, that he might be permitted to resign the Privy Seal. After some civil show of reluctance, the resignation was accepted. Indeed Chatham was, by this time, almost as much forgotten as if he had already been lying in Westminster Abbey.

At length the clouds which had gathered over his mind broke and passed away, his gout returned, and freed him from a more cruel malady. His nerves were newly braced. His spirits became buoyant. He woke as from a sickly dream. It was a strange recovery. Men had been in the habit of talking of him as of one dead, and, when he first showed himself at the King's levee, started as if they had seen a ghost. It was more than two years and a half since he had appeared in public.

He, too, had cause for wonder. The world which he now entered was not the world which he had quitted. The administration which he had formed had never been, at any one moment, entirely changed. But there had been so many losses and so many accessions, that he could scarcely recognise his own work. Charles Townshend was dead. Lord Shelburne had been dismissed. Conway had sunk into utter insignificance. The Duke of Grafton had fallen into the hands of the Bedfords. The Bedfords had deserted Grenville, had made their peace with the King and the King's friends, and had been admitted to office. Lord North was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was rising fast in importance. Corsica had been given up to France without a struggle. The disputes with the American colonies

had been revived. A general election had taken place. Wilkes had returned from exile, and, outlaw as he was, had been chosen knight of the shire for Middlesex. The multitude was on his side. {101}The Court was obstinately bent on ruining him, and was prepared to shake the very foundations of the constitution for the sake of a paltry revenge. The House of Commons, assuming to itself an authority which of right belongs only to the whole legislature, had declared Wilkes incapable of sitting in Parliament. Nor had it been thought sufficient to keep him out. Another must be brought in. Since the freeholders of Middlesex had obstinately refused to choose a member acceptable to the Court, the House had chosen a member for them. This was not the only instance, perhaps not the most disgraceful instance, of the inveterate malignity of the Court. Exasperated by the steady opposition of the Rockingham party, the King's friends had tried to rob a distinguished Whig nobleman of his private estate, and had persisted in their mean wickedness till their own servile majority had revolted from mere disgust and shame. Discontent had spread throughout the nation, and was kept up by stimulants such as had rarely been applied to the public mind. Junius had taken the field, had trampled Sir William Draper in the dust, had well nigh broken the heart of Blackstone, and had so mangled the reputation of the Duke of Grafton, that his grace had become sick of office, and was beginning to look wistfully towards the shades of Euston. Every principle of foreign, domestic, and colonial policy which was dear to the heart of Chatham, had, during the eclipse of his genius, been violated by the government which he had formed.

The remaining years of his life were spent in vainly struggling against that fatal policy which, at the moment when he might have given it a death blow, he had been induced to take under his protection. His exertions {102}redeemed his own fame, but they effected little for his country.

He found two parties arrayed against the government, the party of his own brothers-in-law, the Grenvilles, and the party of Lord Rockingham. On the question of the Middlesex election these parties were agreed. But on many other important questions they differed widely; and they were, in truth, not less hostile to each other than to the Court. The Grenvilles had, during several years, annoyed the Rockinghams with a succession of acrimonious pamphlets. It was long before the Rockinghams could be induced to retaliate. But an ill natured tract, written under Grenville's direction, and entitled a State of the Nation, was too much for their patience. Burke undertook to defend and avenge his friends, and executed the task with admirable skill and vigour. On every point he was victorious, and nowhere more completely victorious than when he joined issue on those dry and minute questions of statistical and financial detail in which the main strength of Grenville lay. The official drudge, even on his own chosen ground, was utterly unable to maintain the fight against the great orator and philosopher. When Chatham reappeared, Grenville was still writhing with the recent shame and smart of this well merited chastisement. Cordial cooperation between the two sections of the Opposition was impossible. Nor could Chatham easily connect himself with either. His feelings, in spite of many affronts given and received, drew him towards the Grenvilles. For he had strong domestic affections; and his nature, which, though haughty, was by no means obdurate, had been softened by affliction. But from his kinsmen he was separated by a wide difference {103}of opinion on the question of colonial taxation. A reconciliation, however, took place. He visited Stowe: he shook hands with George Grenville; and the Whig freeholders of Buckinghamshire, at their public dinners, drank many bumpers to the union of the three brothers.

In opinions, Chatham was much nearer to the Rockinghams than to his own relatives. But between him and the Rockinghams there was a gulf not easily to be passed. He had deeply injured them, and in injuring them,

had deeply injured his country. When the balance was trembling between them and the Court, he had thrown the whole weight of his genius, of his renown, of his popularity, into the scale of misgovernment.

It must be added, that many eminent members of the party still retained a bitter recollection of the asperity and disdain with which they had been treated by him at the time when he assumed the direction of affairs. It is clear from Burke's pamphlets and speeches, and still more clear from his private letters, and from the language which he held in conversation, that he regarded Chatham with a feeling not far removed from dislike. Chatham was undoubtedly conscious of his error, and desirous to atone for it. But his overtures of friendship, though made with earnestness, and even with unwonted humility, were at first received by Lord Rockingham with cold and austere reserve. Gradually the intercourse of the two statesmen became courteous and even amicable. But the past was never wholly forgotten.

Chatham did not, however, stand alone. Round him gathered a party, small in number, but strong in great and various talents. Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, Colonel Barré, and Dunning, afterwards Lord Ashburton, {104}were the principal members of this connection. There is no reason to believe that, from this time till within a few weeks of Chatham's death, his intellect suffered any decay. His eloquence was almost to the last heard with delight. But it was not exactly the eloquence of the House of Lords. That lofty and passionate, but somewhat desultory declamation, in which he excelled all men, and which was set off by looks, tones, and gestures, worthy of Garrick or Talma, was out of place in a small apartment where the audience often consisted of three or four drowsy prelates, three or four old judges, accustomed during many years to disregard rhetorick, and to look only at facts and arguments, and three or four listless and supercilious men of fashion, whom any thing like enthusiasm moved to a sneer. In the House of Commons, a flash of his eye, a wave of his arm, had sometimes cowed Murray. But, in the House

of Peers, his utmost vehemence and pathos produced less effect than the moderation, the reasonableness, the luminous order and the serene dignity, which characterized the speeches of Lord Mansfield.

On the question of the Middlesex election, all the three divisions of the Opposition acted in concert. No orator in either House defended what is now universally admitted to have been the constitutional cause with more ardour or eloquence than Chatham. Before this subject had ceased to occupy the public mind, George Grenville died. His party rapidly melted away; and in a short time most of his adherents appeared on the ministerial benches.

Had George Grenville lived many months longer, the friendly ties which, after years of estrangement and {105}hostility, had been renewed between him and his brother-in-law, would, in all probability, have been a second time violently dissolved. For now the quarrel between England and the North American colonies took a gloomy and terrible aspect. Oppression provoked resistance; resistance was made the pretext for fresh oppression. The warnings of all the greatest statesmen of the age were lost on an imperious court and a deluded nation. Soon a colonial senate confronted the British Parliament. Then the colonial militia crossed bayonets with the British regiments. At length the commonwealth was torn asunder. Two millions of Englishmen, who, fifteen years before, had been as loyal to their prince and as proud of their country as the people of Kent or Yorkshire, separated themselves by a solemn act from the Empire. For a time it seemed that the insurgents would struggle to small purpose against the vast financial and military means of the mother country. But disasters, following one another in rapid succession, rapidly dispelled the illusions of national vanity. At length a great British force, exhausted, famished, harassed on every side by a hostile peasantry, was compelled to deliver up its arms. Those governments which England had, in the late war, so signally humbled, and which had during many years been sullenly brooding over the

recollections of Quebec, of Minden, and of the Moro, now saw with exultation that the day of revenge was at hand. France recognised the independence of the United States; and there could be little doubt that the example would soon be followed by Spain.

Chatham and Rockingham had cordially concurred in opposing every part of the fatal policy which had brought the state into this dangerous situation. But their {106}paths now diverged. Lord Rockingham thought, and, as the event proved, thought most justly, that the revolted colonies were separated from the Empire for ever, and that the only effect of prolonging the war on the American continent would be to divide resources which it was desirable to concentrate. If the hopeless attempt to subjugate Pennsylvania and Virginia were abandoned, war against the House of Bourbon might possibly be avoided, or, if inevitable, might be carried on with success and glory. We might even indemnify ourselves for part of what we had lost, at the expense of those foreign enemies who had hoped to profit by our domestic dissensions. Lord Rockingham, therefore, and those who acted with him, conceived that the wisest course now open to England was to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and to turn her whole force against her European enemies.

Chatham, it should seem, ought to have taken the same side. Before France had taken any part in our quarrel with the colonies, he had repeatedly, and with great energy of language, declared that it was impossible to conquer America, and he could not without absurdity maintain that it was easier to conquer France and America together than America alone. But his passions overpowered his judgment, and made him blind to his own inconsistency. The very circumstances which made the separation of the colonies inevitable made it to him altogether insupportable. The dismemberment of the Empire seemed to him less ruinous and humiliating, when produced by domestic dissensions, than when produced by foreign interference. His blood boiled at the degradation of his country. Whatever lowered her among the nations of

{107}the earth, he felt as a personal outrage to himself. And the feeling was natural. He had made her so great. He had been so proud of her; and she had been so proud of him. He remembered how, more than twenty years before, in a day of gloom and dismay, when her possessions were torn from her, when her flag was dishonoured, she had called on him to save her. He remembered the sudden and glorious change which his energy had wrought, the long series of triumphs, the days of thanksgiving, the nights of illumination. Fired by such recollections, he determined to separate himself from those who advised that the independence of the colonies should be acknowledged. That he was in error will scarcely, we think, be disputed by his warmest admirers. Indeed, the treaty, by which, a few years later, the republic of the United States was recognised, was the work of his most attached adherents and of his favourite son.

The Duke of Richmond had given notice of an address to the throne, against the further prosecution of hostilities with America. Chatham had, during some time, absented himself from Parliament, in consequence of his growing infirmities. He determined to appear in his place on this occasion, and to declare that his opinions were decidedly at variance with those of the Rockingham party. He was in a state of great excitement. His medical attendants were uneasy, and strongly advised him to calm himself, and to remain at home. But he was not to be controlled. His son William, and his son-in-law Lord Mahon, accompanied him to Westminster. He rested himself in the Chancellor’s room till the debate commenced, and then, leaning on his two young relations, limped to his seat. The slightest particulars of that day {108}were remembered, and have been carefully recorded. He bowed, it was remarked, with great courtliness to those peers who rose to make way for him and his supporters. His crutch was in his hand, he wore, as was his fashion, a rich velvet coat. His legs were swathed in flannel. His wig was so large, and his face so emaciated, that none of his features could be discerned, except

the high curve of his nose, and his eyes, which still retained a gleam of the old fire.

When the Duke of Richmond had spoken, Chatham rose. For some time his voice was inaudible. At length his tones became distinct and his action animated. Here and there his hearers caught a thought or an expression which reminded them of William Pitt. But it was clear that he was not himself. He lost the thread of his discourse, hesitated, repeated the same words several times, and was so confused that, in speaking of the Act of Settlement, he could not recall the name of the Electress Sophia. The House listened in solemn silence, and with the aspect of profound respect and compassion. The stillness was so deep that the dropping of a handkerchief would have been heard. The Duke of Richmond replied with great tenderness and courtesy; but while he spoke, the old man was observed to be restless and irritable. The Duke sat down. Chatham stood up again, pressed his hand on his breast, and sank down in an apoplectic fit. Three or four lords who sat near him caught him in his fall. The House broke up in confusion. The dying man was carried to the residence of one of the officers of Parliament, and was so far restored as to be able to bear a journey to Hayes. At Hayes, after lingering a few weeks, he expired in his {109}seventieth year. His bed was watched to the last, with anxious tenderness, by his wife and children; and he well deserved their care. Too often haughty and wayward to others, to them he had been almost effeminately kind. He had through life been dreaded by his political opponents, and regarded with more awe than love even by his political associates. But no fear seems to have mingled with the affection which his fondness, constantly overflowing in a thousand endearing forms, had inspired in the little circle at Hayes.

Chatham, at the time of his decease, had not, in both Houses of Parliament, ten personal adherents. Half the public men of the age had been estranged from him by his errors, and the other half by the exertions

which he had made to repair his errors. His last speech had been an attack at once on the policy pursued by the government, and on the policy recommended by the opposition. But death restored him to his old place in the affection of his country. Who could hear unmoved of the fall of that which had been so great, and which had stood so long? The circumstances, too, seemed rather to belong to the tragic stage than to real life. A great statesman, full of years and honours, led forth to the Senate House by a son of rare hopes, and stricken down in full council while straining his feeble voice to rouse the drooping spirit of his country, could not but be remembered with peculiar veneration and tenderness. The few detractors who ventured to murmur were silenced by the indignant clamours of a nation which remembered only the lofty genius, the unsullied probity, the undisputed services, of him who was no more. For once, the chiefs of all parties were agreed. A public funeral, a {110}public monument, were eagerly voted. The debts of the deceased were paid. A provision was made for his family. The City of London requested that the remains of the great man whom she had so long loved and honoured might rest under the dome of her magnificent cathedral. But the petition came too late. Every thing was already prepared for the interment in Westminster Abbey.

Though men of all parties had concurred in decreeing posthumous honours to Chatham, his corpse was attended to the grave almost exclusively by opponents of the government. The banner of the lordship of Chatham was borne by Colonel Barré, attended by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Rockingham. Burke, Savile, and Dunning upheld the pall. Lord Camden was conspicuous in the procession. The chief mourner was young William Pitt. After the lapse of more than twenty-seven years, in a season as dark and perilous, his own shattered frame and broken heart were laid, with the same pomp, in the same consecrated mould.

Chatham sleeps near the northern door of the Church, in a spot which has ever since been appropriated to statesmen, as the other end of the same

transept has long been to poets. Mansfield rests there, and the second William Pitt, and Fox, and Grattan, and Canning, and Wilberforce. In no other cemetery do so many great citizens he within so narrow a space. High over those venerable graves towers the stately monument of Chatham, and from above, his effigy, graven by a cunning hand, seems still, with eagle face and outstretched arm, to bid England be of good cheer, and to hurl defiance at her foes. The generation which reared that memorial of him has disappeared. The time has come when the rash and indiscriminate judgments {111}which his contemporaries passed on his character may be calmly revised by history. And history, while, for the warning of vehement, high, and daring natures, she notes his many errors, will yet deliberately pronounce, that, among the eminent men whose bones he near his, scarcely one has left a more stainless, and none a more splendid name.

FRANCIS ATTERBURY.

(*Encyclopodia Britannica*, December 1853.)

Francis Atterbury, {112}a man who holds a conspicuous place in the political, ecclesiastical, and literary history of England, was born in the year 1662, at Middleton in Buckinghamshire, a parish of which his father was rector. Francis was educated at Westminster School, and carried thence to Christ Church a stock of learning which, though really scanty, he through life exhibited with such judicious ostentation that superficial observers believed his attainments to be immense. At Oxford, his parts, his taste, and his bold, contemptuous, and imperious spirit, soon made him conspicuous. Here he published, at twenty, his first work, a translation of the noble poem of Absalom and Achitophel into Latin verse. Neither the style nor the versification of the young scholar was that of the Augustan age. In English composition he succeeded much better. In 1687 he distinguished himself among many able men who wrote in defence of the Church of England, then persecuted by James II., and calumniated by apostates who had for lucre quitted her communion. Among these apostates none was more active or malignant than Obadiah Walker, who was master of University College, and who had set up there, under the royal patronage, a press for printing tracts {113}against the established religion. In one of these tracts, written apparently by Walker himself, many aspersions were thrown on Martin Luther. Atterbury undertook to defend the great Saxon Reformer, and performed that task in a manner singularly characteristic. Whoever examines his reply to Walker will be struck by the contrast between the feebleness of those parts which are argumentative and defensive, and the vigour of those parts which are rhetorical and aggressive. The Papists were so much galled by the sarcasms and invectives of the young polemic that they

raised a cry of treason, and accused him of having, by implication, called King James a Judas.

After the Revolution, Atterbury, though bred in the doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience, readily swore fealty to the new government. In no long time he took holy orders. He occasionally preached in London with an eloquence which raised his reputation, and soon had the honour of being appointed one of the royal chaplains. But he ordinarily resided at Oxford, where he took an active part in academical business, directed the classical studies of the undergraduates of his college, and was the chief adviser and assistant of Dean Aldrich, a divine now chiefly remembered by his catches, but renowned among his contemporaries as a scholar, a Tory, and a high-churchman. It was the practice, not a very judicious practice, of Aldrich to employ the most promising youths of his college in editing Greek and Latin books. Among the studious and well-disposed lads who were, unfortunately for themselves, induced to become teachers of philology when they should have been content to be learners, was Charles Boyle, son of the Earl of Orrery, and nephew of Robert Boyle, the great experimental {114}philosopher. The task assigned to Charles Boyle was to prepare a new edition of one of the most worthless books in existence. It was a fashion, amoung those Greeks and Romans who cultivated rhetoric as an art, to compose epistles and harangues in the names of eminent men. Some of these counterfeits are fabricated with such exquisite taste and skill that it is the highest achievement of criticism to distinguish them from originals.

Others are so feebly and rudely executed that they can hardly impose on an intelligent school-boy. The best specimen which has come down to us is perhaps the oration for Marcellus, such an imitation of Tully’s eloquence as Tally would himself have read with wonder and delight. The worst specimen is perhaps a collection of letters purporting to have been written by that Phalaris who governed Agrigentum more than 500

years before the Christian era. The evidence, both internal and external, against the genuineness of these letters is overwhelming. When, in the fifteenth century, they emerged, in company with much that was far more valuable, from their obscurity, they were pronounced spurious by Politian, the greatest scholar of Italy, and by Erasmus, the greatest scholar on our side of the Alps. In truth, it would be as easy to persuade an educated Englishman that one of Johnson's Ramblers was the work of William Wallace as to persuade a man like Erasmus that a pedantic exercise, composed in the trim and artificial Attic of the time of Julian, was a despatch written by a crafty and ferocious Dorian, who roasted people alive many years before there existed a volume of prose in the Greek language. But, though Christ-Church could boast of many good Latinists, of many good English writers, and of a greater number of clever and fashionable {115}men of the world than belonged to any other academic body, there was not then in the college a single man capable of distinguishing between the infancy and the dotage of Greek literature. So superficial indeed was the learning; of the rulers of this celebrated society that they were charmed by an essay which Sir William Temple published in praise of the ancient writers. It now seems strange that even the eminent public services, the deserved popularity, and the graceful style of Temple should have saved so silly a performance from universal contempt. Of the books which he most vehemently eulogised his eulogies proved that he knew nothing. In fact, he could not read a line of the language in which they were written. Among many other foolish things, he said that the letters of Phalaris were the oldest letters and also the best in the world. Whatever Temple wrote attracted notice. People who had never heard of the Epistles of Phalaris began to inquire about them. Aldrich, who knew very little Greek, took the word of Temple who knew none, and desired Boyle to prepare a new edition of these admirable compositions which, having long slept in obscurity, had become on a sudden objects of general interest.

The edition was prepared with the help of Atterbury, who was Boyle's tutor, and of some other members of the college. It was an edition such as might be expected from people who would stoop to édité such a book. The notes were worthy of the text; the Latin version worthy of the Greek original. The volume would have been forgotten in a month, had not a misunderstanding about a manuscript arisen between the young editor and the greatest scholar that had appeared in Europe since the revival of letters, Richard Bentley. {116}The manuscript was in Bentley's keeping. Boyle wished it to be collated. A mischief-making bookseller informed him that Bentley had refused to lend it, which was false and also that Bentley had spoken contemptuously of the letters attributed to Phalaris, and of the critics who were taken in by such counterfeits, which was perfectly true. Boyle, much provoked, paid, in his preface, a bitterly ironical compliment to Bentley's courtesy. Bentley revenged himself by a short dissertation, in which he proved that the epistles were spurious, and the new edition of them worthless: but he treated Boyle personally with civility as a young gentleman of great hopes, whose love of learning was highly commendable, and who deserved to have had better instructors.

Few things in literary history are more extraordinary than the storm which this little dissertation raised. Bentley had treated Boyle with forbearance; but he had treated Christ-Church with contempt; and the Christ-Church-men, wherever dispersed, were as much attached to their college as a Scotchman to his country, or a Jesuit to his order. Their influence was great. They were dominant at Oxford, powerful in the Inns of Court and in the College of Physicians, conspicuous in Parliament and in the literary and fashionable circles of London. Their unanimous cry was, that the honour of the college must be vindicated, that the insolent Cambridge pedant must be put down. Poor Boyle was unequal to the task, and disinclined to it. It was, therefore, assigned to his tutor Atterbury.

The answer to Bentley, which bears the name of Boyle, but which was, in truth, no more the work of Boyle than the letters to which the controversy related were the work of Phalaris, is now read only by the curious, {117}and will in all probability never be reprinted again. But it had its day of noisy popularity. It was to be found, not only in the studies of men of letters, but on the tables of the most brilliant drawing-rooms of Soho Square and Covent Garden. Even the beaus and coquettes of that age, the Wildairs and the Lady Lurewells, the Mirabells and the Millamants, congratulated each other on the way in which the gay young gentleman, whose erudition sate so easily upon him, and who wrote with so much pleasantry and good breeding about the Attic dialect and the anapæstic measure, Sicilian talents and Therielean cups, had bantered the queer prig of a doctor. Nor was the applause of the multitude undeserved. The book is, indeed, Atterbury's masterpiece, and gives a higher notion of his powers than any of those works to which he put his name. That he was altogether in the wrong on the main question, and on all the collateral questions springing out of it, that his knowledge of the language, the literature, and the history of Greece was not equal to what many freshmen now bring up every year to Cambridge and Oxford, and that some of his blunders seem rather to deserve a flogging than a refutation, is true; and therefore it is that his performance is, in the highest degree, interesting and valuable to a judicious reader. It is good by reason of its exceeding badness. It is the most extraordinary instance that exists of the art of making much show with little substance. There is no difficulty, says the steward of Molière's miser, in giving a fine dinner with plenty of money: the really great cook is he who can set out a banquet with no money at all. That Bentley should have written excellently on ancient chronology and geography, on the development of the Greek language, and the origin of the {118}Greek drama, is not strange. But that Atterbury should, during some years, have been thought to have treated these subjects much better than Bentley is strange indeed. It is true that the champion of Christ-Church had all the help which the most

celebrated members of that society could give him. Smalridge contributed some very good wit; Friend and others some very bad archaeology and philology. But the greater part of the volume was entirely Atterbury's: what was not his own was revised and retouched by him; and the whole bears the mark of his mind, a mind inexhaustibly rich in all the resources of controversy, and familiar with all the artifices which make falsehood look like truth, and ignorance like knowledge. He had little gold; but he beat that little out to the very thinnest leaf, and spread it over so vast a surface that to those who judged by a glance, and who did not resort to balances and tests, the glittering heap of worthless matter which he produced seemed to be an inestimable treasure of massy bullion. Such arguments as he had he placed in the clearest light. Where he had no arguments, he resorted to personalities, sometimes serious, generally ludicrous, always clever and cutting. But, whether he was grave or merry, whether he reasoned or sneered, his style was always pure, polished, and easy.

Party spirit then ran high; yet, though Bentley ranked among Whigs, and Christ-Church was a stronghold of Toryism, Whigs joined with Tories in applauding Atterbury's volume. Garth insulted Bentley, and extolled Boyle in lines which are now never quoted except to be laughed at. Swift, in his "Battle of the Books," introduced with much pleasantry Boyle, clad in armour, the gift of all the gods, and directed by Apollo {110}in the form of a human friend, for whose name a blank is left which may easily be filled up. The youth, so accoutred, and so assisted, gains an easy victory over his uncourteous and boastful antagonist. Bentley, meanwhile, was supported by the consciousness of an immeasurable superiority, and encouraged by the voices of the few who were really competent to judge the combat. "No man," he said, justly and nobly, "was ever written down but by himself." He spent two years in preparing a reply, which will never cease to be read and prized while the literature of ancient Greece is studied in any part of the world. This reply proved,

not only that the letters ascribed to Phalaris were spurious, but that Atterbury, with all his wit, his eloquence, his skill in controversial fence, was the most audacious pretender that ever wrote about what he did not understand. But to Atterbury this exposure was matter of indifference. He was now engaged in a dispute about matters far more important and exciting than the laws of Zaleucus and the laws of Charondas. The rage of religions factions was extreme. High church and Low church divided the nation. The great majority of the clergy were on the high-church side; the majority of King William's bishops were inclined to latitudinarianism.

A dispute arose between the two parties touching the extent of the powers of the Lower House of Convocation. Atterbury thrust himself eagerly into the front rank of the high-churchmen. Those who take a comprehensive and impartial view of his whole career will not be disposed to give him credit for religious zeal. But it was his nature to be vehement and pugnacious in the cause of every fraternity of which he was a member. He had defended the genuineness of {120}a spurious book simply because Christ-Church had put forth an edition of that book; he now stood up for the clergy against the civil power, simply because he was a clergyman, and for the priests against the episcopal order, simply because he was as yet only a priest, he asserted the pretensions of the class to which he belonged in several treatises written with much wit, ingenuity, audacity, and acrimony. In this, as in his first controversy, he was opposed to antagonists whose knowledge of the subject in dispute was far superior to his; but in this, as in his first controversy, he imposed on the multitude by bold assertion, by sarcasm, by declamation, and, above all, by his peculiar knack of exhibiting a little erudition in such a manner as to make it look like a great deal. Having passed himself off on the world as a greater master of classical learning than Bentley, he now passed himself off as a greater master of ecclesiastical learning than Wake or Gibson. By the great body of the clergy he was regarded as the

ablest and most intrepid tribune that had ever defended their rights against the oligarchy of prelates. The Lower House of Convocation voted him thanks for his services; the University of Oxford created him a doctor of divinity; and soon after the accession of Anne, while the Tories still had the chief weight in the government, he was promoted to the deanery of Carlisle.

Soon after he had obtained this preferment, the Whig party rose to ascendency in the state. From that party he could expect no favour. Six years elapsed before a change of fortune took place. At length, in the year 1710, the prosecution of Sacheverell produced a formidable explosion of high-church fanaticism. At such a moment Atterbury could not fail to {121}be conspicuous. His inordinate zeal for the body to which he belonged, his turbulent and aspiring temper, his rare talents for agitation and for controversy, were again signally displayed. He bore a chief part in framing that artful and eloquent speech which the accused divine pronounced at the bar of the Lords, and which presents a singular contrast to the absurd and scurrilous sermon which had very unwisely been honoured with impeachment. During the troubled and anxious months which followed the trial, Atterbury was among the most active of those pamphleteers who inflamed the nation against the Whig ministry and the Whig parliament. When the ministry had been changed and the parliament dissolved, rewards were showered upon him. The Lower House of Convocation elected him prolocutor. The Queen appointed him Dean of Christ-Church on the death of his old friend and patron Aldrich. The college would have preferred a gentler ruler. Nevertheless, the new head was received with every mark of honour. A congratulatory oration in Latin was addressed to him in the magnificent vestibule of the hall; and he in reply professed the warmest attachment to the venerable house in which he had been educated, and paid many gracious compliments to those over whom he was to preside. But it was not in his nature to be a mild or an equitable governor. He had left the chapter of Carlisle

distracted by quarrels. He found Christ-Church at peace; but in three months his despotic and contentious temper did at Christ-Church what it had done at Carlisle. He was succeeded in both his deaneries by the humane and accomplished Smalridge, who gently complained of the state in which both had been left. “Atterbury goes before, and sets everything on fire. I {122}come after him with a bucket of water.” It was said by Atterbury’s enemies that he was made a bishop because he was so bad a dean. Under his administration Christ-Church was in confusion; scandalous altercations took place, opprobrious words were exchanged; and there was reason to fear that the great Tory college would be ruined by the tyranny of the great Tory doctor. He was soon removed to the bishopric of Rochester, which was then always united with the deanery of Westminster. Still higher dignities seemed to be before him. For, though there were many able men on the episcopal bench, there was none who equalled or approached him in parliamentary talents. Had his party continued in power, it is not improbable that he would have been raised to the archbishopric of Canterbury. The more splendid his prospects, the more reason he had to dread the accession of a family which was well known to be partial to the Whigs. There is every reason to believe that he was one of those politicians who hoped that they might be able, during the life of Anne, to prepare matters in such a way that at her decease there might be little difficulty in setting aside the Act of Settlement and placing the Pretender on the throne. Her sudden death confounded the projects of these conspirators. Atterbury, who wanted no kind of courage, implored his confederates to proclaim James III., and offered to accompany the heralds in lawn sleeves. But he found even the bravest soldiers of his party irresolute, and exclaimed, not, it is said, without interjections which ill became the mouth of a father of the church, that the best of all causes and the most precious of all moments had been pusillanimously thrown away. He acquiesced in what he could not prevent, took the oaths to the House of {123}Hanover, and at the coronation officiated with the outward show of zeal, and did his best to

ingratiate himself with the royal family. But his servility was requited with cold contempt. No creature is so revengeful as a proud man who has humbled himself in vain. Atterbury became the most factious and pertinacious of all the opponents of the government. In the House of Lords his oratory, lucid, pointed, lively, and set off with every grace of pronunciation and of gesture, extorted the attention and admiration even of a hostile majority. Some of the most remarkable protests which appear in the journals of the peers were drawn up by him; and, in some of the bitterest of those pamphlets which called on the English to stand up for their country against the aliens who had come from beyond the seas to oppress and plunder her, critics easily detected his' style. When the rebellion of 1715 broke out, he refused to sign the paper in which the bishops of the province of Canterbury declared their attachment to the Protestant succession. He busied himself in electioneering, especially at Westminster, where, as dean, he possessed great influence; and was, indeed, strongly suspected of having once set on a riotous mob to prevent his Whig fellow-citizens from polling.

After having been long in indirect communication with the exiled family, he, in 1717, began to correspond directly with the Pretender. The first letter of the correspondence is extant. In that letter Atterbury boasts of having, during many years past, neglected no opportunity of serving the Jacobite cause. "My daily prayer," he says, "is that you may have success. May I live to see that day, and live no longer than I do what is in my power to forward it." It is to be remembered that he who wrote thus was a man bound to set {124}to the church of which he was overseer an example of strict probity; that he had repeatedly sworn allegiance to the House of Brunswick; that he had assisted in placing the crown on the head of George I.; and that he had abjured James III., "without equivocation or mental reservation, on the true faith of a Christian."

It is agreeable to turn from his public to his private life. His turbulent spirit, wearied with faction and treason, now and then required repose,

and found it in domestic endearments, and in the society of the most illustrious of the living and of the dead. Of his wife little is known: but between him and his daughter there was an affection singularly close and tender. The gentleness of his manners when he was in the company of a few friends was such as seemed hardly credible to those who knew him only by his writings and speeches. The charm of his “softer hour” has been commemorated by one of those friends in imperishable verse. Though Atterbury’s classical attainments were not great, his taste in English literature was excellent; and his admiration of genius was so strong that it overpowered even his political and religions antipathies. His fondness for Milton, the mortal enemy of the Stuarts and of the church, was such as to many Tories seemed a crime. On the sad night on which Addison was laid in the chapel of Henry VII., the Westminster boys remarked that Atterbury read the funeral service with a peculiar tenderness and solemnity. The favourite companions, however, of the great Tory prelate were, as might have been expected, men whose politics had at least a tinge of Toryism. He lived on friendly terms with Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay. With Prior he had a close intimacy, {125}which some misunderstanding about public affairs at last dissolved. Pope found in Atterbury, not only a warm admirer, but a most faithful, fearless, and judicious adviser. The poet was a frequent guest at the episcopal palace among the elms of Bromley, and entertained not the slightest suspicion that his host, now declining in years, confined to an easy chair by front, and apparently devoted to literature, was deeply concerned in criminal and perilous designs against the government.

The spirit of the Jacobites had been cowed by the events of 1715. It revived in 1721. The failure of the South Sea project, the panic in the money market, the downfall of great commercial houses, the distress from which no part of the kingdom was exempt, had produced general discontent. It seemed not improbable that at such a moment an insurrection might be successful. An insurrection was planned. The

streets, of London were to be barricaded; the Tower and the Bank were to be surprised; King George, his family, and his chief captains and councillors, were to be arrested; and King James was to be proclaimed. The design became known to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France, who was on terms of friendship with the House of Hanover. He put the English government on its guard. Some of the chief malcontents were committed to prison; and among them was Atterbury. No bishop of the Church of England had been taken into custody since that memorable day when the applauses and prayers of all London had followed the seven bishops to the gate of the Tower. The Opposition entertained some hope that it might be possible to excite among the people an enthusiasm resembling that of their fathers, who rushed into the waters of the Thames {126}to implore the blessing of Saneroft. Pictures of the heroic confessor in his cell were exhibited at the shop windows. Verses in his praise were sung about the streets. The restraints by which he was prevented from communicating with his accomplices were represented as cruelties worthy of the dungeons of the Inquisition. Strong appeals were made to the priesthood. Would they tamely permit so gross an insult to be offered to their cloth? Would they suffer the ablest, the most eloquent member of their profession, the man who had so often stood up for their rights against the civil power, to be treated like the vilest of mankind? There was considerable excitement; but it was allayed by a temperate and artful letter to the clergy, the work, in all probability, of Bishop Gibson, who stood high in the favour of Walpole, and shortly after became minister for ecclesiastical affairs.

Atterbury remained in close confinement during some months. He had carried on his correspondence with the exiled family so cautiously that the circumstantial proofs of his guilt, though sufficient to produce entire moral conviction, were not sufficient to justify legal conviction. He could be reached only by a bill of pains and penalties. Such a bill the Whig party, then decidedly predominant in both houses, was quite prepared to

support. Many hot-headed members of that party were eager to follow the precedent which had been set in the case of Sir John Fenwick, and to pass an act for cutting off the bishop's head. Cadogan, who commanded the army, a brave soldier, but a headstrong politician, is said to have exclaimed with great vehemence: "Fling him to the lions in the Tower." But the wiser and more humane Walpole was always unwilling to shed blood; and his influence prevailed. {127}When parliament met, the evidence against the bishop was laid before committees of both houses. Those committees reported that his guilt was proved. In the Commons a resolution, pronouncing him a traitor, was carried by nearly two to one. A bill was then introduced which provided that he should be deprived of his spiritual dignities, that he should be banished for life, and that no British subject should hold any intercourse with him except by the royal permission.

This bill passed the Commons with little difficulty. For the bishop, though invited to defend himself, chose to reserve his defence for the assembly of which he was a member. In the Lords the contest was sharp. The young Duke of Wharton, distinguished by his parts, his dissoluteness, and his versatility, spoke for Atterbury with great effect; and Atterbury's own voice was heard for the last time by that unfriendly audience which had so often listened to him with mingled aversion and delight. He produced few witnesses; nor did those witnesses say much that could be of service to him. Among them was Pope. He was called to prove that, while he was an inmate of the palace at Bromley, the bishop's time was completely occupied by literary and domestic matters, and that no leisure was left for plotting. But Pope, who was quite unaccustomed to speak in public, lost his head, and, as he afterwards owned, though he had only ten words to say, made two or three blunders.

The bill finally passed the Lords by eighty-three votes to forty-three. The bishops, with a single exception, were in the majority. Their conduct drew on them a sharp taunt from Lord Bathurst, a warm friend of

Atterbury and a zealous Tory. “The wild Indians,” he said, “give no quarter, because they believe {128}that they shall inherit the skill and prowess of every adversary whom they destroy. Perhaps the animosity of the right reverend prelates to their brother may be explained in the same way.”

Atterbury took leave of those whom he loved with a dignity and tenderness worthy of a better man. Three fine lines of his favourite poet were often in his mouth:

“Some natural tears he dropped, but wiped them soon:

The world was all before him, where to chuse

His place of rest, and Providence his guide.”

At parting he presented Pope with a Bible, and said, with a disingenuousness of which no man who had studied the Bible to much purpose would have been guilty: “If ever you learn that I have any dealings with the Pretender, I give you leave to say that my punishment is just.” Pope at this time really believed the bishop to be an injured man. Arbuthnot seems to have been of the same opinion. Swift, a few months later, ridiculed with great bitterness, in the “Voyage to Laputa,” the evidence which had satisfied the two Houses of Parliament. Soon, however, the most partial friends of the banished prelate ceased to assert his innocence, and contented themselves with lamenting and excusing what they could not defend. After a short stay at Brussels, he had taken up his abode at Paris, and had become the leading man among the Jacobite refugees who were assembled there. He was invited to Rome by the Pretender, who then held his mock court under the immediate protection of the Pope. But Atterbury felt that a bishop of the Church of England would be strangely out of place at the Vatican, and declined the invitation. During some months, however, he might flatter himself that he stood high {129}in the good graces of James. The correspondence

between the master and the servant was constant. Atterbury's merits were warmly acknowledged; his advice was respectfully received; and he was, as Bolingbroke had found before him, the prime minister of a king without a kingdom. But the new favourite found, as Bolingbroke had found before him, that it was quite as hard to keep the shadow of power under a vagrant and mendicant prince as to keep the reality of power at Westminster. Though James had neither territories nor revenues, neither army nor navy, there was more faction and more intrigue among his courtiers than among those of his successful rival. Atterbury soon perceived that his counsels were disregarded, if not distrusted. His proud spirit was deeply wounded. He quitted Paris, fixed his residence at Montpellier, gave up politics, and devoted himself entirely to letters. In the sixth year of his exile he had so severe an illness that his daughter, herself in very delicate health, determined to run all risks that she might see him once more. Having obtained a license from the English Government, she went by sea to Bordeaux, but landed there in such a state that she could travel only by boat or in a litter. Her father, in spite of his infirmities, set out from Montpellier to meet her; and she, with the impatience which is often the sign of approaching death, hastened towards him. Those who were about her in vain implored her to travel slowly. She said that every hour was precious, that she only wished to see her papa and to die. She met him at Toulouse, embraced him, received from his hand the sacred bread and wine, and thanked God that they had passed one day in each other's society before they parted for ever. She died that night.

It {130}was some time before even the strong mind of Atterbury recovered from this cruel blow. As soon as he was himself again he became eager for action and conflict; for grief, which disposes gentle natures to retirement, to inaction, and to meditation, only makes restless spirits more restless. The Pretender, dull and bigoted as he was, had found out that he had not acted wisely in parting with one who, though a

heretic, was, in abilities and accomplishments, the foremost man of the Jacobite party. The bishop was courted back, and was without much difficulty induced to return to Paris and to become once more the phantom minister of a phantom monarchy. But his long and troubled life was drawing to a close. To the last, however, his intellect retained all its keenness and vigour. He learned, in the ninth year of his banishment, that he had been accused by Oldmixon, as dishonest and malignant a scribbler as any that has been saved from oblivion by the Dunciad, of having, in concert with other Christ-Church men, garbled Clarendon's History of the Rebellion. The charge, as respected Atterbury, had not the slightest foundation: for he was not one of the editors of the History, and never saw it till it was printed. He published a short vindication of himself, which is a model in its kind, luminous, temperate, and dignified. A copy of this little work he sent to the Pretender, with a letter singularly eloquent and graceful. It was impossible, the old man said, that he should write anything on such a subject without being reminded of the resemblance between his own fate and that of Clarendon. They were the only two English subjects that had ever been banished from their country and debarred from all communication with their friends by act of parliament. But here the resemblance ended.

One {131}of the exiles had been so happy as to bear a chief part in the restoration of the Royal house. All that the other could now do was to die asserting the rights of that house to the last. A few weeks after this letter was written Atterbury died. He had just completed his seventieth year.

His body was brought to England, and laid, with great privacy, under the nave of Westminster Abbey. Only three mourners followed the coffin. No inscription marks the grave. That the epitaph with which Pope honoured the memory of his friend does not appear on the walls of the great national cemetery is no subject of regret: for nothing worse was ever written by Colley Cibber.

Those who wish for more complete information about Atterbury may easily collect it from his sermons and his controversial writings, from the report of the parliamentary proceedings against him, which will be found in the State Trials, from the five volumes of his correspondence, edited by Mr. Nichols, and from the first volume of the Stuart papers, edited by Mr. Glover. A very indulgent but a very interesting account of the bishop’s political career will be found in Lord Mahon’s valuable History of England.

JOHN BUNYAN.

(*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, May 1854.)

John Bunyan, {132}the most popular religious writer in the English language, was born at Elstow, about a mile from Bedford, in the year 1628. He may be said to have been born a tinker. The tinkers then formed an hereditary caste, which was held in no high estimation. They were generally vagrants and pilferers, and were often confounded with the gipsies, whom in truth they nearly resembled. Bunyan's father was more respectable than most of the tribe. He had a fixed residence, and was able to send his son to a village school where reading and writing were taught.

The years of John's boyhood were those during which the puritan spirit was in the highest vigour all over England; and nowhere had that spirit more influence than in Bedfordshire. It is not wonderful, therefore, that a lad to whom nature had given a powerful imagination, and sensibility which amounted to a disease, should have been early haunted by religious terrors. Before he was ten, his sports were interrupted by fits of remorse and despair; and his sleep was disturbed by dreams of fiends trying to fly away with him. As he grew older, his mental conflicts became still more violent. The strong language in which he described them has strangely misled all his biographers except {133}Mr. Southey. It has long been an ordinary practice with pious writers to cite Bunyan as an instance of the supernatural power of divine grace to rescue the human soul from the lowest depths of wickedness. He is called in one book the most notorious of profligates; in another, the brand plucked from the burning. He is designated in Mr. Ivimey's History of the Baptists as the depraved Bunyan, the wicked tinker of Elstow. Mr. Byland, a man once of great note among the Dissenters, breaks out into the following rhapsody:--"No man of common sense and common integrity can deny that Bunyan was a practical atheist, a worthless contemptible infidel, a

vile rebel to God and goodness, a common profligate, a soul-despising, a soul-murdering, a soul-damning, thoughtless wretch as could exist on the face of the earth. Now be astonished, O heavens, to eternity! and wonder, O earth and hell! while time endures. Behold this very man become a miracle of mercy, a mirror of wisdom, goodness, holiness, truth, and love." But whoever takes the trouble to examine the evidence will find that the good men who wrote this had been deceived by a phraseology which, as they had been hearing it and using it all their lives, they ought to have understood better. There cannot be a greater mistake than to infer, from the strong expressions in which a devout man bemoans his exceeding sinfulness, that he has led a worse life than his neighbours. Many excellent persons, whose moral character from boyhood to old age has been free from any stain discernible to their fellow creatures, have, in their autobiographies and diaries, applied to themselves, and doubtless with sincerity, epithets as severe as could be applied to Titus Oates or Mrs. Brownrigg. It is quite certain that Bunyan was, at {134}eighteen, what, in any but the most austerely puritanical circles, would have been considered as a young man of singular gravity and innocence. Indeed, it may be remarked that he, like many other penitents who, in general terms, acknowledge themselves to have been the worst of mankind, fired up and stood vigorously on his defence, whenever any particular charge was brought against him by others. He declares, it is true, that he had let loose the reins on the neck of his lusts, that he had delighted in all transgressions against the divine law, and that he had been the ringleader of the youth of Elstow in all manner of vice. But, when those who wished him ill accused him of licentious amours, he called on God and the angels to attest his purity. No woman, he said, in heaven, earth, or hell, could charge him with having ever made any improper advances to her. Not only had he been strictly faithful to his wife; but he had, even before his marriage, been perfectly spotless. It does not appear from his own confessions, or from the railings of his enemies, that he ever was drunk in his life. One bad habit he contracted, that of using profane language; but

he tells us that a single reproof cured him so effectually that he never offended again. The worst that can be laid to the charge of this poor youth, whom it has been the fashion to represent as the most desperate of reprobates, as a village Rochester, is that he had a great liking for some diversions, quite harmless in themselves, but condemned by the rigid precisians among whom he lived, and for whose opinion he had a great respect. The four chief sins of which he was guilty were dancing, ringing the bells of the parish church, playing at tipcat, and reading the History of Sir Bevis of Southampton. A rector of the school of Laud would {135}have held such a young man up to the whole parish as a model. But Bunyan's notions of good and evil had been learned in a very different school; and he was made miserable by the conflict between his tastes and his scruples.

When he was about seventeen, the ordinary course of his life was interrupted by an event which gave a lasting colour to his thoughts. He enlisted in the parliamentary army, and served during the decisive campaign of 1645. All that we know of his military career is that, at the siege of Leicester, one of his comrades, who had taken his post, was killed by a shot from the town. Bnnyan ever after considered himself as having been saved from death by the special interference of Providence. It may be observed that his imagination was strongly impressed by the glimpse which he had caught of the pomp of war. To the last he loved to draw his illustrations of sacred things from camps and fortresses, from guns, drums, trumpets, flags of truce, and regiments arrayed, each under its own banner. His Greatheart, his Captain Boanerges, and his Captain Credence, are evidently portraits, of which the originals were among those martial saints who fought and expounded in Fairfax's army.

In a few months Bunyan returned home and married. His wife had some pious relations, and brought him as her only portion some pious books. And now his mind, excitable by nature, very imperfectly disciplined by education, and exposed, without any protection, to the infections

virulence of the enthusiasm which was then epidemic in England, began to be fearfully disordered. In outward things he soon became a strict Pharisee. He was constant in attendance at prayers and sermons. His favourite amusements were {136}one after another relinquished, though not without many painful struggles. In the middle of a game at tipcat he paused, and stood staring wildly upwards with his stick in his hand. He had heard a voice asking him whether he would leave his sins and go to heaven, or keep his sins and go to hell; and he had seen an awful countenance frowning on him from the sky. The odious vice of bell-ringing he renounced: but he still for a time ventured to so to the church tower and look on while others pulled the ropes. But soon the thought struck him that, if he persisted in such wickedness, the steeple would fall on his head; and he fled in terror from the accursed place. To give up dancing on the village green was still harder; and some months elapsed before he had the fortitude to part with this darling sin. When this last sacrifice had been made, he was, even when tried by the maxims of that austere time, faultless. All Elstow talked of him as an eminently pious youth. But his own mind was more unquiet than ever. Having nothing more to do in the way of visible reformation, yet finding in religion no pleasures to supply the place of the juvenile amusements which he had relinquished, he began to apprehend that he lay under some special malediction; and he was tormented by a succession of fantasies which seemed likely to drive him to suicide or to Bedlam.

At one time he took it into his head that all persons of Israelite blood would be saved, and tried to make out that he partook of that blood; but his hopes were speedily destroyed by his father, who seems to have had no ambition to be regarded as a Jew.

At another time Bunyan was disturbed by a strange dilemma: “If I have not faith, I am lost; if I have faith, {137}I can work miracles.” He was tempted to cry to the puddles between Elstow and Bedford, “Be ye dry,” and to stake his eternal hopes on the event.

Then he took up a notion that the day of grace for Bedford and the neighbouring villages was past; that all who were to be saved in that part of England were already converted; and that he had begun to pray and strive some months too late.

Then he was harassed by doubts whether the Turks were not in the right, and the Christians in the wrong. Then he was troubled by a maniacal impulse which prompted him to pray to the trees, to a broomstick, to the parish bull. As yet, however, he was only entering the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Soon the darkness grew thicker. Hideous forms floated before him. Sounds of cursing and wailing were in his ears. His way ran through stench and fire, close to the mouth of the bottomless pit. He began to be haunted by a strange curiosity about the unpardonable sin, and by a morbid longing to commit it. But the most frightful of all the forms which his disease took was a propensity to utter blasphemy, and especially to renounce his share in the benefits of the redemption. Night and day, in bed, at table, at work, evil spirits, as he imagined, were repeating close to his ear the words, “Sell him, sell him.” He struck at the hobgoblins; he pushed them from him; but still they were ever at his side. He cried out in answer to them, hour after hour: “Never, never; not for thousands of worlds; not for thousands.” At length, worn out by this long agony, he suffered the fatal words to escape him, “Let him go, if he will.” Then his misery became more fearful than ever. He had done what could not be forgiven. He had forfeited his part of {138}the great sacrifice. Like Esau, he had sold his birthright; and there was no longer any place for repentance. “None,” he afterwards wrote, “knows the terrors of those days but myself.” he has described his sufferings with singular energy, simplicity, and pathos, he envied the brutes; he envied the very stones in the street, and the tiles on the houses. The sun seemed to withhold its light and warmth from him. His body, though cast in a sturdy mould, and though still in the highest vigour of youth, trembled whole days together with the fear of death and judgment. He fancied that this trembling was

the sign set on the worst reprobates, the sign which God had put on Cain. The unhappy man's emotion destroyed his power of digestion. He had such pains that he expected to burst asunder like Judas, whom he regarded as his prototype.

Neither the books which Bunyan read, nor the advisers whom he consulted, were likely to do much good in a case like his. His small library had received a most unseasonable addition, the account of the lamentable end of Francis Spira. One ancient man of high repute for piety, whom the sufferer consulted, gave an opinion which might well have produced fatal consequences. "I am afraid," said Bunyan, "that I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost."

"Indeed," said the old fanatic, "I am afraid that you have."

At length the clouds broke; the light became clearer and clearer; and the enthusiast, who had imagined that he was branded with the mark of the first murderer, and destined to the end of the arch traitor, enjoyed peace and a cheerful confidence in the mercy of God. Years elapsed, however, before his nerves, which had been so perilously overstrained, recovered their tone.

When {139}he had joined a Baptist society at Bedford, and was for the first time admitted to partake of the Eucharist, it was with difficulty that he could refrain from imprecating destruction on his brethren while the cup was passing from hand to hand. After he had been some time a member of the congregation, he began to preach; and his sermons produced a powerful effect. He was indeed illiterate; but he spoke to illiterate men. The severe training through which he had passed had given him such an experimental knowledge of all the modes of religious melancholy as he could never have gathered from books; and his vigorous genius, animated by a fervent spirit of devotion, enabled him, not only to exercise a great influence over the vulgar, but even to extort the half contemptuous admiration of scholars. Yet it was long before he

ceased to be tormented by an impulse which urged him to utter words of horrible impiety in the pulpit.

Counter-irritants are of as great use in moral as in physical diseases. It should seem that Bunyan was finally relieved from the internal sufferings which had embittered his life by sharp persecution from without. He had been five years a preacher, when the Restoration put it in the power of the Cavalier gentlemen and clergymen all over the country to oppress the Dissenters; and, of all the Dissenters whose history is known to us, he was perhaps the most hardly treated. In November 1660, he was flung into Bedford gaol; and there he remained, with some intervals of partial and precarious liberty, during twelve years. His persecutors tried to extort from him a promise that he would abstain from preaching; but he was convinced that he was divinely set apart and commissioned to be a teacher of righteousness: and he was fully {140}determined to obey God rather than man. He was brought before several tribunals, laughed at, caressed, reviled, menaced, but in vain. He was facetiously told that he was quite right in thinking that he ought not to hide his gift: but that his real gift was skill in repairing old kettles. He was compared to Alexander the coppersmith. he was told that, if he would give up preaching, he should be instantly liberated. He was warned that, if he persisted in disobeying the law, he would be liable to banishment, and that, if he were found in England after a certain time, his neck would be stretched. His answer was, “If you let me out to-day, I will preach again tomorrow.” Year after year he lay patiently in a dungeon, compared with which the worst prison now to be found in the island is a palace. His fortitude is the more extraordinary, because his domestic feelings were unusually strong. Indeed, he was considered by his stern brethren as somewhat too fond and indulgent a parent. He had several small children, and among them a daughter who was blind, and whom he loved with peculiar tenderness. He could not, he said, bear even to let the wind blow on her; and now she must suffer cold and hunger: she must beg; she must be beaten; “yet,” he

added, “I must, I must do it.” While he lay in prison he could do nothing in the way of his old trade for the support of his family. He determined, therefore, to take up a new trade. He learned to make long tagged thread laces; and many thousands of these articles were furnished by him to the hawkers. While his hands were thus busied, he had other employment for his mind and his lips. He gave religious instruction to his fellow-captives, and formed from among them a little flock, of which he {141}was himself the pastor. He studied indefatigably the few books which he possessed. His two chief companions were the Bible and Fox’s Book of Martyrs. His knowledge of the Bible was such that he might have been called a living concordance; and on the margin of his copy of the Book of Martyrs are still legible the ill spelt lines of doggrel in which he expressed his reverence for the brave sufferers, and his implacable enmity to the mystical Babylon.

At length he began to write; and, though it was some time before he discovered where his strength lay, his writings were not unsuccessful. They were coarse, indeed; but they showed a keen mother wit, a great command of the homely mother tongue, an intimate knowledge of the English Bible, and a vast and dearly bought spiritual experience. They therefore, when the corrector of the press had improved the syntax and the spelling, were well received by the humbler class of Dissenters.

Much of Bunyan’s time was spent in controversy. He wrote sharply against the Quakers, whom he seems always to have held in utter abhorrence. It is, however, a remarkable fact that he adopted one of their peculiar fashions: his practice was to write, not November or December, but eleventh month and twelfth month.

He wrote against the liturgy of the Church of England. No two things, according to him, had less affinity than the form of prayer and the spirit of prayer. Those, he said with much point, who have most of the spirit of prayer are all to be found in gaol; and those who have most zeal for the

form of prayer are all to be found at the alehouse. The doctrinal articles, on the other hand, he warmly praised, and defended against some {142}Arminian clergymen who had signed them. The most acrimonious of all his works is his answer to Edward Fowler, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, an excellent man, but not free from the taint of Pelagianisin.

Banyan had also a dispute with some of the chiefs of the sect to which he belonged. He doubtless held with perfect sincerity the distinguishing tenet of that sect; but he did not consider that tenet as one of high importance, and willingly joined in communion with quiet Presbyterians and Independents. The sterner Baptists, therefore, loudly pronounced him a false brother. A controversy arose which long survived the original combatants. In our own time the cause which Bunyan had defended with rude logic and rhetoric against Kiffin and Danvers was pleaded by Robert Hall with an ingenuity and eloquence such as no polemical Writer has ever surpassed.

During the years which immediately followed the Restoration, Bunyan’s confinement seems to have been strict. But, as the passions of 1660 cooled, as the hatred with which the Puritans had been regarded while their reign was recent gave place to pity, he was less and less harshly treated. The distress of his family, and his own patience, courage, and piety softened the hearts of his persecutors. Like his own Christian in the cage, he found protectors even among the crowd of Vanity Fair. The bishop of the diocese, Dr. Barlow, is said to have interceded for him. At length the prisoner was suffered to pass most of his time beyond the walls of the gaol, on condition, as it should seem, that he remained within the town of Bedford.

He owed his complete liberation to one of the worst acts of one of the worst governments that England has ever {143}seen. In 1671 the Cabal was in power. Charles II. had concluded the treaty by which he bound himself to set up the Roman Catholic religion in England. The first step

which he took towards that end was to annul, by an unconstitutional exercise of his prerogative, all the penal statutes against the Roman Catholics; and, in order to disguise his real design, he annulled at the same time the penal statutes against Protestant nonconformists. Bunyan was consequently set at large. In the first warmth of his gratitude he published a tract in which he compared Charles to that humane and generous Persian king who, though not himself blessed with the light of the true religion, favoured the chosen people, and permitted them, after years of captivity, to rebuild their beloved temple. To candid men, who consider how much Bunyan had suffered, and how little he could guess the secret designs of the court, the unsuspicious thankfulness with which he accepted the precious boon of freedom will not appear to require any apology.

Before he left his prison he had begun the book which has made his name immortal. The history of that book is remarkable. The author was, as he tells us, writing a treatise, in which he had occasion to speak of the stages of the Christian progress. He compared that progress, as many others had compared it, to a pilgrimage. Soon his quick wit discovered innumerable points of similarity which had escaped his predecessors. Images came crowding on his mind faster than he could put them into words, quagmires and pits, steep hills, dark and horrible glens, soft vales, sunny pastures, a gloomy castle of which the courtyard was strewn with the skulls and bones of murdered prisoners, a town all bustle and splendour, like London on the Lord {144}Mayor’s Day, and the narrow path, straight as a rule could make it, running on up hill and down hill, through city and through wilderness, to the Black River and the Shining Gate. He had found out, as most people would have said, by accident, as he would doubtless have said, by the guidance of Providence, where his powers lay. He had no suspicion, indeed, that he was producing a masterpiece. He could not guess what place his allegory would occupy in English literature; for of English literature he knew nothing. Those who suppose

him to have studied the Fairy Queen might easily be confuted, if this were the proper place for a detailed examination of the passages in which the two allegories have been thought to resemble each other. The only work of fiction, in all probability, with which he could compare his pilgrim, was his old favourite, the legend of Sir Bevis of Southampton. He would have thought it a sin to borrow any time from the serious business of his life, from his expositions, his controversies, and his lace tags, for the purpose of amusing himself with what he considered merely as a trifle. It was only, he assures us, at spare moments that he returned to the House Beautiful, the Delectable Mountains, and the Enchanted Ground. He had no assistance. Nobody but himself saw a line till the whole was complete. He then consulted his pious friends. Some were pleased. Others were much scandalised. It was a vain story, a mere romance, about giants, and lions, and goblins, and warriors, sometimes fighting with monsters and sometimes regaled by fair ladies in stately palaces. The loose atheistical wits at Will's might write such stuff to divert the painted Jezebels of the court: but did it become a minister of the gospel to copy the evil fashions of the world? There had {145}been a time when the cant of such fools would have made Bunyan miserable. But that time was passed; and his mind was now in a firm and healthy state. He saw that, in employing fiction to make truth clear and goodness attractive, he was only following the example which every Christian ought to propose to himself; and he determined to print.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* stole silently into the world. Not a single copy of the first edition is known to be in existence. The year of publication has not been ascertained. It is probable that, during some months, the little volume circulated only among poor and obscure sectaries. But soon the irresistible charm of a book which gratified the imagination of the reader with all the action and scenery of a fairy tale, which exercised his ingenuity by setting him to discover a multitude of curious analogies, which interested his feelings for human beings, frail like himself, and

struggling with temptations from within and from without, which every moment drew a smile from him by some stroke of quaint yet simple pleasantry, and nevertheless left on his mind a sentiment of reverence for God and of sympathy for man, began to produce its effect. In puritanical circles, from which plays and novels were strictly excluded, that effect was such as no work of genius, though it were superior to the Iliad, to Don Quixote, or to Othello, can ever produce on a mind accustomed to indulge in literary luxury. In 1678 came forth a second edition with additions; and then the demand became immense. In the four following years the book was reprinted six times. The eighth edition, which contains the last improvements made by the author, was published in 1682, the ninth in 1684, the tenth in 1685. The help of the engraver had early been {146}called in; and tens of thousands of children looked with terror and delight on execrable copperplates, which represented Christian thrusting his sword into Apollyon, or writhing in the grasp of Giant Despair. In Scotland, and in some of the colonies, the Pilgrim was even more popular than in his native country. Bunyan has told us, with very pardonable vanity, that in New England his dream was the daily subject of the conversation of thousands, and was thought worthy to appear in the most superb binding. He had numerous admirers in Holland, and amoung the Huegonots of France. With the pleasures, however, he experienced some of the pains of eminence. Knavish booksellers put forth volumes of trash under his name; and envious scribblers maintained it to be impossible that the poor ignorant tinker should really be the author of the book which was called his.

He took the best way to confound both those who counterfeited him and those who slandered him. He continued to work the gold-field which he had discovered, and to draw from it new treasures, not indeed with quite such ease and in quite such abundance as when the precious soil was still virgin, but yet with success which left all competition far behind. In 1684 appeared the second part of the “Pilgrim’s Progress.” It was soon

followed by the “Holy War,” which, if the “Pilgrim’s Progress” did not exist, would be the best allegory that ever was written.

Bunyan’s place in society was now very different from what it had been. There had been a time when many Dissenting ministers, who could talk Latin and read Greek, had affected to treat him with scorn. But his fame and influence now far exceeded theirs. He had so great an authority among the Baptists that he was popularly {147}called Bishop Bunyan. His episcopal visitations were annual. From Bedford he rode every year to London, and preached there to large and attentive congregations. From London he went his circuit through the country, animating the zeal of his brethren, collecting and distributing alms, and making up quarrels. The magistrates seem in general to have given him little trouble. But there is reason to believe that, in the year 1685, he was in some danger of again occupying his old quarters in Bedford gaol. In that year the rash and wicked enterprise of Monmouth gave the Government a pretext for prosecuting the Nonconformists; and scarcely one eminent divine of the Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist persuasion remained unmolested. Baxter was in prison: Howe was driven into exile: Henry was arrested. Two eminent Baptists, with whom Bunyan had been engaged in controversy, were in great peril and distress. Danvers was in danger of being hanged: and Kiffin’s grandsons were actually hanged. The tradition is that, during those evil days, Bunyan was forced to disguise himself as a waggoner, and that he preached to his congregation at Bedford in a smock-frock, with a cart-whip in his hand. But soon a great change took place. James the Second was at open war with the church, and found it necessary to court the Dissenters. Some of the creatures of the government tried to secure the aid of Bunyan. They probably knew that he had written in praise of the indulgence of 1672, and therefore hoped that he might be equally pleased with the indulgence of 1687. But fifteen years of thought, observation, and commerce with the world had made him wiser. Nor were the cases exactly parallel. Charles was a professed

Protestant: James was a {148}professed Papist. The object of Charles's indulgence was disguised: the object of James's indulgence was patent. Bunyan was not deceived, he exhorted his hearers to prepare themselves by fasting and prayer for the danger which menaced their civil and religious liberties, and refused even to speak to the courtier who came down to remodel the corporation of Bedford, and who, as was supposed, had it in charge to offer some municipal dignity to the Bishop of the Baptists.

Bunyan did not live to see the Revolution. In the summer of 1688 he undertook to plead the cause of a son with an angry father, and at length prevailed on the old man not to disinherit the young one. This good work cost the benevolent intercessor his life. He had to ride through heavy rain. He came drenched to his lodgings on Snow Hill, was seized with a violent fever, and died in a few days. He was buried in Bunhill Fields; and the spot where he lies is still regarded by the Nonconformists with a feeling which, seems scarcely in harmony with the stern spirit of their theology. Many puritans, to whom the respect paid by Roman Catholics to the reliques and tombs of saints seemed childish or sinful, are said to have begged with their dying breath that their coffins might be placed as near as possible to the coffin of the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

The fame of Bunyan during his life, and during the century which followed his death, was indeed great, but was almost entirely confined to religious families of the middle and lower classes. Very seldom was he during that time mentioned with respect by any writer of great literary eminence. Young coupled his prose with the poetry of the wretched D'Urfey. In the Spiritual Quixote, the adventures of Christian are ranked {149}with those of Jack the Giant-Killer and John Hickathrift. Cowper ventured to praise the great allegorist, but did not venture to name him. It is a significant circumstance that, till a recent period, all the numerous editions of the "Pilgrim's Progress" were evidently meant for the cottage and the servants' hall. The paper, the printing, the plates, were all of the

meanest description. In general, when the educated minority and the common people differ about the merit of a book, the opinion of the educated minority finally prevails. The “Pilgrim’s Progress” is perhaps the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority has come over to the opinion of the common people.

The attempts which have been made to improve and to imitate this book are not to be numbered. It has been done into verse: it has been done into modern English. “The Pilgrimage of Tender Conscience,” the “Pilgrimage of Good Intent,” “The Pilgrimage of Seek Truth,” “The Pilgrimage of Theophilus,” “The Infant Pilgrim,” “The Hindoo Pilgrim,” are among the many feeble copies of the great original. But the peculiar glory of Bunyan is that those who most hated his doctrines have tried to borrow the help of his genius. A Catholic version of his parable may be seen with the head of the Virgin in the title page. On the other hand, those Antinomians for whom his Calvinism is not strong enough may study the pilgrimage of Hephzibah, in which nothing will be found which can be construed into an admission of free agency and universal redemption. But the most extraordinary of all the acts of Vandalism by which a fine work of art was ever defaced was committed so late as the year 1853. It was determined to transform {150}the “Pilgrim’s Progress” into a Tractarian book. The task was not easy: for it was necessary to make the two sacraments the most prominent objects in the allegory; and of all Christian theologians, avowed Quakers excepted, Bunyan was the one in whose system the sacraments held the least prominent place. However, the Wicket Gate became a type of Baptism, and the House Beautiful of the Eucharist. The effect of this change is such as assuredly the ingenious person who made it never contemplated. For, as not a single pilgrim passes through the Wicket Gate in infancy, and as Faithful hurries past the House Beautiful without stopping, the lesson, which the fable in its altered shape teaches, is that none but adults ought to be baptized, and that the Eucharist may safely be neglected. Nobody would have

discovered from the original “Pilgrim’s Progress” that the author was not a Pædobaptist. To turn his book into a book against Pædobaptism was an achievement reserved for an Anglo-Catholic divine. Such blunders must necessarily be committed by every man who mutilates parts of a great work, without taking a comprehensive view of the whole.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

(*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, February 1856.)

Oliver Goldsmith, {151}one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century. He was of a Protestant and Saxon family which had been long settled in Ireland, and which had, like most other Protestant and Saxon families, been, in troubled times, harassed and put in fear by the native population. His father, Charles Goldsmith, studied in the reign of Queen Anne at the diocesan school of Elphin, became attached to the daughter of the schoolmaster, married her, took orders, and settled at a place called Pallas in the county of Longford. There he with difficulty supported his wife and children on what he could earn, partly as a curate and partly as a farmer.

At Pallas Oliver Goldsmith was born in November 1728. The spot was then, for all practical purposes, almost as remote from the busy and splendid capital in which his later years were passed, as any clearing in Upper Canada or any sheep-walk in Australasia now is. Even at this day those enthusiasts who venture to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the poet are forced to perform the latter part of their journey on foot. The hamlet lies far from any high road, on a dreary plain which, in wet weather, is often a lake. {152}The lanes would break any jaunting ear to pieces; and there are ruts and sloughs through which the most strongly built wheels cannot be dragged.

While Oliver was still a child, his father was presented to a living worth about 200l. a year, in the county of Westmeath. The family accordingly quitted their cottage in the wilderness for a spacious house on a frequented road, near the village of Lissoy. Here the boy was taught his letters by a maid-servant, and was sent in his seventh year to a village school kept by an old quartermaster on half-pay, who professed to teach

nothing but reading, writing and arithmetic, but who had an inexhaustible fund of stories about ghosts, banshees and fairies, about the great Rapparee chiefs, Baldearg O'Donnell and galloping Hogan, and about the exploits of Peterborough and Stanhope, the surprise of Monjuich, and the glorious disaster of Brihuega.

This man must have been of the Protestant religion; but he was of the aboriginal race, and not only spoke the Irish language, but could pour forth unpremeditated Irish verses. Oliver early became, and through life continued to be, a passionate admirer of the Irish music, and especially of the compositions of Carolan, some of the last notes of whose harp he heard. It ought to be added that Oliver, though by birth one of the Englishry, and though connected by numerous ties with the Established Church, never showed the least sign of that contemptuous antipathy with which, in his days, the ruling minority in Ireland too generally regarded the subject majority. So far indeed was he from sharing in the opinions and feelings of the caste to which he belonged, that he conceived an aversion to the Glorious and Immortal Memory, and, even when George the Third was on the throne, maintained {153}that nothing but the restoration of the banished dynasty could save the country.

From the humble academy kept by the old soldier Goldsmith was removed in his ninth year. He went to several grammar-schools, and acquired some knowledge of the ancient languages. His life at this time seems to have been far from happy. He had, as appears from the admirable portrait of him at Knowle, features harsh even to ugliness. The small-pox had set its mark on him with more than usual severity. His stature was small, and his limbs ill put together. Among boys little tenderness is shown to personal defects; and the ridicule excited by poor Oliver's appearance was heightened by a peculiar simplicity and a disposition to blunder which he retained to the last. He became the common butt of boys and masters, was pointed at as a fright in the play-ground, and flogged as a dunce in the school-room. When he had

risen to eminence, those who had once derided him ransacked their memory for the events of his early years, and recited repartees and couplets which had dropped from him, and which, though little noticed at the time, were supposed, a quarter of a century later, to indicate the powers which produced the “Vicar of Wakefield” and the “Deserted Village.”

In his seventeenth year Oliver went up to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. The sizars paid nothing for food and tuition, and very little for lodging; but they had to perform some menial services from which they have long been relieved. They swept the court: they carried up the dinner to the fellows’ table, and changed the plates and poured out the ale of the rulers of the society. Goldsmith was quartered, not alone, in a garret, on the window of which {154}his name, scrawled by himself, is still read with interest. (1) From such garrets many men of less parts than his have made their way to the wool-sack or to the episcopal bench. But Goldsmith, while he suffered all the humiliations, threw away all the advantages, of his situation. He neglected the studies of the place, stood low at the examinations, was turned down to the bottom of his class for playing the buffoon in the lecture room, was severely reprimanded for pumping on a constable, and was caned by a brutal tutor for giving a ball in the attic story of the college to some gay youths and damsels from the city.

While Oliver was leading at Dublin a life divided between squalid distress and squalid dissipation, his father died, leaving a mere pittance. The youth obtained his bachelor’s degree, and left the university. During some time the humble dwelling to which his widowed mother had retired was his home. He was now in his twenty-first year; it was necessary that he should do something; and his education seemed to have fitted him to do nothing but to dress himself in gaudy colours, of which he was as fond as a magpie, to take a hand at cards, to sing Irish airs, to play the flute, to angle in summer, and to tell ghost stories by the fire in winter. He tried

five or six professions in turn without success. He applied for ordination; but, as he applied in scarlet clothes, he was speedily turned out of the episcopal palace. He then became tutor in an opulent family, but soon quitted his situation in consequence of a dispute about pay. Then he determined

(1) The glass on which the name is written has, as we are informed by a writer in *Notes and Queries* (2nd S. ix. p. 91), been inclosed in a frame and deposited in the Manuscript Room of the College Library, where it is still to be seen.

to {155}emigrate to America. His relations, with much satisfaction, saw him set out for Cork on a good horse, with thirty pounds in his pocket. But in six weeks he came back on a miserable hack, without a penny, and informed his mother that the ship in which he had taken his passage, having got a fair wind while he was at a party of pleasure, had sailed without him. Then he resolved to study the law. A generous kinsman advanced fifty pounds. With this sum Goldsmith went to Dublin, was enticed into a gaming house, and lost every shilling. He then thought of medicine. A small purse was made up; and in his twenty-fourth year he was sent to Edinburgh. At Edinburgh he passed eighteen months in nominal attendance on lectures, and picked up some superficial information about chemistry and natural history. Thence he went to Leyden, still pretending to study physic. He left that celebrated university, the third university at which he had resided, in his twenty-seventh year, without a degree, with the merest smattering of medical knowledge, and with no property but his clothes and his flute. His flute, however, proved a useful friend. He rambled on foot through Flanders, France, and Switzerland, playing tunes which everywhere set the peasantry dancing, and which often procured for him a supper and a bed. He wandered as far as Italy. His musical performances, indeed, were not to the taste of the Italians; but he contrived to live on the alms whieh he obtained at the gates of convents. It should, however, be observed that

the stories which he told about this part of his life ought to be received with great caution; for strict veracity was never one of his virtues; and a man who is ordinarily inaccurate in narration is likely to be more than ordinarily inaccurate when he talks about his {156}own travels. Goldsmith, indeed, was so regardless of truth as to assert in print that he was present at a most interesting conversation between Voltaire and Fontenelle, and that this conversation took place at Paris. Now it is certain that Voltaire never was within a hundred leagues of Paris during the whole time which Goldsmith passed on the Continent.

In 1756 the wanderer landed at Dover, without a shilling, without a friend, and without a calling. He had, indeed, if his own unsupported evidence may be trusted, obtained from the university of Padua a doctor's degree; but this dignity proved utterly useless to him. In England his flute was not in request: there were no convents; and he was forced to have recourse to a series of desperate expedients. He turned strolling player; but his face and figure were ill suited to the boards even of the humblest theatre. He pounded drugs and ran about London with phials for charitable chemists. He joined a swarm of beggars, which made its nest in Axe Yard. He was for a time usher of a school, and felt the miseries and humiliations of this situation so keenly that he thought it a promotion to be permitted to earn his bread as a bookseller's hack; but he soon found the new yoke more galling than the old one, and was glad to become an usher again. He obtained a medical appointment in the service of the East India Company; but the appointment was speedily revoked. Why it was revoked we are not told. The subject was one on which he never liked to talk. It is probable that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the place. Then he presented himself at Surgeons' Hall for examination, as mate to a naval hospital. Even to so humble a post he was found unequal. By this time the schoolmaster whom he had served for a morsel {157}of food and the third part of a bed was no more. Nothing remained but to return to the lowest drudgery of literature.

Goldsmith took a garret in a miserable court, to which he had to climb from the brink of Fleet Ditch by a dizzy ladder of flag-stones called Breakneck Steps. The court and the ascent have long disappeared; but old Londoners will remember both. (1) Here, at thirty, the unlucky adventurer sat down to toil like a galley slave.

In the succeeding six years he sent to the press some things which have survived and many which have perished. He produced articles for reviews, magazines, and newspapers: children's books which, bound in gilt paper and adorned with hideous woodcuts, appeared in the window of the once far-famed shop at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard; "An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe," which, though of little or no value, is still reprinted among his works; a "Life of Beau Nash," which is not reprinted, though it well deserves to be so; (2) a superficial and incorrect, but very readable, "History of England," in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a nobleman to his son; and some very lively and amusing "Sketches of London Society," in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a Chinese traveller to his friends. All these works were anonymous; but some of them were

(1) A gentleman, who states that he has known the neighbourhood for thirty years, corrects this account, and informs the present publisher that the Breakneck Steps, thirty-two in number, divided into two flights, are still in existence, and that, according to tradition, Goldsmith's house was not on the steps, but was the first house at the head of the court, on the left hand, going from the Old Bailey. See *Notes and Queries* (2nd S. ix. 280).

(2) Mr. Black has pointed out that this is inaccurate: the life of Nash has been twice reprinted; once in Mr. Prior's edition (vol. iii. p. 249), and once in Mr. Cunningham's edition (vol. iv. p. 351.

well {158}known to be Goldsmith's: and he gradually rose in the estimation of the booksellers for whom he drudged. He was, indeed,

emphatically a popular writer. For accurate research or grave disquisition he was not well qualified by nature or by education, he knew nothing accurately: his reading had been desultory; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had read. He had seen much of the world; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen than some grotesque incidents and characters which had happened to strike his fancy. But, though his mind was very scantily stored with materials, he used what materials he had in such a way as to produce a wonderful effect. There have been many greater writers; but perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable. His style was always pure and easy, and, on proper occasions, pointed and energetic. His narratives were always amusing, his descriptions always picturesque, his humour rich and joyous, yet not without an occasional tinge of amiable sadness. About everything that he wrote, serious or sportive, there was a certain natural grace and decorum, hardly to be expected from a man a great part of whose life had been passed among thieves and beggars, street-walkers and merry andrews, in those squalid dens which are the reproach of great capitals.

As his name gradually became known, the circle of his acquaintance widened. He was introduced to Johnson, who was then considered as the first of living English writers; to Reynolds, the first of English painters; and to Burke, who had not yet entered parliament, but had distinguished himself greatly by his writings and by the eloquence of his conversation. With these eminent men Goldsmith became intimate. In 1763 he was {159}one of the nine original members of that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club.

By this time Goldsmith had quitted his miserable dwelling at the top of Breakneck Steps, and had taken chambers in the more civilised region of the Inns of Court. But he was still often reduced to pitiable shifts. Towards the close of 1764 his rent was so long in arrear that his landlady

one morning called in the help of a sheriff's officer. The debtor, in great perplexity, despatched a messenger to Johnson; and Johnson, always friendly, though often surly, sent back the messenger with a guinea, and promised to follow speedily. He came, and found that Goldsmith had changed the guinea, and was railing at the landlady over a bottle of Madeira. Johnson put the cork into the bottle, and entreated his friend to consider calmly how money was to be procured. Goldsmith said that he had a novel ready for the press. Johnson glanced at the manuscript, saw that there were good things in it, took it to a bookseller, sold it for 60l, and soon returned with the money. The rent was paid; and the sheriff's officer withdrew. According to one story, Goldsmith gave his landlady a sharp reprimand for her treatment of him; according to another, he insisted on her joining him in a bowl of punch. Both stories are probably true. The novel which was thus ushered into the world was the "Vicar of Wakefield."

But, before the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared in print, came the great crisis of Goldsmith's literary life. In Christmas week, 1764, he published a poem, entitled the "Traveller." It was the first work to which he had {160}put, his name; and it at once raised him to the rank of a legitimate English classic. The opinion of the most skilful critics was, that nothing finer had appeared in verse since the fourth book of the "Dunciad."

In one respect the "Traveller" differs from all Goldsmith's other writings. In general his designs were bad, and his execution good. In the "Traveller," the execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble, and at the same time so simple. An English, wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the

conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds.

While the fourth edition of the “Traveller” was on the counters of the booksellers, the “Vicar of Wakefield” appeared, and rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own time, and which is likely to last as long as our language. The fable is indeed one of the worst that ever was constructed. It wants, not merely that probability which ought to be found in a tale of common English life, but that consistency which ought to be found even in the wildest fiction about witches, giants, and fairies. But the earlier chapters have all the Sweetness of pastoral poetry, together with all the vivacity of comedy. Moses and his spectacles, the vicar and his monogamy, the sharper and his cosmogony, the squire proving from Aristotle that relatives are related, Olivia preparing {161}herself for the arduous task of converting a rakish lover by studying the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the great ladies with their scandal about Sir Tomkyn’s amours and Dr. Burdock’s verses, and Mr. Burchell with his “Fudge,” have caused as much harmless mirth as has ever been caused by matter packed into so small a number of pages. The latter part of the tale is unworthy of the beginning. As we approach the catastrophe, the absurdities lie thicker and thicker; and the gleams of pleasantry become rarer and rarer.

The success which had attended Goldsmith as a novelist emboldened him to try his fortune as a dramatist. He wrote the “Goodnatured Man,” a piece which had a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refused to produce it at Drury Lane. It was acted at Covent Garden in 1768, but was coldly received. The author, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright, no less than 500l., five times as much as he had made by the “Traveller” and the “Vicar of Wakefield” together. The plot of the “Good-natured Man” is, like almost all Goldsmith’s plots, very ill constructed. But some passages are exquisitely ludicrous; much more ludicrous, indeed, than suited the taste of the town at that time. A canting,

mawkish play, entitled “False Delicacy,” had just had an immense run. Sentimentality was all the mode. During some years, more tears were shed at comedies than at tragedies; and a pleasantry which moved the audience to anything more than a grave smile was reprobated as low. It is not strange, therefore, that the very best scene in the “Goodnatured Man,” that in which Miss Richland finds her lover attended by the bailiff and the bailiff’s follower in full court dresses, should {162}have been mercilessly hissed, and should have been omitted after the first night.

In 1770 appeared the “Deserted Village.” In mere diction and versification this celebrated poem is fully equal, perhaps superior, to the “Traveller;” and it is generally preferred to the “Traveller” by that large class of readers who think, with Bayes in the “Rehearsal,” that the only use of a plan is to bring in fine things. More discerning judges, however, while they admire the beauty of the details, are shocked by one unpardonable fault which pervades the whole. The fault we mean is not that theory about wealth and luxury which has so often been censured by political economists. The theory is indeed false: but the poem, considered merely as a poem, is not necessarily the worse on that account. The finest poem in the Latin language, indeed the finest didactic poem in any language, was written in defence of the silliest and meanest of all systems of natural and moral philosophy. A poet may easily be pardoned for reasoning ill; but he cannot be pardoned for describing ill, for observing the world in which he lives so carelessly that his portraits bear no resemblance to the originals, for exhibiting as copies from real life monstrous combinations of things which never were and never could be found together. What would be thought of a painter who should mix August and January in one landscape, who should introduce a frozen river into a harvest scene? Would it be a sufficient defence of such a picture to say that every part was exquisitely coloured, that the green hedges, the apple-trees loaded with fruit, the waggons reeling under the yellow sheaves, and the sun-burned reapers wiping their foreheads, were

very fine, and that the ice and the boys sliding were also very {163}fine? To such a picture the “Deserted Village” bears a great resemblance. It is made up of incongruous parts. The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. The felicity and the misery which Goldsmith has brought close together belong to two different countries, and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content, and tranquillity, as his “Auburn.” He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day and forced to emigrate in a body to America. The hamlet he had probably seen in Kent; the ejectment he had probably seen in Minister: but, by joining the two, he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part of the world.

In 1773 Goldsmith tried his chance at Covent Garden with a second play, “She Stoops to Conquer.” The manager was not without great difficulty induced to bring this piece out. The sentimental comedy still reigned: and Goldsmith’s comedies were not sentimental. The “Goodnatured Man” had been too funny to succeed; yet the mirth of the “Goodnatured? Man” was sober when compared with the rich drollery of “She Stoops to Conquer,” which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed. Pit, boxes, and galleries, were in a constant roar of laughter. If any bigoted admirer of Kelly and Cumberland ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry of “turn him out,” or “throw him over.” Two generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night.

While {164}Goldsmith was writing the “Deserted Village” and “She Stoops to Conquer,” he was employed on works of a very different kind, works from which he derived little reputation but much profit, he compiled for the use of schools a “History of Rome,” by which he made 300l., a “History of England,” by which he made 500l., a “History of

Greece," for which he received 250l., a "Natural History," for which the booksellers covenanted to pay him 800 guineas. These works he produced without any elaborate research, by merely selecting, abridging, and translating into his own clear, pure, and flowing language what he found in books well known to the world, but too bulky or too dry for boys and girls. He committed some strange blunders; for he knew nothing with accuracy. Thus in his "History of England" he tells us that Naseby is in Yorkshire; nor did he correct this mistake when the book was reprinted. He was very nearly hoaxed into putting into the "History of Greece" an account of a battle between Alexander the Great and Montezuma. In his "Animated Nature" he relates, with faith and with perfect gravity, all the most absurd lies which he could find in books of travels about gigantic Patagonians, monkeys that preach sermons, nightingales that repeat long conversations. "If he can tell a horse from a cow," said Johnson, "that is the extent of his knowledge of zoology." How little Goldsmith was qualified to write about the physical sciences is sufficiently proved by two anecdotes. He on one occasion denied that the sun is longer in the northern than in the southern skies. It was vain to cite the authority of Maupertuis. "Maupertuis!" he cried, "I understand those matters better than Maupertuis." On another occasion he, {165}in defiance of the evidence of his own senses, maintained obstinately, and even angrily, that he chewed his dinner by moving his upper jaw.

Yet, ignorant as Goldsmith was, few writers have done more to make the first steps in the laborious road to knowledge easy and pleasant. His compilations are widely distinguished from the compilations of ordinary book-makers. He was a great, perhaps an unequalled, master of the arts of selection and condensation. In these respects his histories of Rome and of England, and still more his own abridgments of these histories, well deserve to be studied. In general nothing is less attractive than an epitome: but the epitomes of Goldsmith, even when most concise, are

always amusing; and to read them is considered by intelligent children, not as a task, but as a pleasure.

Goldsmith might now be considered as a prosperous man. He had the means of living in comfort, and even in what to one who had so often slept in barns and on bulks must have been luxury. His fame was great and was constantly rising. He lived in what was intellectually far the best society of the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplishment was wanting, and in which the art of conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all the four. He aspired to share in their colloquial renown; but never was ambition more unfortunate. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace, should have been, whenever he took a part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering rattle. But on this point the evidence is overwhelming. {166}So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said, that Horace Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. "Noll," said Garrick, "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Pol." Charnier declared that it was a hard exercise of faith to believe that so foolish a chatterer could have really written the "Traveller." Even Boswell could say, with contemptuous compassion, that he liked very well to hear honest Goldsmith run on. "Yes, sir," said Johnson; "but he should not like to hear himself." Minds differ as rivers differ. There are transparent and sparkling rivers from which it is delightful to drink as they flow; to such rivers the minds of such men as Burke and Johnson may be compared. But there are rivers of which the water when first drawn is turbid and noisome, but becomes pellucid as crystal, and delicious to the taste, if it be suffered to stand till it has deposited a sediment; and such a river is a type of the mind of Goldsmith. His first thoughts on every subject were confused even to absurdity; but they required only a little

time to work themselves clear. When he wrote they had that time; and therefore his readers pronounced him a man of genius: but when he talked he talked nonsense, and made himself the laughing-stock of his hearers. He was painfully sensible of his inferiority in conversation; he felt every failure keenly: yet he had not sufficient judgment and self-command to hold his tongue. His animal spirits and vanity were always impelling him to try to do the one thing whieh he could not do. After every attempt he felt that he had exposed himself, and writhed with shame and vexation; yet the next moment he began again.

His {167}associates seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness: he was so generous that he quite forgot to be just; he forgave injuries so readily that he might be said to invite them; and was so liberal to beggars that he had nothing left for his tailor and his butcher. He was vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident. One vice of a darker shade was imputed to him, envy. But there is not the least reason to believe that this bad passion, though it sometimes made him wince and utter fretful exclamations, ever impelled him to injure by wicked arts the reputation of any of his rivals. The truth probably is, that he was not more envious, but merely less prudent, than his neighbours. His heart was on his lips. All those small jealousies, which are but too common among men of letters, but which a man of letters who is also a man of the world does his best to conceal, Goldsmith avowed with the simplicity of a child. When he was envious, instead of affecting indifference, instead of damning with faint praise, instead of doing injuries slily and in the dark, he told every body that he was envious. “Do not, pray, do not talk of Johnson in such terms,” he said to Boswell; “you harrow up my very soul.” George Steevens and Cumberland were men far too cunning to say such a thing. They would have echoed the praises of the man whom they envied, and then have sent

to the newspapers anonymous libels upon him. Both what was good and what was bad in Goldsmith's character was to his associates a perfect security that he would never commit such villany. He was neither ill-natured enough, nor longheaded {168}enough, to be guilty of any malicious act which required contrivance and disguise.

Goldsmith has sometimes been represented as a man of genius, cruelly treated by the world, and doomed to struggle with difficulties which at last broke his heart. But no representation can be more remote from the truth. He did, indeed, go through much sharp misery before he had done anything considerable in literature. But, after his name had appeared on the title-page of the "Traveller," he had none but himself to blame for his distresses. His average income, during the last seven years of his life, certainly exceeded 400l. a year; and 400l. a year ranked, among the incomes of that day, at least as high as 800l. a year would rank at present. A single man living in the Temple with 400l. a year might then be called opulent. Not one in ten of the young gentlemen of good families who were studying the law there had so much. But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined together, would not have sufficed for Goldsmith. He spent twice as much as he had. He wore fine clothes, gave dinners of several courses, paid court to venal beauties. He had also, it should be remembered, to the honour of his heart, though not of his head, a guinea, or five, or ten, according to the state of his purse, ready for any tale of distress, true or false. But it was not in dress or feasting, in promiscuous amours or promiscuous charities, that his chief expense lay. He had been from boyhood a gambler, and at once the most sanguine and the most unskilful of gamblers. For a time he put off the day of inevitable ruin by temporary expedients. He obtained advances from booksellers, by promising to execute works {169}which he never began. But at length this source of supply failed. He owed more than 2000l. and he saw no hope of extrication from his embarrassments. His spirits and health gave

way. He was attacked by a nervous fever, which he thought himself competent to treat, It would have been happy for him if his medical skill had been appreciated as justly by himself as by others. Notwithstanding the degree which he pretended to have received at Padua, he could procure no patients. “I do not practise,” he once said; “I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends.”

“Pray, dear Doctor,” said Beauclerk, “alter your rule; and prescribe only for your enemies.” Goldsmith now, in spite of this excellent advice, prescribed for himself. The remedy aggravated the malady. The sick man was induced to call in real physicians; and they at one time imagined that they had cured the disease. Still his weakness and restlessness continued. He could get no sleep. He could take no food. “You are worse,” said one of his medical attendants, “than you should be from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?” “No, it is not,” were the last recorded words of Oliver Goldsmith. He died on the third of April 1774, in his forty-sixth year. He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple; but the spot was not marked by any inscription, and is now forgotten. The coffin was followed by Burke and Reynolds. Both these great men were sincere mourners. Burke, when he heard of Goldsmith’s death, had burst into a flood of tears. Reynolds had been so much moved by the news that he had flung aside his brush and palette for the day.

A short time after Goldsmith’s death, a little poem appeared, {170}which will, as long as our language lasts, associate the names of his two illustrious friends with his own. It has already been mentioned that he sometimes felt keenly the sarcasm which his wild blundering talk brought upon him. He was, not long before his last illness, provoked into retaliating. He wisely betook himself to his pen; and at that weapon he proved himself a match for all his assailants together. Within a small compass he drew with a singularly easy and vigorous pencil the characters of nine or ten of his intimate associates. Though this little work did not receive his last touches, it must always be regarded as a

masterpiece. It is impossible, however, not to wish that four or five likenesses which have no interest for posterity were wanting to that noble gallery, and that their places were supplied by sketches of Johnson and Gibbon, as happy and vivid as the sketches of Burke and Garrick.

Some of Goldsmith's friends and admirers honoured him with a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey. Nollekens was the sculptor; and Johnson wrote the inscription. It is much to be lamented that Johnson did not leave to posterity a more durable and a more valuable memorial of his friend. A life of Goldsmith would have been an inestimable addition to the Lives of the Poets. No man appreciated Goldsmith's writings more justly than Johnson: no man was better acquainted with Goldsmith's character and habits; and no man was more competent to delineate with truth and spirit the peculiarities of a mind in which great powers were found in company with great weaknesses. But the list of poets to whose works Johnson was requested by the booksellers to furnish prefaces ended with Lyttleton, who died in 1773. The line seems to have {171}been drawn expressly for the purpose of excluding the person whose portrait would have most fitly closed the series. Goldsmith, however, has been fortunate in his biographers. Within a few years his life has been written by Mr. Prior, by Mr. Washington Irving, and by Mr. Forster. The diligence of Mr. Prior deserves great praise: the style of Mr. Washington Irving is always pleasing; but the highest place must, in justice, be assigned to the eminently interesting work of Mr. Forster.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

(*Encyclopodia Britannica*, December 1856.)

Samuel Johnson, {172}one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield, and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, and, though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession, was to the last a Jacobite in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September 1709. In the child, the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of parts, with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, {173}with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred.

He lost for a time the sight of one eye; and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek; for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist; and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. {174}That Augustan delicacy of taste which is the boast of the great public schools of England he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning. Once, while searching for some apples, he found a large folio volume of Petrarch's works. The name excited his curiosity; and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined; his debts increased; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university: but a wealthy neighbour offered

assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius; and one of the most learned among them declared that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. {175}He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ-Church by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner, panting for one-and-twenty, could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope’s Messiah into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts: but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford

tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samual succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochrondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange for that his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady’s shoe. He would amaze a drawing room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord’s Prayer.

He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active.

At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human napittance {176}almost the whole was appropriated to

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from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium; they reached him refracted, dulled and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birth-place and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronising the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners and squalid garb moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired {178}to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia. He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian, with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse: but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not

exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty, as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and, when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, “Pretty creature!”

His {179}marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre’s den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick, who was one of the pupils, used, many years later, to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of Irene in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

Never, since literature became a calling in England, had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which {180}separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed. Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose Seasons were in every library, such an author as Fielding, whose Pasquin had had a greater run than any drama since The Begar's Opera, was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cook-shop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot, and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the

day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. “Harry Hervey,” said the old philosopher many years later, “was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey I shall love him.”

At {181}Hervey’s table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general be dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat, and a pennyworth of bread, at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sat down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries and ala mode beefshops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne, the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed every where that he had been

{182}knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

About, a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the "Gentleman's Magazine." That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called "Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput." France was Blefuseu; London was Mildendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac secretary of State: Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad: and William Pulteney was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches, was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction--for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another--but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues, or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens. In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he {183}had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical

place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest. Charles II. and James II. were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud, a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden deserved no more honourable name than that of “the zealot of rebellion.” Even the ship money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government, the mildest that had ever been known in the world--under a government which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action--he fancied that he was a slave; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart’s tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stock-jobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments, and continental connections.

He {184}long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion. It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit, A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the Magazine. But Johnson long afterwards owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal had described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's Satires and Epistles had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's London appeared without his name in May 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately {185}and vigorous poem: but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of London. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed; and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index-makers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled

Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blanket; who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober; and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk: Hoole, surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sate cross-legged: and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar, who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis {186}and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted was Richard Savage, an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in Saint James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of irons on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, {187}lived there as he

had lived everywhere, and, in 1748, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared widely different from the catchpenny lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street. The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

The Life of Savage was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English Language, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The prospectus of the Dictionary he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated {188}for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since became Secretary of

State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind.

In 1749 he published the Vanity of Human Wishes, an excellent imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal.

It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day {189}of the fall of Sejanus, the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned too that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles: and Johnson's

vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.

For the copyright of the Vanity of Human Wishes Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields, had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw with more envy than became so great a man the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the {190}exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathised with each other on so many points on which they sympathised with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought Irene out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public,

however, listened with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation.

After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the Vanity of Human Wishes closely resemble the versification of Irene. The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

About a year after the representation of Irene, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the Tatler, and by the still more brilliant success of the Spectator. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted {191}to rival Addison. The Lay Monastery, the Censor, the Freethinker, the Plain Dealer, the Champion, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the Spectator appeared the first number of the Rambler. From March 1750 to March 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

From the first the Rambler was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson, when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to the Spectator. Young and Hartley expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington, among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Dodington, who was then

the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic, two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public the Rambler was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became {192}popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Slialum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the

Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

The last Rambler was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband {193}almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary. Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre or the judgment of the Monthly Review. The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary. She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the Dictionary was at length complete.

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the Ramblers had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called The World, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of The World the Dictionary was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with {194}wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should

be invested with the authority of a Dictator, nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The Dictionary came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could read that passage without tears.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson’s Dictionary was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines and philosophers are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language {195}except English, which indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.

The Dictionary, though it raised Johnson’s fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the

year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his Dictionary. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names, and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the Literary Magazine. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's Inquiry into The Nature and Origin of Evil.

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled The Idler. During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated, while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The Idler may be described as a second part of The {196}Rambler, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busied with his Idlers, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was Rasselas.

The success of Rasselas was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish must have been grievously disappointed when they found that

the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the Princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The Monthly Review and the Critical Review took different sides. Many readers pronounced tire writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

About {197}the plan of Rasselas little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's Travels. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke, and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox or Mrs. Sheridan, transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of

polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ball-rooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. “A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such,” says Rasselas, “is the common process of marriage.” Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had {198}little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate Dictionary, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise, which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal by name as an example of the meaning of the word “renegade.”’ A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed un-likely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The

head of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the {199}most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.

This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to be in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.

One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years; and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter 1765 came, and found him still in the same state, "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, {200}and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in

Cock Lane, and had actually gone himself, with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill, who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October 1765 appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.

This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of Hamlet. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more {201}slovenly, a more worthless, edition of any great classic. The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his Prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is

especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the English Dictionary there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben. Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had {202}discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience; and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775 Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the Life of Savage and on Rasselas.

But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had

strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes.

As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the Rambler. But in his talk there were no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals {203}of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There,

too, were Gibbon, the greatest historian, and Jones, the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together {204}by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton, distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk, renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.

Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb, and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might {205}have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the

fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield, and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water-drinker; and Boswell was a wine-bibber, and indeed little better than a habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note books with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials {206}out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connection less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever,

kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson; and the acquaintance ripened last into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes {207}which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called “the endearing elegance of female friendship.” Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise, was wanting to his sick room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the

names, now obsolete, of Buck and Maccaroni. It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath, and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales, and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinage, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment Johnson {208}had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern. And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than

those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, {209}and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his Journey to the Hebrides was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. {210}It was, of course, not to be expected that an

Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian. But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dishonourable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eved: another for being a pensioner; a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson, whose Fingal had been proved in the Journey to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness {211}which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and, when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But, when he took his pen in his

hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons, did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter.

“Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum.”

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that, {212}fine apophthegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself.

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the Journey to the Hebrides, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might, with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic

policy of the government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Ahnon and Stockdale. But his Taxation No Tyranny was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master s powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the Dictionary and the Rambler were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote Rasselas in the evenings of a week, but because he {213}had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

On Easter Eve 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a

new edition of the English poets, from Cowley downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with {214}the wits of Button; Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery, who had been admitted to the society of Swift; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope. The biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter, he had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

The Lives of the Poets, are, on the whole, the best of Johnson’s works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

Savage's Life Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his {215}pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the Journey to the Hebrides, and in the Lives of the Poets is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

Among the lives the best are perhaps those of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise, money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson received four thousand five hundred pounds for the History of Charles V.; and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the History of Charles V. is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the Lives of the Poets.

Johnson {216}was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming last upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. {217}Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham; she never pressed him to return; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter

of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June 1788, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a Complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron, and the two pictures in Hamlet. He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen {218}to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.

He had, in spite of much mental and bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his Idlers seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples, but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard; and

he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year: but this hope was disappointed; and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham sate much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch a night by the bed.

Frances {219}Burney, whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December, 1781. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian,--Cowley and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay, Prior, and Addison.

Since his death the popularity of his works--the Lives of the Poets, and, perhaps, the Vanity of Human Wishes, excepted--has greatly diminished. His Dictionary has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his Rambler or his Idler is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of Rasselas has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity

of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who {220}has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the aufractuosities of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

WILLIAM PITT

(*Encyclopædia Britannica*, January 1859.)

William Pitt, {221}the second son of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and of Lady Hester Grenville, daughter of Hester, Countess Temple, was born on the 28th of May, 1759. The child inherited a name which, at the time of his birth, was the most illustrious in the civilised world, and was pronounced by every Englishman with pride, and by every enemy of England with mingled admiration and terror. During the first year of his life, every month had its illuminations and bonfires, and every wind brought some messenger charged with joyful tidings and hostile standards. In Westphalia the English infantry won a great battle which arrested the armies of Louis the Fifteenth in the midst of a career of conquest; Boscawen defeated one French fleet on the coast of Portugal; Hawke put to flight another in the Bay of Biscay; Johnson took Niagara; Amherst took Ticonderoga; Wolfe died by the most enviable of deaths under the walls of Quebec; Clive destroyed a Dutch armament in the Hooghly, and established the English supremacy in Bengal; Coote routed Lally at Wandewash, and established the English supremacy in the Carnatic. The nation, while loudly applauding the successful warriors, considered them all, on sea and on land, in Europe, in America, {222}and in Asia, merely as instruments which received their direction from one superior mind. It was the great William Pitt, the great commoner, who had vanquished French marshals in Germany, and French admirals on the Atlantic; who had conquered for his country one great empire on the frozen shores of Ontario, and another under the tropical sun near the mouths of the Ganges, it was not in the nature of things that popularity such as he at this time enjoyed should be permanent. That popularity had lost its gloss before his children were old enough to understand that their father was a great man. He was at length

placed in situations in which neither his talents for administration nor his talents for debate appeared to the best advantage. The energy and decision which had eminently fitted him for the direction of war were not needed in time of peace. The lofty and spirit-stirring eloquence which had made him supreme in the House of Commons often fell dead on the House of Lords. A cruel malady racked his joints, and left his joints only to fall on his nerves and on his brain. During the closing years of his life, he was odious to the court, and yet was not on cordial terms with the great body of the opposition. Chatham was only the ruin of Pitt, but an awful and majestic ruin, not to be contemplated by any man of sense and feeling without emotions resembling those which are excited by the remains of the Parthenon and of the Coliseum. In one respect the old statesman was eminently happy. Whatever might be the vicissitudes of his public life, he never failed to find peace and love by his own hearth. he loved all his children, and was loved by them; and, of all his children, the one of whom he was fondest and proudest was his second son.

The {223}child's genius and ambition displayed themselves with a rare and almost unnatural precocity. At seven, the interest which he took in grave subjects, the ardour with which he pursued his studies, and the sense and vivacity of his remarks on books and on events, amazed his parents and instructors. One of his sayings of this date was reported to his mother by his tutor. In August, 1766, when the world was agitated by the news that Mr. Pitt had become Earl of Chatham, little William exclaimed: "I am glad that I am not the eldest son. I want to speak in the House of Commons like papa." A letter is extant in which Lady Chatham, a woman of considerable abilities, remarked to her lord, that their younger son at twelve had left far behind him his elder brother, who was fifteen. "The fineness," she wrote, "of William's mind makes him enjoy with the greatest pleasure what would be above the reach of any other creature of his small age." At fourteen the lad was in intellect a man. Hayley, who met him at Lyme in the summer of 1773, was

astonished, delighted, and somewhat overawed, by hearing wit and wisdom from so young a mouth. The poet, indeed, was afterwards sorry that his shyness had prevented him from submitting the plan of an extensive literary work, which he was then meditating, to the judgment of this extraordinary boy. The boy, indeed, had already written a tragedy, bad of course, but not worse than the tragedies of his friend. This piece is still preserved at Chevening, and is in some respects highly curious. There is no love. The whole plot is political; and it is remarkable that the interest, such as it is, turns on a contest about a regency. On one side is a faithful servant of the Crown, on the other an ambitious and unprincipled conspirator. At length the King, {224}who had been missing, reappears, resumes his power, and rewards the faithful defender of his rights. A reader who should judge only by internal evidence would have no hesitation in pronouncing that the play was written by some Pittite poetaster at the time of the rejoicings for the recovery of George the Third in 1780.

The pleasure with which William's parents observed the rapid development of his intellectual powers was alloyed by apprehensions about his health. He shot up alarmingly fast; he was often ill, and always weak; and it was feared that it would be impossible to rear a stripling so tall, so slender, and so feeble. Port wine was prescribed by his medical advisers: and it is said that he was, at fourteen, accustomed to take this agreeable physic in quantities which would, in our abstemious age, be thought much more than sufficient for any full-grown man. This regimen, though it would probably have killed ninety-nine boys out of a hundred, seems to have been well suited to the peculiarities of William's constitution; for at fifteen he ceased to be molested by disease, and, though never a strong man, continued, during many years of labour and anxiety, of nights passed in debate and of summers passed in London, to be a tolerably healthy one. It was probably on account of the delicacy of his frame that he was not educated like other boys of the same rank.

Almost all the eminent English statesmen and orators to whom he was afterwards opposed or allied, North, Fox, Shelburne, Windham, Grey, Wellesley, Grenville, Sheridan, Canning, went through the training of great public schools. Lord Chatham had himself been a distinguished Etonian: and it is seldom that a distinguished Etonian forgets his obligations to Eton. But William's {225}infirmities required a vigilance and tenderness such as could be found only at home. He was therefore bred under the paternal roof. His studies were superintended by a clergyman named Wilson; and those studies, though often interrupted by illness, were prosecuted with extraordinary success. Before the lad had completed his fifteenth year, his knowledge both of the ancient languages and of mathematics was such as very few men of eighteen then carried up to college. He was therefore sent, towards the close of the year 1773, to Pembroke Hall, in the university of Cambridge. So young a student required much more than the ordinary care which a college tutor bestows on undergraduates. The governor, to whom the direction of William's academical life was confided, was a bachelor of arts named Pretyman, who had been senior wrangler in the preceding year, and who, though not a man of prepossessing appearance or brilliant parts, was eminently acute and laborious, a sound scholar, and an excellent geometrician. At Cambridge, Pretyman was, during more than two years, the inseparable companion, and indeed almost the only companion, of his pupil. A close and lasting friendship sprang up between the pair. The disciple was able, before he completed his twenty-eighth year, to make his preceptor Bishop of Lincoln and Dean of St. Paul's; and the preceptor showed his gratitude by writing a life of the disciple, which enjoys the distinction of being the worst biographical work of its size in the world.

Pitt, till he graduated, had scarcely one acquaintance, attended chapel regularly morning and evening, dined every day in hall, and never went to a single evening party. At seventeen, he was admitted, after the bad fashion of those times, by right of birth, without {226}any examination,

to the degree of Master of Arts. But he continued during some years to reside at college, and to apply himself vigorously, under Prettyman's direction, to the studies of the place, while mixing freely in the best academic society.

The stock of learning which Pitt laid in during this part of his life was certainly very extraordinary. In fact, it was all that he ever possessed; for he very early became too busy to have any spare time for books. The work in which he took the greatest delight was Newton's Principia. His liking for mathematics, indeed, amounted to a passion, which, in the opinion of his instructors, themselves distinguished mathematicians, required to be cheeked rather than encouraged. The acuteness and readiness with which he solved problems was pronounced by one of the ablest of the moderators, who in those days presided over the disputations in the schools, and conducted the examinations of the Senate House, to be unrivalled in the university. Nor was the youth's proficiency in classical learning less remarkable. In one respect, indeed, he appeared to disadvantage when compared with even second-rate and third-rate men from public schools. He had never, while under Wilson's care, been in the habit of composing in the ancient languages; and he therefore never acquired that knack of versification which is sometimes possessed by clever boys whose knowledge of the language and literature of Greece and Rome is very superficial. It would have been utterly out of his power to produce such charming elegiac lines as those in which Wellesley bade farewell to Eton, or such Virgilian hexameters as those in which Canning described the pilgrimage to Mecca. But it may be doubted whether any scholar has ever, at twenty, {227}had a more solid and profound knowledge of the two great tongues of the old civilised world. The facility with which he penetrated the meaning of the most intricate sentences in the Attic writers astonished veteran critics. He had set his heart on being intimately acquainted with all the extant poetry of Greece, and was not satisfied till he had mastered Lycophron's Cassandra, the

most obscure work in the whole range of ancient literature. This strange rhapsody, the difficulties of which have perplexed and repelled many excellent scholars, “he read,” says his preceptor, “with an ease at first sight, which, if I had not witnessed it, I should have thought beyond the compass of human intellect.”

To modern literature Pitt paid comparatively little attention. He knew no living language except French; and French he knew very imperfectly. With a few of the best English writers he was intimate, particularly with Shakspeare and Milton. The debate in Pandemonium, was, as it well deserved to be, one of his favourite passages; and his early friends used to talk, long after his death, of the just emphasis and the melodious cadence with which they had heard him recite the incomparable speech of Belial. He had indeed been carefully trained from infancy in the art of managing his voice, a voice naturally clear and deep-toned. His father, whose oratory owed no small part of its effect to that art, had been a most skilful and judicious instructor. At a later period, the wits of Brookes’s, irritated by observing, night after night, how powerfully Pitt’s sonorous elocution fascinated the rows of country gentlemen, reproached him with having been “taught by his dad on a stool.”

His education, indeed, was well adapted to form a great {228}parliamentary speaker. One argument often urged against those classical studies which occupy so large a part of the early life of every gentleman bred in the south of our island is, that they prevent him from acquiring a command of his mother tongue, and that it is not unusual to meet with a youth of excellent parts, who writes Ciceronian Latin prose and Horatian Latin Aleaics, but who would find it impossible to express his thoughts in pure, perspicuous, and forcible English. There may perhaps be some truth in this observation. But the classical studies of Pitt were carried on in a peculiar manner, and had the effect of enriching his English vocabulary, and of making him wonderfully expert in the art of constructing correct English sentences. His practice was to look over a

page or two of a Greek or Latin author, to make himself master of the meaning, and then to read the passage straight-forward into his own language. This practice, begun under his first teacher Wilson, was continued under Pretyman. It is not strange that a young man of great abilities, who had been exercised daily in this way during ten years, should have acquired an almost unrivalled power of putting his thoughts, without premeditation, into words well selected and well arranged.

Of all the remains of antiquity, the orations were those on which he bestowed the most minute examination. His favourite employment was to compare harangues on opposite sides of the same question, to analyse them, and to observe which of the arguments of the first speaker were refuted by the second, which were evaded, and which were left untouched. Nor was it only in books that he at this time studied the art of parliamentary fencing. When he was at home, he had frequent opportunities of hearing important debates {229}at Westminster; and he heard them, not only with interest and enjoyment, but with a close scientific attention resembling that with which a diligent pupil at Guy's Hospital watches every turn of the hand of a great surgeon through a difficult operation. On one of these occasions, Pitt, a youth whose abilities were as yet known onlv to his own family and to a small knot of college friends, was introduced on the steps of the throne in the House of Lords to Fox, who was his senior by eleven years, and who was already the greatest debater, and one of the greatest orators, that had appeared in England. Fox used afterwards to relate that, as the discussion proceeded, Pitt repeatedly turned to him, and said, "But surely, Mr. Fox, that might be met thus;" or, "Yes; but he lays himself open to this retort." What the particular criticisms were Fox had forgotten; but he said that he was much struck at the time by the precocity of a lad who, through the whole sitting, seemed to be thinking only how all the speeches on both sides could be answered.

One of the young man's visits to the House of Lords was a sad and memorable era in his life. He had not quite completed his nineteenth year, when, on the 7th of April, 1778, he attended his father to Westminster. A great debate was expected. It was known that France had recognised the independence of the United States. The Duke of Richmond was about to declare his opinion that all thought of sublimating those states ought to be relinquished. Chatham had always maintained that the resistance of the colonies to the mother country was justifiable. But he conceived, very erroneously, that on the day on which their independence should be acknowledged the greatness of England would be at an end. Though sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, {230}he determined, in spite of the entreaties of his family, to be in his place. His son supported him to a seat. The excitement and exertion were too much for the old man. In the very act of addressing the peers, he fell back in convulsions. A few weeks later his corpse was borne, with gloomy pomp, from the Painted Chamber to the Abbey. The favourite child and namesake of the deceased statesman followed the coffin as chief mourner, and saw it deposited in the transept where his own was destined to he.

His elder brother, now Earl of Chatham, had means sufficient, and barely sufficient, to support the dignity of the peerage. The other members of the family were poorly provided for. William had little more than three hundred a year. It was necessary for him to follow a profession. He had already begun to eat his terms. In the spring of 1780 he came of age. He then quitted Cambridge, was called to the bar, took Chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and joined the western circuit. In the autumn of that year a General election took place; and he offered himself as a candidate for the university; but he was at the bottom of the poll. It is said that the grave doctors, who then sate, robed in scarlet, on the benches of Golgotha, thought it great presumption in so young a man to solicit so high a distinction. He was, however, at the request of a hereditary friend, the

Duke of Rutland, brought into Parliament by Sir James Lowther for the borough of Appleby.

The dangers of the country were at that time such as might well have disturbed even a constant mind. Army after army had been sent in vain against the rebellious colonists of North America. On pitched fields of battle the advantage had been with the disciplined troops {231}of the mother country. But it was not on pitched fields of battle that the event of such a contest could be decided. An armed nation, with hunger and the Atlantic for auxiliaries, was not to be subjugated. Meanwhile the House of Bourbon, humbled to the dust a few years before by the genius and vigour of Chatham, had seized the opportunity of revenge. France and Spain were united against us, and had recently been joined by Holland. The command of the Mediterranean had been for a time lost. The British flag had been scarcely able to maintain itself in the British Channel. The northern powers professed neutrality; but their neutrality had a menacing aspect. In the East, Hyder had descended on the Carnatic, had destroyed the little army of Baillie, and had spread terror even to the ramparts of Fort St. George. The discontents of Ireland threatened nothing less than civil war. In England the authority of the government had sunk to the lowest point. The King and the House of Commons were alike unpopular. The cry for parliamentary reform was scarcely less loud and vehement than in the autumn of 1830. Formidable associations, headed, not by ordinary demagogues, but by men of high rank, stainless character, and distinguished ability, demanded a revision of the representative system. The populace, emboldened by the impotence and irresolution of the government, had recently broken loose from all restraint, besieged the chambers of the legislature, hustled peers, hunted bishops, attacked the residences of ambassadors, opened prisons, burned and pulled down houses. London had presented during some days the aspect of a city taken by storm; and it had been necessary to form a camp among the trees of Saint James’s Park.

In {232}spite of dangers and difficulties abroad and at home, George the Third, with a firmness which had little affinity with virtue or with wisdom, persisted in his determination to put down the American rebels by force of arms; and his ministers submitted their judgment to his. Some of them were probably actuated merely by selfish cupidity; but their chief, Lord North, a man of high honour, amiable temper, winning manners, lively wit, and excellent talents both for business and for debate, must be acquitted of all sordid motives. He remained at a post from which he had long wished and had repeatedly tried to escape, only because he had not sufficient fortitude to resist the entreaties and reproaches of the King, who silenced all arguments by passionately asking whether any gentleman, any man of spirit, could have the heart to desert a kind master in the hour of extremity.

The opposition consisted of two parties which had once been hostile to each other, and which had been very slowly, and, as it soon appeared, very imperfectly reconciled, but which at this conjuncture seemed to act together with cordiality. The larger of these parties consisted of the great body of the Whig aristocracy. Its head was Charles, Marquess of Rockingham, a man of sense and virtue, and in wealth and parliamentary interest equalled by very few of the English nobles, but afflicted with a nervous timidity which prevented him from taking a prominent part in debate, In the House of Commons, the adherents of Rockingham were led by Fox, whose dissipated habits and ruined fortunes were the talk of the whole town, but whose commanding genius, and whose sweet, generous, and affectionate disposition, extorted the admiration and love of those who most lamented the errors of his private {233}life. Burke, superior to Fox in largeness of comprehension, in extent of knowledge, and in splendour of imagination, but less skilled in that kind of logic and in that kind of rhetoric which convince and persuade great assemblies, was willing to be the lieutenant of a young chief who might have been his son.

A smaller section of the opposition was composed of the old followers of Chatham. At their head was William, Earl of Shelburne, distinguished both as a statesman and as a lover of science and letters. With him were leagued Lord Camden, who had formerly held the Great Seal, and whose integrity, ability, and constitutional knowledge commanded the public respect; Barré, an eloquent and acrimonious declaimer; and Dunning, who had long held the first place at the English bar. It was to this party that Pitt was naturally attracted.

On the 26th of February 1781 he made his first speech, in favour of Burke's plan of economical reform. Fox stood up at the same moment, but instantly gave way. The lofty yet animated deportment of the young member, his perfect self-possession, the readiness with which he replied to the orators who had preceded him, the silver tones of his voice, the perfect structure of his unpremeditated sentences, astonished and delighted his hearers. Burke, moved even to tears, exclaimed, "It is not a chip of the old block; it is the old block itself." "Pitt will be one of the first men in Parliament," said a member of the opposition to Fox. "He is so already," answered Fox, in whose nature envy had no place. It is a curious fact, well remembered by some who were very recently living, that soon after this debate Pitt's name was put up by Fox at Brookes's.

On two subsequent occasions during that session Pitt {234}addressed the house, and on both fully sustained the reputation which he had acquired on his first appearance. In the summer, after the prorogation, he again went the western circuit, held several briefs, and acquitted himself in such a manner that he was highly complimented by Puller from the bench, and by Dunning at the bar.

On the 27th of November the Parliament reassembled. Only forty-eight hours before had arrived tidings of the surrender of Cornwallis and his army; and it had consequently been necessary to rewrite the royal speech. Every man in the kingdom, except the King, was now convinced that it

was mere madness to think of conquering the United States. In the debate on the report of the address, Pitt spoke with even more energy and brilliancy than on any former occasion. He was warmly applauded by his allies; but it was remarked that no person on his own side of the house was so loud in eulogy as Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, who spoke from the ministerial ranks. That able and versatile politician distinctly foresaw the approaching downfall of the government with which he was connected, and was preparing to make his own escape from the ruin. From that night dates his connection with Pitt, a connection which soon became a close intimacy, and which lasted till it was dissolved by death.

About a fortnight later, Pitt spoke in the committee of supply on the army estimates. Symptoms of dissension had begun to appear on the Treasury bench. Lord George Germaine, the Secretary of State who was especially charged with the direction of the war in America, had held language not easily to be reconciled with declarations made by the First Lord of the Treasury. {235}Pitt noticed the discrepancy with much force and keenness. Lord George and Lord North began to whisper together; and Welbore Ellis, an ancient placeman who had been drawing salary almost every quarter since the days of Henry Pelham, bent down between them to put in a word. Such interruptions sometimes discompose veteran speakers. Pitt stopped, and, looking at the group, said, with admirable readiness, “I shall wait till Nestor has composed the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles.”

After several defeats, or victories hardly to be distinguished from defeats, the ministry resigned. The King, reluctantly and ungraciously, consented to accept Rockingham as first minister. Fox and Shelburne became Secretaries of State. Lord John Cavendish, one of the most upright and honourable of men, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thurlow, whose abilities and force of character had made him the dictator of the House of Lords, continued to hold the great seal.

To Pitt was offered, through Shelburne, the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, one of the easiest and most highly paid places in the gift of the Crown; but the offer was, without hesitation, declined. The young statesman had resolved to accept no post which did not entitle him to a seat in the cabinet: and, a few days later, he announced that resolution in the House of Commons. It must be remembered that the cabinet was then a much smaller and more select body than at present. We have seen cabinets of sixteen. In the time of our grandfathers a cabinet of ten or eleven was thought inconveniently large. Seven was an usual number. Even Burke, who had taken the lucrative office of paymaster, was not in the cabinet. Many therefore {236}thought Pitt's declaration indecent. He himself was sorry that he had made it. The words, he said in private, had escaped him in the heat of speaking; and he had no sooner uttered them than he would have given the world to recall them. They, however, did him no harm with the public. The second William Pitt, it was said, had shown that he had inherited the spirit, as well as the genius, of the first. In the son, as in the father, there might perhaps be too much pride; but there was nothing low or sordid. It might be called arrogance in a young barrister, living in chambers on three hundred a year, to refuse a salary of five thousand a year, merely because he did not choose to bind himself to speak or vote for plans which he had no share in framing; but surely such arrogance was not very far removed from virtue.

Pitt gave a general support to the administration of Rockingham, but omitted, in the meantime, no opportunity of courting that Ultra-Whig party which the persecution of Wilkes and the Middlesex election had called into existence, and which the disastrous events of the war, and the triumph of republican principles in America, had made formidable both in numbers and in temper. He supported a motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments. He made a motion for a committee to examine into the state of the representation, and, in the speech by which that motion was introduced, avowed himself the enemy of the close boroughs,

the strongholds of that corruption to which he attributed all the calamities of the nation, and which, as he phrased it in one of those exact and sonorous sentences of which he had a boundless command, had grown with the growth of England and strengthened with her strength, but had not diminished with her diminution {237}or decayed with her decay. On this occasion he was supported by Fox. The motion was lost by only twenty votes in a house of more than three hundred members. The reformers never again had so good a division till the year 1881.

The new administration was strong in abilities, and was more popular than any administration which had held office since the first year of George the Third, but was hated by the King, hesitatingly supported by the Parliament, and torn by internal dissensions. The Chancellor was disliked and distrusted by almost all his colleagues. The two Secretaries of State regarded each other with no friendly feeling. The line between their departments had not been traced with precision; and there were consequently jealousies, encroachments, and complaints. It was all that Rockingham could do to keep the peace in his cabinet; and, before the cabinet had existed three months, Rockingham died.

In an instant all was confusion. The adherents of the deceased statesman looked on the Duke of Portland as their chief. The King placed Shelburne at the head of the Treasury. Fox, Lord John Cavendish, and Burke, immediately resigned their offices; and the new prime minister was left to constitute a government out of very defective materials. His own parliamentary talents were great; but he could not be in the place where parliamentary talents were most needed. It was necessary to find some member of the House of Commons who could confront the great orators of the opposition; and Pitt alone had the eloquence and the courage which were required. He was offered the great place of Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he accepted it. He had scarcely completed his twenty-third year.

The {238}Parliament was speedily prorogued. During the recess, a negotiation for peace which had been commenced under Rockingham was brought to a successful termination. England acknowledged the independence of her revolted colonies; and she ceded to her European enemies some places in the Mediterranean and in the Gulf of Mexico. But the terms which she obtained were quite as advantageous and honourable as the events of the war entitled her to expect, or as she was likely to obtain by persevering in a contest against immense odds. All her vital parts, all the real sources of her power, remained uninjured. She preserved even her dignity; for she ceded to the House of Bourbon only part of what she had won from that House in previous wars. She retained her Indian empire undiminished; and, in spite of the mightiest efforts of two great monarchies, her flag still waved on the rock of Gibraltar. There is not the slightest reason to believe that Fox, if he had remained in office, would have hesitated one moment about concluding a treaty on such conditions. Unhappily that great and most amiable man was, at this crisis, hurried by his passions into an error which made his genius and his virtues, during a long course of years, almost useless to his country.

He saw that the great body of the House of Commons was divided into three parties, his own, that of North, and that of Shelburne; that none of those three parties was large enough to stand alone; that, therefore, unless two of them united, there must be a miserably feeble administration, or, more probably, a rapid succession of miserably feeble administrations, and this at a time when a strong government was essential to the prosperity and respectability of the nation. It was then necessary and right that there should be a coalition. {239}To every possible coalition there were objections. But, of all possible coalitions, that to which there were the fewest objections was undoubtedly a coalition between Shelburne and Fox. It would have been generally applauded by the followers of both. It might have been made without any sacrifice of public principle on the part of either. Unhappily, recent bickerings had

left in the mind of Fox a profound dislike and distrust of Shelburne. Pitt attempted to mediate, and was authorised to invite Fox to return to the service of the Crown. “Is Lord Shelburne,” said Fox, “to remain prime minister?” Pitt answered in the affirmative. “It is impossible that I can act under him,” said Fox. “Then negotiation is at an end,” said Pitt; “for I cannot betray him.” Thus the two statesmen parted. They were never again in a private room together.

As Fox and his friends would not treat with Shelburne, nothing remained to them but to treat with North. That fatal coalition which is emphatically called “The Coalition” was formed. Not three quarters of a year had elapsed since Fox and Burke had threatened North with impeachment, and had described him, night after night, as the most arbitrary, the most corrupt, the most incapable of ministers. They now allied themselves with him for the purpose of driving from office a statesman with whom they cannot be said to have differed as to any important question. Nor had they even the prudence and the patience to wait for some occasion on which they might, without inconsistency, have combined with their old enemies in opposition to the government. That nothing might be wanting to the scandal, the great orators, who had, during seven years, thundered against the war, determined {240}to join with the authors of that war in passing a vote of censure on the peace.

The Parliament met before Christmas 1782. But it was not till January 1783 that the preliminary treaties were signed. On the 17th of February they were taken into consideration by the House of Commons. There had been, during some days, floating rumours that Fox and North had coalesced; and the debate indicated but too clearly that those rumours were not unfounded. Pitt was suffering from indisposition: he did not rise till his own strength and that of his hearers were exhausted; and he was consequently less successful than on any former occasion. His admirers owned that his speech was feeble and petulant. He so far forgot himself as to advise Sheridan to confine himself to amusing theatrical audiences.

This ignoble sarcasm gave Sheridan an opportunity of retorting with great felicity. “After what I have seen and heard tonight,” he said, “I really feel strongly tempted to venture on a competition with so great an artist as Ben Jonson, and to bring on the stage a second Angry Boy.” On a division, the address proposed by the supporters of the government was rejected by a majority of sixteen.

But Pitt was not a man to be disheartened by a single failure, or to be put down by the most lively repartee. When, a few days later, the opposition proposed a resolution directly censuring the treaties, he spoke with an eloquence, energy, and dignity, which raised his fame and popularity higher than ever. To the coalition of Fox and North he alluded in language which drew forth tumultuous applause from his followers. “If,” he said, “this ill-omened and unnatural marriage be not yet consummated, I know of a just and {241}lawful impediment; and, in the name of the public weal, I forbid the banns.”

The ministers were again left in a minority; and Shelburne consequently tendered his resignation. It was accepted; but the King struggled long and hard before he submitted to the terms dictated by Fox, whose faults he detested, and whose high spirit and powerful intellect he detested still more. The first place at the board of Treasury was repeatedly offered to Pitt; but the offer, though tempting, was steadfastly declined. The young man, whose judgment was as precocious as his eloquence, saw that his time was coming, but was not come, and was deaf to royal importunities and reproaches. His Majesty, bitterly complaining of Pitt’s faintheartedness, tried to break the coalition. Every art of seduction was practised on North, but in vain. During several weeks the country remained without a government. It was not till all devices had failed, and till the aspect of the House of Commons became threatening, that the King gave way. The Duke of Portland was declared First Lord of the Treasury. Thurlow was dismissed. Fox and North became Secretaries of State, with power ostensibly equal. But Fox was the real prime minister.

The year was far advanced before the new arrangements were completed; and nothing very important was done during the remainder of the session. Pitt, now seated on the opposition bench, brought the question of parliamentary reform a second time under the consideration of the Commons. He proposed to add to the House at once a hundred county members and several members for metropolitan districts, and to enact that every borough of which an election committee {242}should report that the majority of voters appeared to be corrupt should lose the franchise. The motion was rejected by 203 votes to 140.

After the prorogation, Pitt visited the Continent for the first and last time. His travelling companion was one of his most intimate friends, a young man of his own age, who had already distinguished himself in Parliament by an engaging natural eloquence, set off by the sweetest and most exquisitely modulated of human voices, and whose affectionate heart, caressing manners, and brilliant wit, made him the most delightful of companions, William Wilberforce. That was the time of Anglomania in France; and at Paris the son of the great Chatham was absolutely hunted by men of letters and women of fashion, and forced, much against his will, into political disputation. One remarkable saying which dropped from him during this tour has been preserved. A French gentleman expressed some surprise at the immense influence which Fox, a man of pleasure, ruined by the dice-box and the turf, exercised over the English nation. “You have not,” said Pitt, “been under the wand of the magician.”

In November 1783 the Parliament met again. The government had irresistible strength in the House of Commons, and seemed to be scarcely less strong in the House of Lords, but was, in truth, surrounded on every side by dangers. The King was impatiently waiting for the moment fit which he could emancipate himself from a yoke which galled him so severely that he had more than once seriously thought of retiring to Hanover; and the King was scarcely more eager for a change than the nation. Fox and North had committed a fatal error. They ought to have

known that coalitions {243}between parties which have long been hostile can succeed only when the wish for coalition pervades the lower ranks of both. If the leaders unite before there is any disposition to union among the followers, the probability is that there will be a mutiny in both camps, and that the two revolted armies will make a truce with each other, in order to be revenged on those by whom they think that they have been betrayed. Thus it was in 1783. At the beginning of that eventful year, North had been the recognised head of the old Tory party, which, though for a moment prostrated by the disastrous issue of the American war, was still a great power in the state. To him the clergy, the universities, and that large body of country gentlemen whose rallying cry was “Church and King,” had long looked up with respect and confidence. Fox had, on the other hand, been the idol of the Whigs, and of the whole body of Protestant dissenters. The coalition at once alienated the most zealous Tories from North, and the most zealous Whigs from Fox. The University of Oxford, which had marked its approbation of North’s orthodoxy by electing him chancellor, the city of London, which had been during two and twenty years at war with the Court, were equally disgusted. Squires and rectors, who had inherited the principles of the cavaliers of the preceding century, could not forgive their old leader for combining with disloyal subjects in order to put a force on the sovereign. The members of the Bill of Rights Society and of the Reform Associations were enraged by learning that their favourite orator now called the great champion of tyranny and corruption his noble friend. Two great multitudes were at once left without any head, and both at once turned their eyes on Pitt. One party saw {244}in him the only man who could rescue the King; the other saw in him the only man who could purify the Parliament. He was supported on one side by Archbishop Markham, the preacher of divine right, and by Jenkinson, the captain of the Praetorian band of the King’s friends; on the other side by Jebb and Priestley, Sawbridge and Cartwright, Jack Wilkes and Horne Tooke. On the benches of the House of Commons, however, the ranks of the

ministerial majority were unbroken; and that any statesman would venture to brave such a majority was thought impossible. No prince of the Hanoverian line had ever, under any provocation, ventured to appeal from the representative body to the constituent body. The ministers, therefore, notwithstanding the sullen looks and muttered words of displeasure with which their suggestions were received in the closet, notwithstanding the roar of obloquy which was rising louder and louder every day from every corner of the island, thought themselves secure.

Such was their confidence in their strength that, as soon as the Parliament had met, they brought forward a singularly bold and original plan for the government of the British territories in India. What was proposed was that the whole authority, which till that time had been exercised over those territories by the East India Company, should be transferred to seven Commissioners who were to be named by Parliament, and were not to be removable at the pleasure of the Crown. Earl Fitzwilliam, the most intimate personal friend of Fox, was to be chairman of this board; and the eldest son of North was to be one of the members.

As soon as the outlines of the scheme were known, all the hatred which the coalition had excited burst forth {245}with an astounding explosion. The question which ought undoubtedly to have been considered as paramount to every other was, whether the proposed change was likely to be beneficial or injurious to the thirty millions of people who were subject to the Company. But that question cannot be said to have been even seriously discussed. Burke, who, whether right or wrong in the conclusions to which he came, had at least the merit of looking at the subject in the right point of view, vainly reminded his hearers of that mighty population whose daily rice might depend on a vote of the British Parliament. He spoke, with even more than his wonted power of thought and language, about the desolation of Rohilcund, about the spoliation of Benares, about the evil policy which had suffered the tanks of the Carnatic to go to ruin; but he could scarcely obtain a hearing. The

contending parties, to their shame it must be said, would listen to none but English topics. Out of doors the cry against the ministry was almost universal. Town and country were united. Corporations exclaimed against the violation of the charter of the greatest corporation in the realm. Tories and democrats joined in pronouncing the proposed board an unconstitutional body. It was to consist of Fox's nominees. The effect of his bill was to give, not to the Crown, but to him personally, whether in office or in opposition, an enormous power, a patronage sufficient to counterbalance the patronage of the Treasury and of the Admiralty, and to decide the elections for fifty boroughs. He knew, it was said, that he was hateful alike to King and people; and he had devised a plan which would make him independent of both. Some nicknamed him Cromwell, and some Carlo Khan. Wilberforce, with his usual felicity of expression, {246}and with very unusual bitterness of feeling, described the scheme as the genuine offspring of the coalition, as marked with the features of both its parents, the corruption of one and the violence of the other. In spite of all opposition, however, the bill was supported in every stage by great majorities, was rapidly passed, and was sent up to the Lords. To the general astonishment, when the second reading was moved in the Upper House, the opposition proposed an adjournment, and carried it by eighty-seven votes to seventy-nine. The cause of this strange turn of fortune was soon known. Pitt's cousin, Earl Temple, had been in the royal closet, and had there been authorised to let it be known that His Majesty would consider all who voted for the bill as his enemies. The ignominious commission was performed; and instantly a troop of Lords of the Bedchamber, of Bishops who wished to be translated, and of Scotch peers who wished to be re-elected, made haste to change sides. On a later day, the Lords rejected the bill. Fox and North were immediately directed to send their seals to the palace by their Under Secretaries; and Pitt was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The general opinion was, that there would be an immediate dissolution. But Pitt wisely determined to give the public feeling time to gather strength. On this point he differed from his kinsman Temple. The consequence was, that Temple, who had been appointed one of the Secretaries of State, resigned his office forty-eight hours after he had accepted it, and thus relieved the new government from a great load of unpopularity; for all men of sense and honour, however strong might be their dislike of the India Bill, disapproved of the manner {247}in which that bill had been thrown out. Temple carried away with him the scandal which the best friends of the new government could not but lament. The fame of the young prime minister preserved its whiteness. He could declare with perfect truth that, if unconstitutional machinations had been employed, he had been no party to them.

He was, however, surrounded by difficulties and dangers. In the House of Lords, indeed, he had a majority; nor could any orator of the opposition in that assembly be considered as a match for Thurlow, who was now again Chancellor, or for Camden, who cordially supported the son of his old friend Chatham. But in the other House there was not a single eminent speaker among the official men who sate round Pitt. His most useful assistant was Dundas, who, though he had not eloquence, had sense, knowledge, readiness, and boldness. On the opposite benches was a powerful majority, led by Fox, who was supported by Burke, North, and Sheridan. The heart of the young minister, stout as it was, almost died within him. He could not once close his eyes on the night which followed Temple's resignation. But, whatever his internal emotions might be, his language and deportment indicated nothing but unconquerable firmness and haughty confidence in his own powers. His contest against the House of Commons lasted from the 17th of December, 1783, to the 8th of March, 1784. In sixteen divisions the opposition triumphed. Again and again the King was requested to dismiss his ministers. But he was determined to go to Germany rather

than yield. Pitt's resolution never wavered. The cry of the nation in his favour became vehement and almost furious. Addresses assuring him of public support came up daily from {248}every part of the kingdom. The freedom of the city of London was presented to him in a gold box. He went in state to receive this mark of distinction. he was sumptuously feasted in Grocers' Hall; and the shopkeepers of the Strand and Fleet Street illuminated their houses in his honour. These things could not but produce an effect within the walls of Parliament. The ranks of the majority began to waver; a few passed over to the enemy; some skulked away; many were for capitulating while it was still possible to capitulate with the honours of war. Negotiations were opened with the view of forming an administration on a wide basis; but they had scarcely been opened when they were closed. The opposition demanded, as a preliminary article of the treaty, that Pitt should resign the Treasury; and with this demand Pitt steadfastly refused to comply. While the contest was raging, the Clerkship of the Pells, a sinecure place for life, worth three thousand a year, and tenable with a seat in the House of Commons, became vacant. The appointment was with the Chancellor of the Exchequer: nobody doubted that he would appoint himself; and nobody could have blamed him if he had done so: for such sinecure offices had always been defended on the ground that they enabled a few men of eminent abilities and small incomes to live without any profession, and to devote themselves to the service of the state. Pitt, in spite of the remonstrances of his friends, gave the Pells to his father's old adherent, Colonel Barré, a man distinguished by talent and eloquence, but poor and afflicted with blindness. By this arrangement a pension which the Rockingham administration had granted to Barré was saved to the public. Never was there a happier stroke of policy. About treaties, {249}wars, expeditions, tariffs, budgets, there will always be room for dispute. The policy which is applauded by half the nation may be condemned by the other half. But pecuniary disinterestedness everybody comprehends. It is a great thing for a man who has only three hundred a year to be able to

show that he considers three thousand a year as mere dirt beneath his feet, when compared with the public interest and the public esteem. Pitt had his reward. No minister was ever more rancorously libelled; but, even when he was known to be overwhelmed with debt, when millions were passing through his hands, when the wealthiest magnates of the realm were soliciting him for marquisates and garters, his bitterest enemies did not dare to accuse him of touching unlawful gain.

At length the hard fought fight ended. A final remonstrance, drawn up by Burke with admirable skill, was carried on the 8th of March by a single vote in a full House. Had the experiment been repeated, the supporters of the coalition would probably have been in a minority. But the supplies had been voted; the Mutiny Bill had been passed; and the Parliament was dissolved.

The popular constituent bodies all over the country were in general enthusiastic on the side of the new government. A hundred and sixty of the supporters of the coalition lost their seats. The First Lord of the Treasury himself came in at the head of the poll for the University of Cambridge. His young friend, Wilberforce, was elected knight of the great shire of York, in opposition to the whole influence of the Fitzwilliams, Cavendishes, Dundases, and Saviles. In the midst of such triumphs Pitt completed his twenty-fifth year. He was now the greatest subject that England had seen {250}during many generations. He domineered absolutely over the cabinet, and was the favourite at once of the Sovereign, of the Parliament, and of the nation. His father had never been so powerful, nor Walpole, nor Marlborough.

This narrative has now reached a point, beyond which a full history of the life of Pitt would be a history of England, or rather of the whole civilised world; and for such a history this is not the proper place. Here a very slight sketch must suffice; and in that sketch prominence will be given to such points as may enable a reader who is already acquainted with the

general course of events to form a just notion of the character of the man on whom so much depended.

If we wish to arrive at a correct judgment of Pitt's merits and defects, we must never forget that he belonged to a peculiar class of statesmen, and that he must be tried by a peculiar standard. It is not easy to compare him fairly with such men as Ximenes and Sully, Richelieu and Oxenstiern, John de Witt and Warren Hastings. The means by which those politicians governed great communities were of quite a different kind from those which Pitt was under the necessity of employing. Some talents, which they never had any opportunity of showing that they possessed, were developed in him to an extraordinary degree. In some qualities, on the other hand, to which they owe a large part of their fame, he was decidedly their inferior. They transacted business in their closets, or at boards where a few confidential councillors sate. It was his lot to be born in an age and in a country in which parliamentary government was completely established; his whole training from infancy was such as fitted him to bear a part in parliamentary {251}government; and, from the prime of his manhood to his death, all the powers of his vigorous mind were almost constantly exerted in the work of parliamentary government. He accordingly became the greatest master of the whole art of parliamentary government that has ever existed, a greater than Montagne or Walpole, a greater than his father Chatham or his rival Fox, a greater than either of his illustrious successors Canning and Peel.

Parliamentary government, like every other contrivance of man, has its advantages and its disadvantages. On the advantages there is no need to dilate. The history of England during the hundred and seventy years which have elapsed since the House of Commons became the most powerful body in the state, her immense and still growing prosperity, her freedom, her tranquillity, her greatness in arts, in sciences, and in arms, her maritime ascendency, the marvels of her public credit, her American, her African, her Australian, her Asiatic empires, sufficiently prove the

excellence of her institutions. But those institutions, though excellent, are assuredly not perfect. Parliamentary government is government by speaking. In such a government, the power of speaking is the most highly prized of all the qualities which a politician can possess; and that power may exist, in the highest degree, without judgment, without fortitude, without skill in reading the characters of men or the signs of the times, without any knowledge of the principles of legislation or of political economy, and without any skill in diplomacy or in the administration of war. Nay, it may well happen that those very intellectual qualities which give a peculiar charm to the speeches of a public man may be incompatible with the qualities which would {252}fit him to meet a pressing emergency with promptitude and firmness. It was thus with Charles Townshend. It was thus with Windham. It was a privilege to listen to those accomplished and ingenious orators. But in a perilous crisis they would have been found far inferior in all the qualities of rulers to such a man as Oliver Cromwell, who talked nonsense, or as William the Silent, who did not talk at all. When parliamentary government is established, a Charles Townshend or a Windham will almost always exercise much greater influence than such men as the great Protector of England, or as the founder of the Batavian commonwealth. In such a government, parliamentary talent, though quite distinct from the talents of a good executive or judicial official, will be a chief qualification for executive and judicial office. From the Book of Dignities a curious list might be made out of Chancellors ignorant of the principles of equity, and First Lords of the Admiralty ignorant of the principles of navigation, of Colonial ministers who could not repeat the names of the Colonies, of Lords of the Treasury who did not know the difference between funded and unfunded debt, and of Secretaries of the India Board who did not know whether the Mahrattas were Mahometans or Hindoos. On these grounds, some persons, incapable of seeing more than one side of a question, have pronounced parliamentary government a positive evil, and have maintained that the administration would be greatly improved if the

power, now exercised by a large assembly, were transferred to a single person. Men of sense will probably think the remedy very much worse than the disease, and will be of opinion that there would be small gain in exchanging Charles Townshend {253}and Windham for the Prince of the Peace, or the poor slave and dog Steenie.

Pitt was emphatically the man of parliamentary government, the type of his class, the minion, the child, the spoiled child, of the House of Commons. For the House of Commons he had a hereditary, an infantine love. Through his whole boyhood, the House of Commons was never out of his thoughts, or out of the thoughts of his instructors. Reciting at his father's knee, reading Thucydides and Cicero into English, analysing the great Attic speeches on the Embassy and on the Crown, he was constantly in training for the conflicts of the House of Commons. He was a distinguished member of the House of Commons at twenty-one. The ability which he had displayed in the House of Commons made him the most powerful subject in Europe before he was twenty-five. It would have been happy for himself and for his country if his elevation had been deferred. Eight or ten years, during which he would have had leisure and opportunity for reading and reflection, for foreign travel, for social intercourse and free exchange of thought on equal terms with a great variety of companions, would have supplied what, without any fault on his part, was wanting to his powerful intellect. He had all the knowledge that he could be expected to have; that is to say, all the knowledge that a man can acquire while he is a student at Cambridge, and all the knowledge that a man can acquire when he is First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the stock of general information which he brought from college, extraordinary for a boy, was far inferior to what Fox possessed, and beggarly when compared with the massy, the splendid, the various treasures laid up in the large {254}mind of Burke. After Pitt became minister, he had no leisure to learn more than was necessary for the purposes of the day which was passing over him. What

was necessary for those purposes such a man could learn with little difficulty, he was surrounded by experienced and able public servants, he could at any moment command their best assistance. From the stores which they produced his vigorous mind rapidly collected the materials for a good parliamentary case: and that was enough. Legislation and administration were with him secondary matters. To the work of framing statutes, of negotiating treaties, of organising fleets and armies, of sending forth expeditions, he gave only the leavings of his time and the dregs of his fine intellect. The strength and sap of his mind were all drawn in a different direction. It was when the House of Commons was to be convinced and persuaded that he put forth all his powers.

Of those powers we must form our estimate chiefly from tradition; for of all the eminent speakers of the last age Pitt has suffered most from the reporters. Even while he was still living, critics remarked that his eloquence could not be preserved, that he must be heard to be appreciated. They more than once applied to him the sentence in which Tacitus describes the fate of a senator whose rhetoric was admired in the Augustan age: “Haterii canorum illud et profluens cum ipso simul exstinctum est.” There is, however, abundant evidence that nature had bestowed on Pitt the talents of a great orator; and those talents had been developed in a very peculiar manner, first by his education, and secondly by the high official position to which he rose early, and in which he passed the greater part of his public life.

At {255}his first appearance in Parliament he showed himself superior to all his contemporaries in command of language. He could pour forth a long succession of round and stately periods, without premeditation, without ever pausing for a word, without ever repeating a word, in a voice of silver clearness, and with a pronunciation so articulate that not a letter was slurred over. He had less amplitude of mind and less richness of imagination than Burke, less ingenuity than Windham, less wit than Sheridan, less perfect mastery of dialectical fence, and less of that highest

sort of eloquence which consists of reason and passion fused together, than Fox. Yet the almost unanimous judgment of those who were in the habit of listening to that remarkable race of men placed Pitt, as a speaker, above Burke, above Windham, above Sheridan, and not below Fox. His declamation was copious, polished, and splendid. In power of sarcasm he was probably not surpassed by any speaker, ancient or modern; and of this formidable weapon he made merciless use. In two parts of the oratorical art which are of the highest value to a minister of state he was singularly expert. No man knew better how to be luminous or how to be obscure. When he wished to be understood, he never failed to make himself understood. He could with ease present to his audience, not perhaps an exact or profound, but a clear, popular, and plausible view of the most extensive and complicated subject. Nothing was out of place; nothing was forgotten; minute details, dates, sums of money, were all faithfully preserved in his memory. Even intricate questions of finance, when explained by him, seemed clear to the plainest man among his hearers. On the other hand, when he did not wish to be explicit,--and {256}no man who is at the head of affairs always wishes to be explicit,--he had a marvellous power of saying nothing in language which left on his audience the impression that he had said a great deal. He was at once the only man who could open a budget without notes, and the only man who, as Windham said, could speak that most elaborately evasive and unmeaning of human compositions, a King’s speech, without premeditation.

The effect of oratory will always to a great extent depend on the character of the orator. There perhaps never were two speakers whose eloquence had more of what may be called the race, more of the flavour imparted by moral qualities, than Fox and Pitt. The speeches of Fox owe a great part of their charm to that warmth and softness of heart, that sympathy with human suffering, that admiration for everything great and beautiful, and that hatred of cruelty and injustice, which interest and

delight us even in the most defective reports. No person, on the other hand, could hear Pitt without perceiving him to be a man of high, intrepid, and commanding spirit, proudly conscious of his own rectitude and of his own intellectual superiority, incapable of the low vices of fear and envy, but too prone to feel and to show disdain. Pride, indeed, pervaded the whole man, was written in the harsh, rigid lines of his face, was marked by the way in which he walked, in which he sate, in which he stood, and, above all, in which he bowed. Such pride, of course, inflicted many wounds. It may confidently be affirmed that there cannot be found, in all the ten thousand invectives written against Fox, a word indicating that his demeanour had ever made a single personal enemy. On the other hand, several men of note who had been partial {257}to Pitt, and who to the last continued to approve his public conduct and to support his administration, Cumberland, for example, Boswell, and Matthias, were so much irritated by the contempt with which he treated them, that they complained in print of their wrongs. But his pride, though it made him bitterly disliked by individuals, inspired the great body of his followers in Parliament and throughout the country with respect and confidence. They took him at his own valuation. They saw that his self-esteem was not that of an upstart, who was drunk with good luck and with applause, and who, if fortune turned, would sink from arrogance into abject humility. It was that of the magnanimous man so finely described by Aristotle in the Ethics, of the man who thinks himself worthy of great things, being in truth worthy. It sprang from a consciousness of great powers and great virtues, and was never so conspicuously displayed as in the midst of difficulties and dangers which would have unnerved and bowed down any ordinary mind. It was closely connected, too, with an ambition which had no mixture of low cupidity. There was something noble in the cynical disdain with which the mighty minister scattered riches and titles to right and left among those who valued them, while he spurned them out of his own way. Poor himself, he was surrounded by friends on whom he had bestowed three thousand, six

thousand, ten thousand a year. Plain Mister himself, he had made more lords than any three ministers that had preceded him. The garter, for which the first dukes in the kingdom were contending, was repeatedly offered to him, and offered in vain.

The correctness of his private life added much to the dignity of his public character. In the relations of son, brother, {258}uncle, master, friend, his conduct was exemplary. In the small circle of his intimate associates, he was amiable, affectionate, even playful. They loved him sincerely; they regretted him long; and they would hardly admit that he who was so kind and gentle with them could be stern and haughty with others. He indulged, indeed, somewhat too freely in wine, which he had early been directed to take as a medicine, and which use had made a necessary of life to him. But it was very seldom that any indication of undue excess could be detected in his tones or gestures; and, in truth, two bottles of port were little more to him than two dishes of tea. He had, when he was first introduced into the clubs of Saint James's Street, shown a strong taste for play; but he had the prudence and the resolution to stop before this taste had acquired the strength of habit. From the passion which generally exercises the most tyrannical dominion over the young he possessed an immunity, which is probably to be ascribed partly to his temperament and partly to his situation. His constitution was feeble; he was very shy; and he was very busy. The strictness of his morals furnished such buffoons as Peter Pindar and Captain Morris with an inexhaustible theme for merriment of no very delicate kind. But the great body of the middle class of Englishmen could not see the joke. They warmly praised the young statesman for commanding his passions, and for covering his frailties, if he had frailties, with decorous obscurity, and would have been very far indeed from thinking better of him if he had vindicated himself from the taunts of his enemies by taking under his protection a Nancy Parsons or a Marianne Clark.

No part of the immense popularity which Pitt long enjoyed {259}is to be attributed to the eulogies of wits and poets. It might have been naturally expected that a man of genius, of learning, of taste, an orator whose diction was often compared to that of Tully, the representative, too, of a great university, would have taken a peculiar pleasure in befriending eminent writers, to whatever political party they might have belonged. The love of literature had induced Augustus to heap benefits on Pompeians, Somers to be the protector of nonjurors, Harley to make the fortunes of Whigs. But it could not move Pitt to show any favour even to Pittites. He was doubtless right in thinking that, in general, poetry, history and philosophy ought to be suffered, like calico and cutlery, to find their proper price in the market, and that to teach men of letters to look habitually to the state for their recompense is bad for the state and bad for letters. Assuredly nothing can be more absurd or mischievous than to waste the public money in bounties for the purpose of inducing people who ought to be weighing out grocery or measuring out drapery to write bad or middling books. But, though the sound rule is that authors should be left to be remunerated by their readers, there will, in every generation, be a few exceptions to this rule. To distinguish these special cases from the mass is an employment well worthy of the faculties of a great and accomplished ruler; and Pitt would assuredly have had little difficulty in finding such cases. While he was in power, the greatest philologist of the age, his own contemporary at Cambridge, was reduced to earn a livelihood by the lowest literary drudgery, and to spend in writing squibs for the *Morning Chronicle*. years to which we might have owed an all but perfect text of the whole tragic and comic drama of Athens. {260}The greatest historian of the age, forced by poverty to leave his country, completed his immortal work on the shores of Lake Leman. The political heterodoxy of Person, and the religious heterodoxy of Gibbon, may perhaps be pleaded in defence of the minister by whom those eminent men were neglected. But there were other cases in which no such excuse could be set up. Scarcely had Pitt obtained possession of

unbounded power when an aged writer of the highest eminence, who had made very little by his writings, and who was sinking into the grave under a load of infirmities and sorrows, wanted five or six hundred pounds to enable him, during the winter or two which might still remain to him, to draw his breath more easily in the soft climate of Italy. Not a farthing was to be obtained; and before Christmas the author of the English Dictionary and of the Lives of the Poets had gasped his last in the river fog and coal smoke of Fleet Street. A few months after the death of Johnson appeared the Task, incomparably the best poem that any Englishman then living had produced--a poem, too, which could hardly fail to excite in a well constituted mind a feeling of esteem and compassion for the poet, a man of genius and virtue, whose means were scanty, and whom the most cruel of all the calamities incident to humanity had made incapable of supporting himself by vigorous and sustained exertion. Nowhere had Chatham been praised with more enthusiasm, or in verse more worthy of the subject, than in the Task. The son of Chatham, however, contented himself with reading and admiring the book, and left the author to starve. The pension which, long after, enabled poor Cowper to close his melancholy life, unmolested by duns and bailiffs, was obtained for him by the {261}strenuous kindness of Lord Spencer. What a contrast between the way in which Pitt acted towards Johnson and the way in which Lord Grey acted towards his political enemy Scott, when Scott, worn out by misfortune and disease, was advised to try the effect of the Italian air! What a contrast between the way in which Pitt acted towards Cowper and the way in which Burke, a poor man and out of place, acted towards Crabbe! Even Dundas, who made no pretensions to literary taste, and was content to be considered as a hard-headed and somewhat coarse man of business, was, when compared with his eloquent and classically educated friend, a Maecenas or a Leo. Dundas made Burns an exciseman, with seventy pounds a year; and this was more than Pitt, during his long tenure of power, did for the encouragement of letters. Even those who may think that it is, in general,

no part of the duty of a government to reward literary merit will hardly deny that a government, which has much lucrative church preferment in its gift, is bound, in distributing that preferment, not to overlook divines whose writings have rendered great service to the cause of religion. But it seems never to have occurred to Pitt that he lay under any such obligation. All the theological works of all the numerous bishops whom he made and translated are not, when put together, worth fifty pages of the Horæ Paulinæ, of the Natural Theology, or of the View of the Evidences of Christianity. But on Paley the all-powerful minister never bestowed the smallest benefice. Artists Pitt treated as contemptuously as writers. For painting he did simply nothing. Sculptors, who had been selected to execute monuments voted by Parliament, had to haunt the ante-chambers of the Treasury during many years before {262}they could obtain a farthing from him. One of them, after vainly soliciting the minister for payment during fourteen years, had the courage to present a memorial to the King, and thus obtained tardy and ungracious justice. Architects it was absolutely necessary to employ; and the worst that could be found seem to have been employed. Not a single fine public building of any kind or in any style was erected during his long administration. It may be confidently affirmed that no ruler whose abilities and attainments would bear any comparison with his has ever shown such cold disdain for what is excellent in arts and letters.

His first administration lasted seventeen years. That long period is divided by a strongly marked line into two almost exactly equal parts. The first part ended and the second began in the autumn of 1792. Throughout both parts Pitt displayed in the highest degree the talents of a parliamentary leader. During the first part he was a fortunate and, in many respects, a skilful administrator. With the difficulties which he had to encounter during the second part he was altogether incapable of contending: but his eloquence and his perfect mastery of the tactics of the House of Commons concealed his incapacity from the multitude.

The eight years which followed the general election of 1784 were as tranquil and prosperous as any eight years in the whole history of England. Neighbouring nations which had lately been in arms against her, and which had flattered themselves that, in losing her American colonies, she had lost a chief source of her wealth and of her power, saw, with wonder and vexation, that she was more wealthy and more powerful than ever. Her trade increased. Her manufactures flourished. Her exchequer was full to overflowing.

Very {263}idle apprehensions were generally entertained, that the public debt, though much less than a third of the debt which we now bear with ease, would be found too heavy for the strength of the nation. Those apprehensions might not perhaps have been easily quieted by reason. But Pitt quieted them by a juggle. He succeeded in persuading first himself, and then the whole nation, his opponents included, that a new sinking fund, which, so far as it differed from former sinking funds, differed for the worse, would, by virtue of some mysterious power of propagation belonging to money, put into the pocket of the public creditor great sums not taken out of the pocket of the tax-payer. The country, terrified by a danger which was no danger, hailed with delight and boundless confidence a remedy which was no remedy. The minister was almost universally extolled as the greatest of financiers. Meanwhile both the branches of the House of Bourbon found that England was as formidable an antagonist as she had ever been. France had formed a plan for reducing Holland to vassalage. But England interposed; and France receded. Spain interrupted by violence the trade of our merchants with the regions near the Oregon. But England armed; and Spain receded. Within the island there was profound tranquillity. The King was, for the first time, popular. During the twenty-three years which had followed his accession he had not been loved by his subjects. His domestic virtues were acknowledged. But it was generally thought that the good qualities by which he was distinguished in private life were wanting to his

political character. As a Sovereign, he was resentful, unforgiving, stubborn, cunning. Under his rule the country had sustained cruel disgraces and disasters; and {264}every one of those disgraces and disasters was imputed to his strong antipathies, and to his perverse obstinacy in the wrong. One statesman after another complained that he had been induced by royal caresses, entreaties, and promises, to undertake the direction of affairs at a difficult conjuncture, and that, as soon as he had, not without sullying his fame and alienating his best friends, served the turn for which he was wanted, his ungrateful master began to intrigue against him, and to canvass against him. Grenville, Rockingham, Chatham, men of widely different characters, but all three upright and high-spirited, agreed in thinking that the Prince under whom they had successively held the highest place in the government was one of the most insincere of mankind. His confidence was reposed, they said, not in those known and responsible counsellors to whom he had delivered the seals of office, but in secret advisers who stole up the back stairs into his closet. In Parliament, his ministers, while defending themselves against the attacks of the opposition in front, were perpetually, at his instigation, assailed on the flank or in the rear by a vile band of mercenaries who called themselves his friends. These men constantly, while in possession of lucrative places in his service, spoke and voted against bills which he had authorised the First Lord of the Treasury or the Secretary of State to bring in. But from the day on which Pitt was placed at the head of affairs there was an end of secret influence. His haughty and aspiring spirit was not to be satisfied with the mere show of power. Any attempt to undermine him at Court, any mutinous movement among his followers in the House of Commons, was certain to be at once put down. He had only to tender his resignation; and he could dictate {265}his own terms. For he, and he alone, stood between the King and the Coalition. He was therefore little less than Mayor of the Palace. The nation loudly applauded the King for having the wisdom to repose entire confidence in so excellent a minister. His Majesty’s private

virtues now began to produce their full effect. He was generally regarded as the model of a respectable country gentleman, honest, good-natured, sober, religious. He rose early: he dined temperately: he was strictly faithful to his wife: he never missed church; and at church he never missed a response. His people heartily prayed that he might long reign over them; and they prayed the more heartily because his virtues were set off to the best advantage by the vices and follies of the Prince of Wales, who lived in close intimacy with the chiefs of the opposition.

How strong this feeling was in the public mind appeared signally on one great occasion. In the autumn of 1788 the King became insane. The opposition, eager for office, committed the great indiscretion of asserting that the heir apparent had, by the fundamental laws of England, a right to be Regent with the full powers of royalty. Pitt, on the other hand, maintained it to be the constitutional doctrine that, when a Sovereign is, by reason of infancy, disease, or absence, incapable of exercising the regal functions, it belongs to the estates of the realm to determine who shall be the vicegerent, and with what portion of the executive authority such vicegerent shall be entrusted. A long and violent contest followed, in which Pitt was supported by the great body of the people with as much enthusiasm as during the first months of his administration. Tories with one voice applauded him for {266}defending the sick-bed of a virtuous and unhappy Sovereign against a disloyal faction and an undutiful son. Not a few Whigs applauded him for asserting the authority of Parliaments and the principles of the Revolution, in opposition to a doctrine which seemed to have too much affinity with the servile theory of indefeasible hereditary right. The middle class, always zealous on the side of decency and the domestic virtues, looked forward with dismay to a reign resembling that of Charles II. The palace, which had now been, during thirty years, the pattern of an English home, would be a public nuisance, a school of profligacy. To the good King’s repast of mutton and lemonade, despatched at three o’clock, would succeed midnight

banquets, from which the guests would be carried home speechless. To the backgammon board at which the good King played for a little silver with his equerries, would succeed faro tables from which young patricians who had sate down rich would rise up beggars. The drawing-room, from which the frown of the Queen had repelled a whole generation of frail beauties, would now be again what it had been in the days of Barbara Palmer and Louisa de Querouaille. Nay, severely as the public reprobated the Prince's many illicit attachments, his one virtuous attachment was reprobated more severely still. Even in grave and pious circles his Protestant mistresses gave less scandal than his Popish wife. That he must be Regent nobody ventured to deny. But he and his friends were so unpopular that Pitt could, with general approbation, propose to limit the powers of the Regent by restrictions to which it would have been impossible to subject a Prince beloved and trusted by the country. Some interested men, fully expecting a change of administration, went over {267}to the opposition. But the majority, purified by these desertions, closed its ranks, and presented a more firm array than ever to the enemy. In every division Pitt was victorious. When at length, after a stormy interregnum of three months, it was announced, on the very eve of the inauguration of the Regent, that the King was himself again, the nation was wild with delight. On the evening of the day on which His Majesty resumed his functions, a spontaneous illumination, the most general that had ever been seen in England, brightened the whole vast space from Highgate to Tooting, and from Hammersmith to Greenwich. On the day on which he returned thanks in the cathedral of his capital, all the horses and carriages within a hundred miles of London were too few for the multitudes which flocked to see him pass through the streets. A second illumination followed, which was even superior to the first in magnificence. Pitt with difficulty escaped from the tumultuous kindness of an innumerable multitude which insisted on drawing his coach from Saint Paul's Churchyard to Downing Street. This was the moment at which his fame and fortune may be said to have reached the zenith. His

influence in the closet was as great as that of Carr or Villiers had been. His dominion over the Parliament was more absolute than that of Walpole or Pelham had been. He was at the same time as high in the favour of the populace as ever Wilkes or Sacheverell had been. Nothing did more to raise his character than his noble poverty. It was well known that, if he had been dismissed from office after more than five years of boundless power, he would hardly have carried out with him a sum sufficient to furnish the set of chambers in which, as he cheerfully declared, he meant to resume the {268}practice of the law. His admirers, however, were by no means disposed to suffer him to depend on daily toil for his daily bread. The voluntary contributions which were awaiting his acceptance in the city of London alone would have sufficed to make him a rich man. But it may be doubted whether his haughty spirit would have stooped to accept a provision so honourably earned and so honourably bestowed.

To such a height of power and glory had this extraordinary man risen at twenty-nine years of age. And now the tide was on the turn. Only ten davs after the triumphant procession to Saint Paul's, the States-General of France, after an interval of a hundred and seventy-four years, met at Versailles.

The nature of the great Revolution which followed was long very imperfectly understood in this country. Burke saw much further than any of his contemporaries: but whatever his sagacity descried was refracted and discoloured by his passions and his imagination. More than three years elapsed before the principles of the English administration underwent any material change. Nothing could as yet be milder or more strictly constitutional than the minister's domestic policy. Not a single act indicating an arbitrary temper or a jealousy of the people could be imputed to him. He had never applied to Parliament for any extraordinary powers. He had never used with harshness the ordinary powers entrusted by the constitution to the executive government. Not a single state

prosecution which would even now be called oppressive had been instituted by him. Indeed, the only oppressive state prosecution instituted during the first eight years of his administration was that of Stockdale, which is to be attributed, not to the government, but to the chiefs of {269}the opposition. In office, Pitt had redeemed the pledges which he had, at his entrance into public life, given to the supporters of parliamentary reform. He had, in 1785, brought forward a judicious plan for the improvement of the representative system, and had prevailed on the King, not only to refrain from talking against that plan, but to recommend it to the Houses in a speech from the throne. (1) This attempt failed; but there can be little doubt that, if the French Revolution had not produced a violent reaction of public feeling, Pitt would have performed, with little difficulty and no danger, that great work which, at a later period, Lord Grey could accomplish only by means which for a time loosened the very foundations of the commonwealth. When the atrocities of the slave trade were first brought under the consideration of Parliament, no abolitionist was more zealous than Pitt. When sickness prevented Wilberforce from appearing in public, his place was most efficiently supplied by his friend the minister. A humane bill, which mitigated the horrors of the middle passage, was, in 1788, carried by the eloquence and determined spirit of Pitt, in spite of the opposition of some of his own colleagues; and it ought always to be remembered to his honour that, in order to carry that bill, he kept the Houses sitting, in spite of many murmurs, long after the business of the government had been done, and the Appropriation Act passed. In 1791 he cordially concurred with Fox in maintaining the sound constitutional doctrine, that an impeachment is not terminated by a

(1) The speech with which the King opened the session of 1785, concluded with an assurance that His Majesty would heartily concur in every measure which could tend to secure the true principles of the

constitution. These words were at the time understood to refer to Pitt's Reform Bill.

dissolution. {270}In the course of the some year the two great rivals contended side by side in a far more important cause. They are fairly entitled to divide the high honour of having added to our statute-book the inestimable law which places the liberty of the press under the protection of juries. On one occasion, and one alone, Pitt, during the first half of his long administration, acted in a manner unworthy of an enlightened Whig. In the debate on the Test Act, he stooped to gratify the master whom he served, the university which he represented, and the great body of clergymen and country gentlemen on whose support he rested, by talking, with little heartiness, indeed, and with no asperity, the language of a Tory. With this single exception, his conduct from the end of 1783 to the middle of 1792 was that of an honest friend of civil and religious liberty.

Nor did anything, during that period, indicate that he loved war, or harboured any malevolent feeling against any neighbouring nation. Those French writers who have represented him as a Hannibal sworn in childhood by his father to bear eternal hatred to France, as having, by mysterious intrigues and lavish bribes, instigated the leading Jacobins to commit those excesses which dishonoured the Revolution, as having been the real author of the first coalition, know nothing of his character or of his history. So far was he from being a deadly enemy to France, that his laudable attempts to bring about a closer connection with that country by means of a wise and liberal treaty of commerce brought on him the severe censure of the opposition. He was told in the House of Commons that he was a degenerate son, and that his partiality, for the hereditary foes of our island was enough to make his {271}great father's hones stir under the pavement of the Abbey.

And this man, whose name, if he had been so fortunate as to die in 1792, would now have been associated with peace, with freedom, with philanthropy, with temperate reform, with mild and constitutional administration, lived to associate his name with arbitrary government, with harsh laws harshly executed, with alien bills, with gagging bills, with suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, with cruel punishments inflicted on some political agitators, with unjustifiable prosecutions instituted against others, and with the most costly and most sanguinary wars of modern times. He lived to be held up to obloquy as the stern oppressor of England, and the indefatigable disturber of Europe. Poets, contrasting his earlier with his later years, likened him sometimes to the apostle who kissed in order to betray, and sometimes to the evil angels who kept not their first estate. A satirist of great genius introduced the fiends of Famine, Slaughter, and Fire, proclaiming that they had received their commission from One whose name was formed of four letters, and promising to give their employer ample proofs of gratitude. Famine would gnaw the multitude till they should rise up against him in madness. The demon of Slaughter would impel them to tear him from limb to limb. But Fire boasted that she alone could reward him as he deserved, and that she would cling round him to all eternity. By the French press and the French tribune every crime that disgraced and every calamity that afflicted France was ascribed to the monster Pitt and his guineas. While the Jacobins were dominant, it was he who had corrupted the Gironde, who had raised Lyons and Bordeaux against the Convention, who {272}had suborned Paris to assassinate Lepelletier, and Cecilia Régnault to assassinate Robespierre. When the Thermidorian reaction came, all the atrocities of the Reign of Terror were imputed to him. Collot D'Herbois and Fouquier Tinville had been his pensioners. It was he who had hired the murderers of September, who had dictated the pamphlets of Marat and the Carmagnoles of Barrere, who had paid Lebon to deluge Arras with blood, and Carrier to choke the Loire with corpses.

The truth is, that he liked neither war nor arbitrary government. He was a lover of peace and freedom, driven, by a stress against which it was hardly possible for any will or any intellect to struggle, out of the course to which his inclinations pointed, and for which his abilities and acquirements fitted him, and forced into a policy repugnant to his feelings and unsuited to his talents.

The charge of apostasy is grossly unjust. A man ought no more to be called an apostate because his opinions alter with the opinions of the great body of his contemporaries than he ought to be called an oriental traveller because he is always going round from west to east with the globe and everything that is upon it. Between the spring of 1789 and the close of 1792, the public mind of England underwent a great change. If the change of Pitt's sentiments attracted peculiar notice, it was not because he changed more than his neighbours; for in fact he changed less than most of them; but because his position was far more conspicuous than theirs; because he was, till Bonaparte appeared, the individual who filled the greatest space in the eyes of the inhabitants of the civilised world. During a short time the nation, and Pitt, as one of the {273}nation, looked with interest and approbation on the French Revolution. But soon vast confiscations, the violent sweeping away of ancient institutions, the domination of clubs, the barbarities of mobs maddened by famine and hatred, produced a reaction here. The court, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, the manufacturers, the merchants, in short, nineteen twentieths of those who had good roofs over their heads and good coats on their backs, became eager and intolerant Antijacobins. This feeling was at least as strong among the minister's adversaries as among his supporters. Fox in vain attempted to restrain his followers. All his genius, all his vast personal influence, could not prevent them from rising up against him in general mutiny. Burke set the example of revolt; and Burke was in no long time joined by Portland, Spencer, Fitz-william, Loughborough, Carlisle, Malmesbury, Windham, Elliot. In the House of Commons, the

followers of the great Whig statesman and orator diminished from about a hundred and sixty to fifty. In the House of Lords he had but ten or twelve adherents left. There can be no doubt that there would have been a similar mutiny on the ministerial benches if Pitt had obstinately resisted the general wish. Pressed at once by his master and by his colleagues, by old friends and by old opponents, he abandoned, slowly and reluctantly, the policy which was dear to his heart. He laboured hard to avert the European war. When the European war broke out, he still flattered himself that it would not be necessary for this country to take either side. In the spring of 1792 he congratulated the Parliament on the prospect of long and profound peace, and proved his sincerity by proposing large remissions of taxation. Down to the end of that year he {274}continued to cherish the hope that England might be able to preserve neutrality. But the passions which raged on both sides of the Channel were not to be restrained. The republicans who ruled France were inflamed by a fanaticism resembling that of the Mussulmans, who, with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other, went forth, conquering and converting, eastward to the Bay of Bengal, and westward to the Pillars of Hercules. The higher and middle classes of England were animated by zeal not less fiery than that of the Crusaders who raised the cry of *Deus vult* at Clermont. The impulse which drove the two nations to a collision was not to be arrested by the abilities or by the authority of any single man. As Pitt was in front of his fellows, and towered high above them, he seemed to lead them. But in fact he was violently pushed on by them, and, had he held back but a little more than he did, would have been thrust out of their way or trampled under their feet.

He yielded to the current: and from that day his misfortunes began. The truth is that there were only two consistent courses before him. Since he did not choose to oppose himself, side by side with Fox, to the public feeling, he should have taken the advice of Burke, and should have availed himself of that feeling to the full extent. If it was impossible to

preserve peace, he should have adopted the only policy which could lead to victory. He should have proclaimed a Holy War for religion, morality, property, order, public law, and should have thus opposed to the Jacobins an energy equal to their own. Unhappily he tried to find a middle path; and he found one which united all that was worst in both extremes. He went to war: but he would not understand the peculiar character of that {275}war. He was obstinately blind to the plain fact, that he was contending; against a state which was also a sect, and that the new quarrel between England and France was of quite a different kind from the old quarrels about colonies in America and fortresses in the Netherlands. He had to combat frantic enthusiasm, boundless ambition, restless activity, the wildest and most audacious spirit of innovation; and he acted as if he had to deal with the harlots and fops of the old Court of Versailles, with Madame de Pompadour and the Abbé de Bernis. It was pitiable to hear him, year after year, proving to an admiring audience that the wicked Republic was exhausted, that she could not hold out, that her credit was gone, and her assignats were not worth more than the paper of which they were made; as if credit was necessary to a government of which the principle was rapine, as if Alboin could not turn Italy into a desert till he had negotiated a loan at five per cent., as if the exchequer bills of Attila had been at par. It was impossible that a man who so completely mistook the nature of a contest could carry on that contest successfully. Great as Pitt's abilities were, his military administration was that of a driveller. He was at the head of a nation engaged in a struggle for life and death, of a nation eminently distinguished by all the physical and all the moral qualities which make excellent soldiers. The resources at his command were unlimited. The Parliament was even more ready to grant him men and money than he was to ask for them. In such an emergency, and with such means, such a statesman as Richelieu, as Louvois, as Chatham, as Wellesley, would have created in a few months one of the finest armies in the world, and would soon have discovered and {276}brought forward generals worthy to command such

an army. Germany might have been saved by another Blenheim; Flanders recovered by another Ramillies; another Poitiers might have delivered the Royalist and Catholic provinces of France from a yoke which they abhorred, and might have spread terror even to the barriers of Paris. But the fact is, that, after eight years of war, after a vast destruction of life, after an expenditure of wealth far exceeding the expenditure of the American war, of the Seven Years' War, of the war of the Austrian Succession, and of the war of the Spanish Succession, united, the English army, under Pitt, was the laughing-stock of all Europe. It could not boast of one single brilliant exploit. It had never shown itself on the Continent but to be beaten, chased, forced to reëmbark, or forced to capitulate. To take some sugar island in the West Indies, to scatter some mob of half-naked Irish peasants, such were the most splendid victories won by the British troops under Pitt's auspices.

The English navy no mismanagement could ruin. But during a long period whatever mismanagement could do was done. The Earl of Chatham, without a single qualification for high public trust, was made, by fraternal partiality, First Lord of the Admiralty, and was kept in that great post during two years of a war in which the very existence of the state depended on the efficiency of the fleet. He continued to doze away and trifle away the time which ought to have been devoted to the public service, till the whole mercantile body, though generally disposed to support the government, complained bitterly that our flag gave no protection to our trade. Fortunately he was succeeded by George Earl Spencer, one of those chiefs of the Whig party {277}who, in the great schism caused by the French Revolution, had followed Burke. Lord Spencer, though inferior to many of his colleagues as an orator, was decidedly the best administrator among them. To him it was owing that a long and gloomy succession of days of fasting, and, most emphatically, of humiliation, was interrupted, twice in the short space of eleven months, by days of thanksgiving for great victories.

It may seem paradoxical to say that the incapacity which Pitt showed in all that related to the conduct of the war is, in some sense, the most decisive proof that he was a man of very extraordinary abilities. Yet this is the simple truth. For assuredly one-tenth part of his errors and disasters would have been fatal to the power and influence of any minister who had not possessed, in the highest degree, the talents of a parliamentary leader. While his schemes were confounded, while his predictions were falsified, while the coalitions which he had laboured to form were falling to pieces, while the expeditions which he had sent forth at enormous cost were ending in rout and disgrace, while the enemy against whom he was feebly contending was subjugating Flanders and Brabant, the Electorate of Mentz, and the Electorate of Treves, Holland, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, his authority over the House of Commons was constantly becoming more and more absolute. There was his empire. There were his victories, his Lodi and his Arcola, his Rivoli and his Marengo. If some great misfortune, a pitched battle lost by the allies, the annexation of a new department to the French Republic, a sanguinary insurrection in Ireland, a mutiny in the fleet, a panic in the city, a run on the bank, had spread dismay through the ranks of his majority, that dismay lasted only till he rose from the Treasury {278}bench, drew up his haughty head, stretched his arm with commanding gesture, and poured forth, in deep and sonorous tones, the lofty language of inextinguishable hope and inflexible resolution. Thus, through a long and calamitous period, every disaster that happened without the walls of Parliament was regularly followed by a triumph within them. At length he had no longer an opposition to encounter. Of the great party which had contended against him during the first eight years of his administration more than one half now marched under his standard, with his old competitor the Duke of Portland at their head; and the rest had, after many vain struggles, quitted the field in despair. Fox had retired to the shades of St. Anne’s Hill, and had there found, in the society of friends whom no vicissitude could estrange from him, of a woman whom he tenderly loved, and of the

illustrious dead of Athens, of Rome, and of Florence, ample compensation for all the misfortunes of his public life. Session followed session with scarcely a single division. In the eventful year 1799, the largest minority that could be mustered against the government was twenty-five.

In Pitt's domestic policy there was at this time assuredly no want of vigour. While he offered to French Jacobinism a resistance so feeble that it only encouraged the evil which he wished to suppress, he put down English Jacobinism with a strong hand. The Habeas Corpus Act was repeatedly suspended. Public meetings were placed under severe restraints. The government obtained from Parliament power to send out of the country aliens who were suspected of evil designs; and that power was not suffered to be idle. Writers who propounded doctrines adverse to monarchy {279}and aristocracy were proscribed and punished without mercy. It was hardly safe for a republican to avow his political creed over his beefsteak and his bottle of port at a chop-house. The old laws of Scotland against sedition, laws which were considered by Englishmen as barbarous, and which a succession of governments had suffered to rust, were now furbished up and sharpened anew. Men of cultivated minds and polished manners were, for offences which at Westminster would have been treated as mere misdemeanours, sent to herd with felons at Botany Bay. Some reformers, whose opinions were extravagant, and whose language was intemperate, but who had never dreamed of subverting the government by physical force, were indicted for high treason, and were saved from the gallows only by the righteous verdicts of juries. This severity was at the time loudly applauded by alarmists whom fear had made cruel, but will be seen in a very different light by posterity. The truth is, that the Englishmen who wished for a revolution were, even in number, not formidable, and, in every thing but number, a faction utterly contemptible, without arms, or funds, or plans, or organisation, or leader. There can be no doubt that Pitt, strong as he was

in the support of the great body of the nation, might easily have repressed the turbulence of the discontented minority by firmly yet temperately enforcing the ordinary law. Whatever vigour he showed during this unfortunate part of his life was vigour out of place and season. He was all feebleness and languor in his conflict with the foreign enemy who was really to be dreaded, and reserved all his energy and resolution for the domestic enemy who might safely have been despised.

One part only of Pitt's conduct during the last eight years {280}of the eighteenth century deserves high praise, he was the first English minister who formed great designs for the benefit of Ireland. The manner in which the Roman Catholic population of that unfortunate country had been kept down during many generations seemed to him unjust and cruel; and it was scarcely possible for a man of his abilities not to perceive that, in a contest against the Jacobins, the Roman Catholics were his natural allies. Had he been able to do all that he wished, it is probable that a wise and liberal policy would have averted the rebellion of 1798. But the difficulties which he encountered were great, perhaps insurmountable; and the Roman Catholics were, rather by his misfortune than by his fault, thrown into the hands of the Jacobins. There was a third great rising of the Irishry against the Englishry, a rising not less formidable than the risings of 1641 and 1689. The Englishry remained victorious; and it was necessary for Pitt, as it had been necessary for Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange before him, to consider how the victory should be used. It is only just to his memory to say that he formed a scheme of policy, so grand and so simple, so righteous and so humane, that it would alone entitle him to a high place among statesmen. He determined to make Ireland one kingdom with England, and, at the same time, to relieve the Roman Catholic laity from civil disabilities, and to grant a public maintenance to the Roman Catholic clergy. Had he been able to carry these noble designs into effect, the Union would have been an Union indeed. It would have been inseparably associated in the minds of

the great majority of Irishmen with civil and religious freedom; and the old Parliament in College Green would have been regretted only {281}by a small knot of discarded jobbers and oppressors, and would have been remembered by the body of the nation with the loathing and contempt due to the most tyrannical and the most corrupt assembly that had ever sate in Europe. But Pitt could execute only one half of what he had projected. He succeeded in obtaining the consent of the Parliaments of both kingdoms to the Union; but that reconciliation of races and sects, without which the Union could exist only in name, was not accomplished. He was well aware that he was likely to find difficulties in the closet. But he flattered himself that, by cautious and dexterous management, those difficulties might be overcome. Unhappily, there were traitors and sycophants in high place who did not suffer him to take his own time and his own way, but prematurely disclosed his scheme to the King, and disclosed it in the manner most likely to irritate and alarm a weak and diseased mind. His Majesty absurdly imagined that his Coronation oath bound him to refuse his assent to any bill for relieving Roman Catholics from civil disabilities. To argue with him was impossible. Dundas tried to explain the matter, but was told to keep his Scotch metaphysics to himself. Pitt, and Pitt's ablest colleagues, resigned their offices. It was necessary that the King should make a new arrangement. But by this time his anger and distress had brought back the malady which had, many years before, incapacitated him for the discharge of his functions. He actually assembled his family, read the Coronation oath to them, and told them that, if he broke it, the Crown would immediately pass to the House of Savoy. It was not until after an interregnum of several weeks that he regained the full use of his small faculties, and that {282}a ministry after his own heart was at length formed.

The materials out of which he had to construct a government were neither solid nor splendid. To that party, weak in numbers, but strong in

every kind of talent, which was hostile to the domestic and foreign policy of his late advisers, he could not have recourse. For that party, while it differed from his late advisers on every point on which they had been honoured with his approbation, cordially agreed with them as to the single matter which had brought on them his displeasure. All that was left to him was to call up the rear ranks of the old ministry to form the front rank of a new ministry. In an age pre-eminently fruitful of parliamentary talents, a cabinet was formed containing hardly a single man who, in parliamentary talents, could be considered as even of the second rate. The most important offices in the state were bestowed on decorous and laborious mediocrity. Henry Addington was at the head of the Treasury. He had been an early, indeed a hereditary, friend of Pitt, and had by Pitt's influence been placed, while still a young man, in the chair of the House of Commons. He was universally admitted to have been the best speaker that had sate in that chair since the retirement of Onslow. But nature had not bestowed on him very vigorous faculties; and the highly respectable situation which he had long occupied with honour had rather unfitted than fitted him for the discharge of his new duties. His business had been to bear himself evenly between contending factions. He had taken no part in the war of words; and he had always been addressed with marked deference by the great orators who thundered against each other from his right and from his left. It was {283}not strange that, when, for the first time, he had to encounter keen and vigorous antagonists, who dealt hard blows without the smallest ceremony, he should have been awkward and unready, or, that the air of dignity and authority which he had acquired in his former post, and of which he had not divested himself, should have made his helplessness laughable and pitiable. Nevertheless, during many months, his power seemed to stand firm. He was a favourite with the King, whom he resembled in narrowness of mind, and to whom he was more obsequious than Pitt had ever been. The nation was put into high good humour by a peace with France. The enthusiasm with which the upper and middle, classes had rushed into the war spent itself. Jacobinism

was no longer formidable. Everywhere there was a strong reaction against what was called the atheistical and anarchical philosophy of the eighteenth century. Bonaparte, now First Consul, was busied in constructing out of the ruins of old institutions a new ecclesiastical establishment and a new order of knighthood. That nothing less than the dominion of the whole civilised world would satisfy his selfish ambition was not yet suspected; nor did even wise men see any reason to doubt that he might be as safe a neighbour as any prince of the House of Bourbon had been. The treaty of Amiens was therefore hailed by the great body of the English people with extravagant joy. The popularity of the minister was for the moment immense. His want of parliamentary ability was, as yet, of little consequence; for he had scarcely any adversary to encounter. The old opposition, delighted by the peace, regarded him with favour. A new opposition had indeed been formed by some of the late ministers, {284}and was led by Grenville in the House of Lords, and by Windham in the House of Commons. But the new opposition could scarcely muster ten votes, and was regarded with no favour by the country. On Pitt the ministers relied as on their firmest support. He had not, like some of his colleagues, retired in anger. He had expressed the greatest respect for the conscientious scruple which had taken possession of the royal mind; and he had promised his successors all the help in his power. In private his advice was at their service. In Parliament he took his seat on the bench behind them; and, in more than one debate, defended them with powers far superior to their own. The King perfectly understood the value of such assistance. On one occasion, at the palace, he took the old minister and the new minister aside. “If we three,” he said, “keep together, all will go well.”

But it was hardly possible, human nature being what it is, and, more especially, Pitt and Addington being what they were, that this union should be durable. Pitt, conscious of superior powers, imagined that the place which he had quitted was now occupied by a mere puppet which he

had set up, which he was to govern while he suffered it to remain, and which he was to fling aside as soon as he wished to resume his old position. Nor was it long before he began to pine for the power which he had relinquished. He had been so early raised to supreme authority in the state, and had enjoyed that authority so long, that it had become necessary to him. In retirement his days passed heavily. He could not, like Fox, forget the pleasures and cares of ambition in the company of Euripides or Herodotus. Pride restrained him from intimating, even to his dearest friends, that he wished to be again minister. {285}But he thought it strange, almost ungrateful, that his wish had not been divined, that it had not been anticipated, by one whom he regarded as his deputy.

Addington, on the other hand, was by no means inclined to descend from his high position. He was, indeed, under a delusion much resembling that of Abon Hassan in the Arabian tale. His brain was turned by his short and unreal Caliphate. He took his elevation quite seriously, attributed it to his own merit, and considered himself as one of the great triumvirate of English statesmen, as worthy to make a third with Pitt and Fox.

Such being the feelings of the late minister and of the present minister, a rupture was inevitable; and there was no want of persons bent on making that rupture speedy and violent. Some of these persons wounded Addington’s pride by representing him as a lacquey, sent to keep a place on the Treasury bench till his master should find it convenient to come. Others took every opportunity of praising him at Pitt’s expense. Pitt had waged a long, a bloody, a costly, an unsuccessful war. Addington had made peace. Pitt had suspended the constitutional liberties of Englishmen. Under Addington those liberties were again enjoyed. Pitt had wasted the public resources. Addington was carefully nursing them. It was sometimes but too evident that these compliments were not unpleasing to Addington. Pitt became cold and reserved. During many months he remained at a distance from London. Meanwhile his most intimate friends, in spite of his declarations that he made no complaint,

and that he had no wish for office, exerted themselves to effect a change of ministry. His favourite disciple, George {286}Canning, young, ardent, ambitious, with great powers and great virtues, but with a temper too restless and a wit too satirical tor his own happiness, was indefatigable. He spoke; he wrote; he intrigued; he tried to induce a large number of the supporters of the government to sign a round robin desiring a change; he made game of Addington and of Addington's relations in a succession of lively pasquinades. The minister's partisans retorted with equal acrimony, if not with equal vivacity. Pitt could keep out of the affray only by keeping out of politics altogether; and this it soon became impossible for him to do. Had Napoleon, content with the first place amoung the sovereigns of the Continent, and with a military reputation surpassing that of Marlborough or of Turenne, devoted himself to the noble task of making France happy by mild administration and wise legislation, our country might have long continued to tolerate a government of fair intentions and feeble abilities. Unhappily, the treaty of Amiens had scarcely been signed, when the restless ambition and the insupportable insolence of the First Consul convinced the great body of the English people that the peace, so eagerly welcomed, was only a precarious armistice. As it became clearer and clearer that a war for the dignity, the independence, the very existence of the nation was at hand, men looked with increasing uneasiness on the weak and languid cabinet which would have to contend against an enemy who united more than the power of Lewis the Great to more than the genius of Frederick the Great. It is true that Addington might easily have been a better war minister than Pitt, and could not possibly have been a worse. But Pitt had cast a spell on the public mind. The eloquence, the judgment, {287}the calm and disdainful firmness, which he had, during many years, displayed in Parliament, deluded the world into the belief that he must be eminently qualified to superintend every department of politics; and they imagined, even after the miserable failures of Dunkirk, of Quiberon, and of the Helder, that he was the only statesman who could cope with Bonaparte.

This feeling was nowhere stronger than among Addington's own colleagues. The pressure put on him was so strong that he could not help yielding to it; yet, even in yielding, he showed how far he was from knowing his own place. His first proposition was, that some insignificant nobleman should be First Lord of the Treasury and nominal head of the administration, and that the real power should be divided between Pitt and himself, who were to be secretaries of state. Pitt, as might have been expected, refused even to discuss such a scheme, and talked of it with bitter mirth. "Which secretaryship was offered to you?" his friend Wilberforce asked. "Really," said Pitt, "I had not the curiosity to inquire." Addington was frightened into bidding higher. He offered to resign the Treasury to Pitt, on condition that there should be no extensive change in the government. But Pitt would listen to no such terms. Then came a dispute such as often arises after negotiations orally conducted, even when the negotiators are men of strict honour. Pitt gave one account of what had passed; Addington gave another: and, though the discrepancies were not such as necessarily implied any intentional violation of truth on either side, both were greatly exasperated.

Meanwhile the quarrel with the First Consul had come to a crisis. On the 16th of May, 1803, the King {288}sent a message calling on the House of Commons to support him in withstanding the ambitious and encroaching policy of France; and, on the 22nd, the House took the message into consideration.

Pitt had now been living many months in retirement. There had been a general election since he had spoken in Parliament; and there were two hundred members who had never heard him. It was known that on this occasion he would be in his place; and curiosity was wound up to the highest point. Unfortunately, the short-hand writers were, in consequence of some mistake, shut out on that day from the gallery, so that the newspapers contained only a very meagre report of the proceedings. But several accounts of what passed are extant; and of those accounts the

most interesting is contained in an unpublished letter, written by a very young member, John William Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley. When Pitt rose, he was received with loud cheering. At every pause in his speech there was a burst of applause. The peroration is said to have been one of the most animated and magnificent ever heard in Parliament. "Pitt's speech," Fox wrote a few days later, "was admired very much, and very justly. I think it was the best he ever made in that style." The debate was adjourned; and on the second night Fox replied in an oration which, as the most zealous Pittites were forced to acknowledge, left the palm of eloquence doubtful. Addington made a pitiable appearance between the two great rivals; and it was observed that Pitt, while exhorting the Commons to stand resolutely by the executive government against France, said not a word indicating esteem or friendship for the Prime Minister.

War {289}was speedily declared. The First Consul threatened to invade England at the head of the conquerors of Belgium and Italy, and formed a great camp near the Straits of Dover. On the other side of those Straits the whole population of our island was ready to rise up as one man in defence of the soil. At this conjuncture, as at some other great conjunctures in our history, the conjuncture of 1660, for example, and the conjuncture of 1688, there was a general disposition among honest and patriotic men to forget old quarrels, and to regard as a friend every person who was ready, in the existing emergency, to do his part towards the saving of the state. A coalition of all the first, men in the country would, at that moment, have been as popular as the coalition of 1783 had been unpopular. Alone in the kingdom the King looked with perfect complacency on a cabinet in which no man superior to himself in genius was to be found, and was so far from being willing to admit all his ablest subjects to office that he was bent on excluding them all.

A few months passed before the different parties which agreed in regarding the government with dislike and contempt came to an

understanding with each other. But in the spring of 1804 it became evident that the weakest of ministries would have to defend itself against the strongest of oppositions, an opposition made up of three oppositions, each of which would, separately, have been formidable from ability, and which, when united, were also formidable from number. The party which had opposed the peace, headed by Grenville and Windham, and the party which had opposed the renewal of the war, headed by Fox, concurred in thinking that the men now in power were {290}incapable of either making a good peace or waging a vigorous war. Pitt had, in 1802, spoken for peace against the party of Grenville, and had, in 1803, spoken for war against the party of Fox. But of the capacity of the cabinet, and especially of its chief, for the conduct of great affairs, he thought as meanly as either Fox or Grenville. Questions were easily found on which all the enemies of the government could act cordially together. The unfortunate First Lord of the Treasury, who had, during the earlier months of his administration, been supported by Pitt on one side, and by Fox on the other, now had to answer Pitt, and to be answered by Fox. Two sharp debates, followed by close divisions, made him weary of his post. It was known, too, that the Upper House was even more hostile to him than the Lower, that the Scotch representative peers wavered, that there were signs of mutiny among the bishops. In the cabinet itself there was discord, and, worse than discord, treachery. It was necessary to give way: the ministry was dissolved: and the task of forming a government was entrusted to Pitt.

Pitt was of opinion that there was now an opportunity, such as had never before offered itself, and such as might never offer itself again, of uniting in the public service, on honourable terms, all the eminent talents of the kingdom. The passions to which the French Revolution had given birth were extinct. The madness of the innovator and the madness of the alarmist had alike had their day. Jacobinism and Anti-Jacobinism had gone out of fashion together. The most liberal statesman did not think

that season propitious for schemes of parliamentary reform; and the most conservative statesman could not pretend that there was {291}any occasion for gagging bills and suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act. The great struggle for independence and national honour occupied all minds; and those who were agreed as to the duty of maintaining that struggle with vigour might well postpone to a more convenient time all disputes about matters comparatively unimportant. Strongly impressed by these considerations, Pitt wished to form a ministry including all the first men in the country. The Treasury he reserved for himself; and to Fox he proposed to assign a share of power little inferior to his own.

The plan was excellent; but the king would not hear of it. Dull, obstinate, unforgiving, and, at that time, half mad, he positively refused to admit Fox into his service. Anybody else, even men who had gone as far as Fox, or further than Fox, in what his Majesty considered as Jacobinism, Sheridan, Grey, Erskine, should be graciously received; but Fox never. During several hours Pitt laboured in vain to reason down this senseless antipathy. That he was perfectly sincere there can be no doubt: but it was not enough to be sincere; he should have been resolute. Had he declared himself determined not to take office without Fox, the royal obstinacy would have given way, as it gave way, a few months later, when opposed to the immutable resolution of Lord Grenville. In an evil hour Pitt yielded. He flattered himself with the hope that, though he consented to forego the aid of his illustrious rival, there would still remain ample materials for the formation of an efficient ministry. That hope was cruelly disappointed. Fox entreated his friends to leave personal considerations out of the question, and declared that he would support, with the utmost cordiality, an efficient and patriotic ministry from which he {292}should be himself excluded. Not only his friends, however, but Grenville, and Grenville's adherents, answered, with one voice, that the question was not personal, that a great constitutional principle was at stake, and that they would not take office while a man eminently

qualified to render service to the commonwealth was placed under a ban merely because he was disliked at Court. All that was left to Pitt was to construct a government out of the wreck of Addington's feeble administration. The small circle of his personal retainers furnished him with a very few useful assistants, particularly Dundas, who had been created Viscount Melville, Lord Harrowby, and Canning.

Such was the inauspicious manner in which Pitt entered on his second administration. The whole history of that administration was of a piece with the commencement. Almost every month brought some new disaster or disgrace. To the war with France was soon added a war with Spain. The opponents of the minister were numerous, able, and active. His most useful coadjutors he soon lost. Sickness deprived him of the help of Lord Harrowby. It was discovered that Lord Melville had been guilty of highly culpable laxity in transactions relating to public money. He was censured by the House of Commons, driven from office, ejected from the Privy Council, and impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours. The blow fell heavy on Pitt. It gave him, he said in Parliament, a deep pang; and, as he uttered the word pang, his lip quivered, his voice shook, he paused, and his hearers thought that he was about to burst into tears. Such tears shed by Eldon would have moved nothing but laughter. Shed by the warm-hearted and open-hearted Fox, {293}they would have moved sympathy, but would have caused no surprise. But a tear from Pitt would have been something portentous. He suppressed his emotion, however, and proceeded with his usual majestic self-possession.

His difficulties compelled him to resort to various expedients. At one time Addington was persuaded to accept office with a peerage; but he brought no additional strength to the government. Though he went through the form of reconciliation, it was impossible for him to forget the past. While he remained in place he was jealous and punctilious; and he soon retired again. At another time Pitt renewed his efforts to overcome his master's aversion to Fox; and it was rumoured that the King's

obstinacy was gradually giving away. But, meanwhile, it was impossible for the minister to conceal from the public eye the decay of his health, and the constant anxiety which gnawed at his heart. His sleep was broken. His food ceased to nourish him. All who passed him in the Park, all who had interviews with him in Downing Street, saw misery written in his face. The peculiar look which he wore during the last months of his life was often pathetically described by Wilberforce, who used to call it the Austerlitz look.

Still the vigour of Pitt's intellectual faculties, and the intrepid haughtiness of his spirit, remained unaltered. He had staked everything on a great venture. He had succeeded in forming another mighty coalition against the French ascendency. The united forces of Austria, Russia and England might, he hoped, oppose an insurmountable barrier to the ambition of the common enemy. But the genius and energy of Napoleon prevailed. While the English troops were preparing to {294}embark for Germany, while the Russian troops were slowly coming up from Poland, he, with rapidity unprecedented in modern war, moved a hundred thousand men from the shores of the Ocean to the Black Forest, and compelled a great Austrian army to surrender at Ulm. To the first faint rumours of this calamity Pitt would give no credit. He was irritated by the alarms of those around him. "Do not believe a word of it," he said: "it is all a fiction." The next day he received a Dutch newspaper containing the capitulation. He knew no Dutch. It was Sunday; and the public offices were shut. He carried the paper to Lord Malmesbury, who had been minister in Holland; and Lord Malmesbury translated it. Pitt tried to bear up; but the shock was too great; and he went away with death in his face.

The news of the battle of Trafalgar arrived four days later, and seemed for a moment to revive him. Forty-eight hours after that most glorious and most mournful of victories had been announced to the country came the Lord Mayor's day; and Pitt dined at Guildhall. His popularity had declined. But on this occasion the multitude, greatly excited by the recent

tidings, welcomed him enthusiastically, took off his horses in Cheapside, and drew his carriage up King Street. When his health was drunk, he returned thanks in two or three of those stately sentences of which he had a boundless command. Several of those who heard him laid up his words in their hearts; for they were the last words that he ever uttered in public: “Let us hope that England, having saved herself by her energy, may save Europe by her example.”

This was but a momentary rally. Austerlitz soon completed what Ulm had begun. Early in December Pitt {295}had retired to Bath, in the hope that he might there gather strength for the approaching session. While he was languishing there on his sofa arrived the news that a decisive battle had been fought and lost in Moravia, that the coalition was dissolved, that the Continent was at the feet of France. He sank down under the blow. Ten days later, he was, so emaciated that his most intimate friends hardly knew him. He came up from Bath by slow journeys, and, on the 11th of January, 1806, reached his villa at Putney. Parliament was to meet on the 21st. On the 20th was to be the parliamentary dinner at the house of the First Lord of the Treasury in Downing Street; and the cards were already issued. But the days of the great minister were numbered. The only chance for his life, and that a very slight chance, was, that he should resign his office, and pass some months in profound repose. His colleagues paid him very short visits, and carefully avoided political conversation. But his spirit, long accustomed to dominion, could not, even in that extremity, relinquish hopes which everybody but himself perceived to be vain. On the day on which he was carried into his bedroom at Putney, the Marquess Wellesley, whom he had long loved, whom he had sent to govern India, and whose administration had been eminently able, energetic, and successful, arrived in London after an absence of eight years. The friends saw each other once more. There was an affectionate meeting, and a last parting. That it was a last parting Pitt did not seem to be aware. He fancied himself to be recovering, talked on

various subjects cheerfully, and with an unclouded mind, and pronounced a warm and discerning eulogium on the Marquess's brother Arthur.

"I {296}never," he said, "met with any military man with whom it was so satisfactory to converse." The excitement and exertion of this interview were too much for the sick man. He fainted away; and Lord Wellesley left the house, convinced that the close was fast approaching.

And now members of Parliament were fast coming up to London. The chiefs of the opposition met for the purpose of considering the course to be taken on the first day of the session. It was easy to guess what would be the language of the King's speech, and of the address which would be moved in answer to that speech. An amendment condemning the policy of the government had been prepared, and was to have been proposed in the House of Commons by Lord Henry Petty, a young nobleman who had already won for himself that place in the esteem of his country which, after the lapse of more than half a century, he still retains. He was unwilling, however, to come forward as the accuser of one who was incapable of defending himself. Lord Grenville, who had been informed of Pitt's state by Lord Wellesley, and had been deeply affected by it, earnestly recommended forbearance; and Fox, with characteristic generosity and good nature, gave his voice against attacking his now helpless rival. "Sunt lacryrmæ rerum," he said, "et mentem mortalia tangunt." On the first day, therefore, there was no debate. It was rumoured that evening that Pitt was better. But on the following morning his physicians pronounced that there were no hopes. The commanding faculties of which he had been too proud were beginning to fail. His old tutor and friend, the Bishop of Lincoln, informed him of his danger, and gave such religious advice and consolation as a confused {297}and obscured mind could receive. Stories were told of devout sentiments fervently uttered by the dying man. But these stories found no credit with anybody who knew him. Wilberforce pronounced it impossible that they

could be true. “Pitt,” he added, “was a man who always said less than he thought on such topics.” It was asserted in many after-dinner speeches, Grub Street elegies, and academic prize poems and prize declamations, that the great minister died exclaiming, “Oh my country!” This is a fable: but it is true that the last words which he uttered, while he knew what he said, were broken exclamations about the alarming state of public affairs. He ceased to breathe on the morning of the 23rd of January, 1806, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day on which he first took his seat in Parliament. He was in his forty-seventh year, and had been, during near nineteen years, First Lord of the Treasury, and undisputed chief of the administration. Since parliamentary government was established in England, no English statesman has held supreme power so long. Walpole, it is true, was first Lord of the Treasury during more than twenty years: but it was not till Walpole had been some time First Lord of the Treasury that he could be properly called Prime Minister.

It was moved in the House of Commons that Pitt should be honoured with a public funeral and a monument. The motion was opposed by Fox in a speech which deserves to be studied as a model of good taste and good feeling. The task was the most invidious that ever an orator undertook: but it was performed with a humanity and delicacy which were warmly acknowledged by the mourning friends of him who was gone. The motion was carried by 288 votes to 89.

The {298}22nd of February was fixed for the funeral. The corpse, having lain in state during two days in the Painted Chamber, was borne with great pomp to the northern transept of the Abbey. A splendid train of princes, nobles, bishops, and privy councillors followed. The grave of Pitt had been made near to the spot where his great father lay, near also to the spot where his great rival was soon to be. The sadness of the assistants was beyond that of ordinary mourners. For he whom they were committing to the dust had died of sorrows and anxieties of which none of the survivors could be altogether without a share. Wilberforce, who

carried the banner before the hearse, described the awful ceremony with deep feeling. As the coffin descended into the earth, he said, the eagle face of Chatham from above seemed to look down with consternation into the dark house which was receiving all that remained of so much power and glory.

All parties in the House of Commons readily concurred in voting forty thousand pounds to satisfy the demands of Pitt's creditors. Some of his admirers seemed to consider the magnitude of his embarrassments as a circumstance highly honourable to him; but men of sense will probably be of a different opinion. It is far better, no doubt, that a great minister should carry his contempt of money to excess than that he should contaminate his hands with unlawful gain. But it is neither right nor becoming in a man to whom the public has given an income more than sufficient for his comfort and dignity to bequeath to that public a great debt, the effect of mere negligence and profusion. As First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Pitt never had less than six thousand a year, besides an excellent house. In 1792 {299}he was forced by his royal master's friendly importunity to accept for life the office of Warden of the Cinque Ports, with near four thousand a year more. He had neither wife nor child: he had no needy relations: he had no expensive tastes: he had no long election bills. Had he given but a quarter of an hour a week to the regulation of his household, he would have kept his expenditure within bounds. Or, if he could not spare even a quarter of an hour a week for that purpose, he had numerous friends, excellent men of business, who would have been proud to act as his stewards. One of those friends, the chief of a great commercial house in the city, made an attempt to put the establishment in Downing Street to rights; but in vain. He found that the waste of the servants' hall was almost fabulous. The quantity of butcher's meat charged in the bills was nine hundred-weight a week. The consumption of poultry, of fish, and of tea was in proportion. The character of Pitt would have stood higher if, with the

disinterestedness of Pericles and of De Witt, he had united their dignified frugality.

The memory of Pitt has been assailed, times innumerable, often justly, often unjustly; but it has suffered much less from his assailants than from his eulogists.

For, during many years, his name was the rallying cry of a class of men with whom, at one of those terrible conjunctures which confound all ordinary distinctions, he was accidentally and temporarily connected, but to whom, on almost all great questions of principle, he was diametrically opposed. The haters of parliamentary reform called themselves Pittites, not choosing to remember that Pitt made three motions for parliamentary reform, and, that, though he thought that such a reform {300}could not safely be made while the passions excited by the French revolution were raging, he never uttered a word indicating that he should not be prepared at a more convenient season to bring the question forward a fourth time. The toast of protestant ascendency was drunk on Pitt's birthday by a set of Pittites who could not but be aware that Pitt had resigned his office because he could not carry Catholic emancipation. The defenders of the Test Act called themselves Pittites, though they could not be ignorant that Pitt had laid before George the Third unanswerable reasons for abolishing the Test Act. The enemies of free trade called themselves Pittites, though Pitt was far more deeply imbued with the doctrines of Adam Smith than either Fox or Grey. The very negro-drivers invoked the name of Pitt, whose eloquence was never more conspicuously displayed than when he spoke of the wrongs of the negro. This mythical Pitt, who resembles the genuine Pitt as little as the Charlemagne of Ariosto resembles the Charlemagne of Einhard, has had his day. History will vindicate the real man from calumny disguised under the semblance of adulation, and will exhibit him as what he was, a minister of great talents, honest intentions, and liberal opinions, pre-eminently qualified, intellectually and morally, for the part of a parliamentary leader, and

capable of administering, with prudence and moderation, the government of a prosperous and tranquil country, but unequal to surprising and terrible emergencies, and liable, in such emergencies, to err grievously, both on the side of weakness and on the side of violence.

A P P E N D I X.

THE WEST INDIES. (1)

(*Edinburgh Review*, January 1825.)

I

Of {303}the numerous excellent works in which this important subject has lately been discussed, that of Mr. Stephen is the most comprehensive, and, in many respects, the most valuable. We are not aware that any opponent has appeared, sufficiently intrepid to deny his statements, or to dispute their results. The decent and cautious advocates of slavery carefully avoid all allusion to a publication which they feel to be unanswerable; and the boldest content themselves with misrepresenting and reviling what they cannot even pretend to confute. In truth, it is not too much to assert that, on the part of the slave-drivers and their supporters, this controversy has, for the most part, been conducted with a disingenuousness and a bitterness to which literary history furnishes no parallel. Most of the honourable and intelligent men whose names give respectability to the Colonial party, have, in prudence or in disgust, stood aloof from the contest. In their absence, the warfare has been carried on by a race of scribblers, who, like the mercenary Mohawks, so often our auxiliaries in Transatlantic campaigns, unite the indifference of the hireling to the ferocity of the cannibal; who take aim from an ambush, and who desire victory only that they may have the pleasure of scalping and torturing the vanquished.

(1) *The Slavery of the British West India Colonies delineated, as it exists both in Law and Practice, and compared with the Slavery of other Counties, Ancient and Modern*. By James Stephen, Esq. Vol. I, being a Delineation of the State in point of Law. London, Butterworth, 1824.

The friends of humanity and freedom have often boasted, with {304}honest pride, that the wise and good of hostile sects and factions seemed, when slavery or the slave-trade were in question, to forget their mutual antipathies:--that the introduction of this subject was to such men what the proclamation of a Crusade was to the warriors of the dark

ages--a signal to suspend all their petty disputes, and to array themselves under the same holy banner, against the same accursed enemy. In this respect the slave-drivers are now even with us. They, too, may boast that, if our cause has received support from honest men of all religious and political parties, theirs has tended, in as great a degree, to combine and conciliate every form of violence and illiberality. Tories and Radicals, prebendaries and field-preachers, are to be found in their ranks. The only requisites for one who aspires to enlist, are a front of brass and a tongue of venom.

“Omnigenumque Deum monstra, et latrator Anubis,

Contra Neptunum et Venerem, contraque Minervam

Tela tenent.”

But it is neither on facts nor on arguments that slavery seems now to depend for protection. It neither doubles, nor stands at bay. It has neither the ingenuity of the hare, nor the intrepidity of the lion. It defends itself, like the hunted polecat, by the loathsomeness with which it taints the atmosphere around it; and hopes to escape, by disgusting those whom it can neither weary nor subdue. We could say much on this subject. But the sum is, that “the worm will do his kind”--and we have a more important task to perform. It is our intention to analyse, very concisely, the valuable work of Mr. Stephen, (1) and afterwards to offer to our readers some remarks which the perusal of it has suggested.

Mr. Stephen begins, by inquiring into the origin and authority of the Colonial Slave-laws. It has been commonly supposed in England, that there exists some known local law in the Colonies, distinct from the law of England, by which the bondage of the Negro has been introduced and defined. There is, however, no such law. The Colonists could, at no time, venture to present an act for such a purpose to an

(1) Mr. Stephen's work cannot, of course, embrace any changes which may have taken place in West Indian Legislation during the last eighteen months or two years. Some partial modifications of the former code may have taken place during that time in three or four of the colonies, but these do not affect the general results.

English {305}sovereign. The Spanish conquerors and the roving pirates of the Antilles had established that state: and the English settlers considered themselves as succeeding to the rights of the original despoilers of America. Those rights, as they at that time existed, may be summed up in one short and terrible maxim,--that the slave is *the absolute property* of the master. It is desirable that this should be known; because, although a few restraining statutes have of late years been passed, this odious principle is still the basis of all West Indian legislation. It is pre-supposed in all meliorating acts. It is the rule, and the restraints are exceptions. In the benefits which every other English subject derives from the common law, the Negro has no share. His master may lawfully treat him as he pleases, except in points regulated by express enactment.

Mr. Stephen proceeds to analyze the legal nature of the relation between the master and the slave. Throughout the West Indies, slavery is a constrained service,--a service without wages. In some of the colonies, indeed, there are acts which regulate the time of labour, and the amount of the subsistence which shall be given in return. But, from causes to which we shall hereafter advert, these acts are nugatory. In other islands, even these ostensible reforms have not taken place: and the owner may legally give his slaves as much to do, and as little to eat, as he thinks fit.

In all the islands, the master may legally imprison his slave. In all the islands he may legally flog him; and in some of the islands he may legally flog him at his discretion. The best of the meliorating acts promise little, and perform less. By some of them it is enacted, that the

slave shall not be flogged, till recovered from the effects of his last flogging--by others, that he shall not receive more than a certain number of lashes in one day. These laws, useless as they are, have a meaning. But there are others which add insult to cruelty. In some of the Colonial Codes, there are facetious provisions that the slave shall not receive more than a certain number of lashes at one time, or for one fault. What is the legal definition of a time? Or who are the legal judges of a fault? If the master should chuse to say that it is a fault in his slave to have woolly hair, whom does the law authorize to contradict him?

It is just to say, that the murder of a slave is now a capital {306}crime. But the West Indian rules of evidence, to which we shall hereafter call the attention of onr readers, render the execution of the laws on this subject almost impossible. The most atrocious kinds of mutilation,--even those which in England are punished with death,--when committed upon the person of a slave, subject the offender only to a fine, or to a short imprisonment. In Dominica, for instance, “to maim, deface, mutilate, or cruelly torture” a slave, is a crime which is to be expiated by a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds currency, or by imprisonment not exceeding the term of three months, By the law of Jamaica, a master who perpetrates any outrage short of murder on the person of a slave, is subject to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds currency, or to imprisonment not exceeding the term of 12 months. In very atrocious cases, the court may direct the enfranchisement of the slave. But this, though a benefit, as far as it goes, to the Negro, is a very slight aggravation of the punishment of the master. At most, it is only an addition of a few pounds to the fine. And as the possession of a slave who has been maimed in such a maimer as to render him helpless, is rather burdensome than profitable, it would, in many eases, be really an advantage to the criminal.

If these terrible prerogatives were confined to the master alone, the condition of the slave would be suficiently wretched. Yet it would not be

without alleviations. The proprietor might sometimes be restrained by a sense of his pecuniary interest, if not by higher considerations, from those extreme outrages, against which the law affords so scanty a protection. At all events, during his absence, his Negroes would enjoy an interval of security. Unhappily, the Colonial Codes permit all the representatives and agents of the master, black and white, bond and free, to exercise most of his despotic powers.

We have seen that the slave has no legal property in his own body. It is almost unnecessary to say, that he has no property in any thing else,--that all his acquisitions belong, like himself, to his master. He is, in fact, a chattel. We should rather say, that to serve the purpose of rapacity and tyranny, he is alternately considered as real and as personal property. He may be sold or bequeathed at the pleasure of his master, he may be put up to auction by process of law, for {307}the benefit of the creditors or legatees of his master. In either of these ways he may be, in a moment, torn for ever from his home, his associates, his own children. He is, in addition to this, legally a subject of mortgages, demises, leases, settlements in tail, in remainder, and in reversion. The practice of raising money on this species of property, is favoured by the laws of all the Colonies, and has been equally fatal to the owner and to the slave. It is fatal to the owner, because it enables him to risk capital not his own, in the precarious lottery of the West Indian sugar trade. It is fatal to the slave, because, in the first place, while it leaves to the master all his power to oppress, it deprives him of his power to manumit; and secondly, because it leads the master to keep possession of his Negroes, and to compel them to labour, when he has no prospect of holding them long, and is therefore naturally inclined to make as much by them, and to spend as little upon them as possible,--a fact amply proved by the miserable state in which the gang is generally found, when transferred from the ruined planter to the half ruined mortgagee.

Such is the legal condition of the Negro, considered with reference to his master. We shall proceed to examine into the nature of the relation in which he stands towards free persons in general.

He is not competent to be a party to any civil action, either as plaintiff or defendant; nor can he be received as informant or prosecutor against any person of free condition. He is protected only as a horse is protected in this country. His owner may bring an action against any person who may have occasioned the loss of his services. But it is plain that the slave may sustain many civil injuries, to which this circuitous mode of obtaining redress is not applicable; and even when it is applicable, the damages are awarded, not to the injured party, but to his master. The protection which indictments and criminal informations afford, is also of very narrow extent. Many crimes which, when committed against a white man, are considered as most atrocious, may be committed by any white man against a slave with perfect impunity. To rob a slave, for instance, is, in most of the islands, not even a misdemeanour. In this case, the grand principle of Colonial law is suspended. The property of a slave, it seems, is considered as belonging to his owner for the purpose {308}of oppression, but not for the purpose of protection. By the meliorating laws of some of the Colonies, the crime of highway robbery upon a Negro, is punished by fines, which, as far as we are informed, in no case exceed thirty pounds currency.

But this is not all. The natural right of self-defence is denied to the slave. By the laws of almost all the islands, a slave who should defend himself from murder or torture, to the injury of a White person, though such White person should posess no authority whatever over him might be punished with death.

We now come to the laws respecting the evidence of slaves,--laws which the Colonists stoutly defend,--and with reason; for, while these remain unaltered, the meliorating acts, feeble at best, must always be utterly

inefficient. The testimony of these unfortunate beings is not admissible in any cause, civil or criminal, against a White person. To this general rule there are, in a very few of the smaller Colonies, some partial exceptions. It is needless to say, that every crime may be easily perpetrated in a community of which only one member in ten is a competent witness. The Government have pressed this point on the consideration of the Colonial Assemblies. In Jamaica, the proposed amendments were recently negatived by a majority of 34 to 1. In Barbadoes they have met with a similar reception. The only excuse we ever heard made for so disgraceful a law, is this, that the Negroes are ignorant of the nature and obligations of an oath, and, in fact, are scarcely responsible beings. But from this excuse the legislators of Jamaica have excluded themselves, by enacting, that a slave who commits perjury, in a criminal cause, against another slave, shall suffer the same punishment as the prisoner, if convicted, would have suffered. If a slave be ignorant of the nature of an oath, why is he admitted as a witness against any human being? Why is he punished, in some cases, with death, for an offence which subjects his more enlightened, and therefore, more guilty master, only to transportation? If, on the other hand, he possesses the moral and intellectual qualifications which are required in a witness, why is he not suffered to appear against an European?

But we must proceed. The slave, thus excluded from the protection of the law, is subject to all its restraints. He undergoes {309}the miseries of a beast of burden, without enjoying its immunities. He is bound, notwithstanding that alleged inferiority of his understanding, which is admitted as a reason for curtailing his rights, but not for lightening his responsibility, by the whole of the criminal code which is in force against free persons. And, in addition to this, he is subjected to another most unjust and cruel code, made for his class alone. If he flies from the colony, he is put to death. If he goes beyond the limits of the plantation to which he is attached, without a written permission, he is liable to be

severely punished. Actions in themselves perfectly innocent,--buying or selling certain goods in a market,--raising certain descriptions of produce,--possessing certain species of live stock,--are crimes for which the Negro is punished, unless he can produce a written authority from his owner. In some of the Islands, not even the command of his owner is admitted as an excuse. To beat a drum, to blow a horn, to dance, to play at quoits, to throw squibs, to make fireworks, are all offences when committed by a slave, and subject him to the cruel chastisement of the whip. When things merely indifferent are visited with such severe penalties, it may easily be imagined that real delinquencies are not very mercifully dealt with. In fact, many actions for which a White man is only imprisoned, or otherwise slightly punished, if punished at all, are capital crimes when committed by a slave. Such are stealing, or attempting to steal, to the value of 12d. currency, killing any animal of the value of 6s., uttering mutinous words, and a long list of equally heinous crimes. We have already mentioned the infamous law which exists in Jamaica on the subject of perjury. Another of a most kingly character is in force in the same Isand. To compass or imagine the death of any of the White inhabitants, (God bless their Majesties!) is an enormity for which a slave is punished with death. It is contrary to the duty of their allegiance!

Such is the penal code to which the slaves are subject. The manner in which they are tried is, if possible, still more disgraceful. On charges which do not affect their lives, a single justice is, for the most part, competent to decide. In capital cases, several justices must attend, and, in most of the Colonies, a Jury is summoned, if that name can be applied where there is neither parity of condition nor right of challenge. {310}No indictment is preferred No previous investigation takes place before a Grand Jury. In most of the Islands no record is drawn up. In some, it is enacted, that the execution shall immediately follow the sentence. The

prisoner is now sufficiently lucky to be hanged. But formerly it was not unusual to inflict what the Colonial codes style “exemplary punishment.”

When it was thought expedient to exercise this right, the offender was roasted alive, hung up in irons to perish by thirst, or shut up in a cage and starved to death! These punishments were commonly reserved for wretches who had committed the diabolical crime of insurrection against the just and paternal government, of which we have feebly attempted to delineate the excellence.

The bondage, of which we have given this description, is hereditary. It is entailed on the posterity of the slave to the remotest generations. The law does not compel his master to enfranchise him, on receiving a fair price. On the contrary, it interferes to prevent the master, even when so inclined, from giving him his liberty. In some of the islands a direct tax is imposed on manumission; and in all, the encouragement which is given to the practice of raising money on Negroes by mortgage, tends to obstruct their liberation.

Slavery in the West Indies is confined to Negroes and people of colour. This circumstance is peculiar to the slavery of the New World; and its effects are most calamitous. The external peculiarities of the African race are thus associated in the minds of the Colonists with every thing degrading, and are considered as the disgusting livery of the most abject servitude. Hence it is, that the free Negroes and Mulattoes he under so many legal disabilities, and experience such contemptuous treatment, that their condition can be esteemed desirable only when compared with the bondage to which it has succeeded. Of the rules to which this class is subjected, we shall notice only one of the most odious. We speak of the presumption against liberty, which is a recognised principle of colonial law. The West Indian maxim is, that every Negro and Mulatto is to be considered as a slave, till, by documentary evidence, he can be proved to be otherwise. It may be notorious, that he has been free since he first

resided in the colony,--that he has lived twenty years in England,--that he is a citizen of Hayti or Columbia. {311}All this is immaterial. If he cannot produce a deed of manumission, he is liable to be put up to sale by public auction! On this subject remarks would be superfluous. Thank God, we are writing; for a free people.

We have now accompanied Mr. Stephen through most of the leading topics of his work. We have occasionally departed from his arrangement, which indeed is not always the most convenient. This, however, is to be attributed, not to the author, but to the circumstances under which the work was composed. If there be any thing else to which we should be inclined to object, it is to the lengthened parallels which Mr. Stephen draws between the Slave laws of the West Indies and those which have existed in other countries. He is not, we think, too severe upon our Colonists. But we suspect that he is a little too indulgent to the Greeks and Romans. These passages are, at the same time, in a high degree curious and ingenious, though perhaps too long and too frequent. Such blemishes, however, if they can be called such, detract but in a very slight degree from the value of a book eminently distinguished by the copiousness and novelty of the information which it affords, by the force of its reasoning, and by the energy and animation of its style.

We have not alluded to that part of the work, in which the lamentable state of the law, on the subject of religious instruction, is described; because the evil has been universally acknowledged, and something intended for a remedy has at last been provided. The imagined specific, as our readers are aware, is an Ecclesiastical Establishment. This measure, we doubt not, is well intended. But we feel convinced that, unless combined with other reforms, it will prove almost wholly useless. The immorality and irreligion of the slaves are the necessary consequences of their political and personal degradation. They are not considered by the law as human beings. And they have therefore, in some measure, ceased to be human beings. They must become men before they

can become Christians. A great effect may, under fortunate circumstances, have been wrought on particular individuals: But those who believe that any extensive effect can be produced by religious instruction on this miserable race, may believe in the famous conversion wrought by St. Anthony on the fish. Can a preacher prevail on his bearers strictly to fulfil their conjugal duties in a country where {312}no protection is given to their conjugal rights.--in a country where the husband and wife may, at the pleasure of the master, or by process of law, be in an instant, separated for ever? Can he persuade them to rest on the Sunday, in Colonies where the law appoints that time for the markets? Is there any lesson which a Christian minister is more solemnly bound to teach,--is there any lesson which it is, in a religious point of view,--more important for a convert to learn, than that it is a duty to refuse obedience to the unlawful commands of superiors? Are the new pastors of the slaves to inculcate this principle or not? In other words, are the slaves to remain uninstructed in the fundamental laws of Christian morality, or are their teachers to be hanged? This is the alternative. We all remember that it was made a charge against Mr. Smith, that he had read an inflammatory chapter of the Bible to his congregation,--excellent encouragement for their future teachers to “declare unto them,” according to the expression of an old divine, far too methodistical to be considered as an authority in the West Indies, “the whole counsel of God.”

The great body of the Colonists have resolutely opposed religious instruction; and they are in the right. They know, though their misinformed friends in England do not know, that Christianity and slavery cannot long exist together. We have already given it us our opinion, that the great body of the Negroes can never, while their political state remains the same, be expected to become Christians. But, if that were possible, we are sure that their political state would very speedily be changed. At every step which the Negro makes in the

knowledge and discrimination of right and wrong, he will learn to reprobate more and more the system under which he lives. He will not indeed be so prone to engage in rash and foolish tumults; but he will be as willing as he now is to struggle for liberty, and far more capable of struggling with effect. The forms in which Christianity has been at different times disguised, have been often hostile to liberty. But wherever the spirit has surmounted the forms,--in France, during the wars of the Huguenots,--in Holland, during the reign of Philip II.,--in Scotland, at the time of the Reformation,--in England, through the whole contest against the Stuarts, from their accession to their expulsion.--in New-England, through its whole history,--in every place,--{313}in every age,--it has inspired a hatred of oppression, and a love of freedom! It would be thus in the West-Indies. The attempts which have been made to press a few detached texts into the cause of tyranny, have never produced any extensive effect. Those who cannot refute them by reasoning and comparison, will be hurried forward by the sense of intolerable wrongs, and the madness of wounded affection. All this the Colonists have discovered; and we feel assured that they will never suffer religious instruction to be unreservedly given to the slaves. In that case, the Establishment will degenerate into a job. This is no chimerical apprehension. There have been clergymen in the West-Indies for many years past; and what have they done for the Negroes? In what have they conduced, either to their temporal or to their spiritual welfare? Doubtless there have been respectable men among them. But is it not notorious, that the benefices of the colonies have been repeatedly given to the outcasts of English society,--men whom the inhabitants would not venture to employ as book-keepers, yet whom they desired to retain as boon companions? Any person who will look over the Parliamentary papers which contain the answers returned by the colonial clergy to certain queries sent out a few years ago by Lord Bathurst, will see some curious instances of the ignorance, the idleness, and the levity of that body. Why should the new Establishment be less corrupt than the old? The dangers

to which it is exposed are the same; we do not see that its securities are much greater. It has Bishops, no doubt; and when we observe that Bishops are more active than their inferiors on this side of the Atlantic, we shall begin to hope that they may be useful on the other.

These reforms have begun at the wrong end. “God,” says old Hooker, no enemy to Episcopal Establishments, “first assigned Adam maintenance for life, and then appointed him a law to observe.” Our rulers would have done well to imitate the example,--to give some security to the hearth and to the back of the slave, before they sent him Bishops, Archdeacons, and Chancellors and Chapters.

The work of Mr. Stephen has, we think, disposed forever of some of the principal arguments which are urged by the Colonists. If those who conscientiously support slavery be open to conviction, if its dishonest advocates be susceptible of {314}shame, they can surely never again resort to that mode of defence, which they have so often employed when hard pressed by some particular case of oppression. On such occasions their cry has been, “There are individual instances. You must not deduce general conclusions from them. What would you say, if we were to form our estimate of English society from the Police Reports, or the Newgate Calendar? Look at the rules, and not at the exceptions.” Here, then, we have those boasted rules. And what are they? We find that the actions which other societies punish as crimes, are in the West Indies sanctioned by law;--that practices, of which England affords no example but in the records of the jail and the gibbet, are there suffered to exist unpunished;--that atrocities may there be perpetrated in the drawing-room or in the market-place, on the persons of untried and unconvicted individuals, which here would scarcely find an asylum in the vaults of the Blood-Bowl House.

Is it any answer to this charge, now most fully established, to say that we too have our crimes? Unquestionably, under all systems, however wise,

under all circumstances, however fortunate, the passions of men will incite them to evil. The most vigilant police, the most rigid tribunals, the severest penalties, are but imperfect restraints upon avarice and revenge. What then must be the ease when these restraints are withdrawn? In England there is a legal remedy for every injury. If the first prince of the blood, were to treat the poorest pauper in St. Giles's as the best code in the West Indies authorizes a master to treat his slave, it would be better for him that he had never been born. Yet even here we find, that wherever power is given, it is occasionally abused; that magistrates, not having the fear of the Court of King's Bench before their eyes, will sometimes be guilty of injustice and tyranny, that even parents will sometimes starve, torture, murder the helpless beings to whom they have given life. And is it not evident, that where there are fewer checks, there will be more cruelty?

But we are told, the manners of a people, the state of public opinion, are of more real consequence than any written code. Many things, it is confessed, in the Colonial laws, are cruel and unjust in theory: but we are assured that the feeling of the Colonists renders the practical operation of the system lenient and liberal. We answer, that publie feeling, though {315}an excellent auxiliary to laws, always has been, and always must be, a miserable and inefficient substitute for them. The rules of evidence on which public opinion proceeds are defective, and its decisions are capricious. Its condemnation frequently spares the guilty, and falls on the innocent. It is terrible to sensitive and generous minds; but it is disregarded by those whose hardened depravity most requires restraint. Hence its decrees, however salutary, unless supported by the clearer definitions and stronger sanctions of legislation, will be daily and hourly infringed; and with principles which rest only on public opinion, frequent infraction amounts to a repeal. Nothing that is very common can be very disgraceful. Thus public opinion, when not strengthened by positive

enactment, is first defied, and then vitiated. At best it is a feeble check to wickedness, and at last it becomes its most powerful auxiliary.

As a remedy for the evils of a system of slavery, public opinion must be utterly inefficacious; and that for this simple reason, that the opinion of the slaves themselves goes for nothing. The desire which we feel to obtain the approbation, and to avoid the censure of our neighbours, is no innate or universal sentiment. It always springs, directly or indirectly, from consideration of the power which others possess to serve or to injure us. The good will of the lower orders, is courted only in countries where they possess political privileges, and where there is much they can give, and much that they can take away. Their opinion is important or unimportant, in proportion as their legal rights are great or small. It can, therefore, never be a substitute for legal rights. Does a Smithfield drover care for the love or hatred of his oxen? and yet his oxen, since the passing of Mr. Martin’s meliorating act, are scarcely in a more unprotected condition than the slaves in our islands.

The opinion then, which is to guard the slaves from the oppressions of the privileged order, is the opinion of the privileged order itself. A vast authority is intrusted to the master--the law imposes scarcely tiny restraints upon him--and we are required to believe, that the place of all other checks will be fully supplied by the general sense of those who participate in his power and his temptations. This may be reason at Kingston; but will it pass at Westminster? We are not inveighing against the white inhabitants of the West {316}Indies. We do not say that they are naturally more cruel or more sensual than ourselves. But we say that they are men; and they desire to be considered as angels!--we say as angels, for to no human being, however generous and beneficent, to no philanthropist, to no fathers of the church, could powers like theirs be safely intrusted. Such authority a parent ought not to have over his children. They ask very complacently, “Are we men of a different species from yourselves? We come among you;--we mingle with you in all your

kinds of business and pleasure;--we buy and sell with you on Change in the morning;--we dance with your daughters in the evening. Are not our manners civil? Are not our dinners good? Are we not kind friends, fair dealers, generous benefactors? Are not our names in the subscription lists of all your charities? And can you believe that we are such monsters as the saints represent us to be? Can you imagine that, by merely crossing the Atlantic, we acquire a new nature?" We reply, You are not men of a different species from ourselves; and, therefore, we will not give you powers with which we would not dare to trust ourselves. We know that your passions are like ours. We know that your restraints are fewer; and, therefore, we know that your crimes must be greater. Are despotic sovereigns men of harder hearts by nature than their subjects? Are they born with a hereditary thirst for blood--with a natural incapacity for friendship? Surely not. Yet what is their general character? False--cruel--licentious---ungrateful. Many of them have performed single acts of splendid generosity and heroism; a few may be named whose general administration has been salutary; but scarcely one has passed through life without committing at least some one atrocious act, from the guilt and infamy of which restricting laws would have saved him and his victims. If Henry VIII. had been a private man, he might have torn his wife's ruff, and kicked her lap-dog. He was a King, and he cutoff her head--not that his passions were more brutal than those of many other men, but that they were less restrained. How many of the West Indian overseers can boast of the piety and magnanimity of Theodosius? Yet, in a single moment of anger, that amiable prince destroyed more innocent people than all the ruffians in Europe stab in fifty years. Thus it is with a master in the Colonies. We will suppose him to be {317}a good natured man, but subject, like other men, to occasional fits of passion. He gives an order. It is slowly or negligently executed. In England he would grumble, perhaps swear a little. In the West Indies, the law empowers him to indict a severe flogging on the loiterer. Are we

very uncharitable in supposing that he will sometimes exercise his privilege?

It by no means follows that a person who is humane in England will be humane to his Negroes in the West Indies. Nothing is so capricious and inconsistent as the compassion of men. The Romans were people of the same flesh and blood with ourselves--they loved their friends--they cried at tragedies--they gave money to beggars;--yet we know their fondness for gladiatorial shows. When, by order of Pompey, some elephants were tortured in the amphitheatre, the audience was so shocked at the yells and contortions by which the poor creatures expressed their agony, that they burst forth into execrations against their favourite general. The same people, in the same place, had probably often given the fatal twirl of the thumb which condemned some gallant barbarian to receive the sword. In our own time, many a man shoots partridges in such numbers that he is compelled to bury them, who would chastise his son for amusing himself with the equally interesting, and not more cruel diversion, of catching flies and tearing them to pieces. The drover goads oxen--the fishmonger crimps cod--the dragoon sabres a Frenchman--the Spanish Inquisition burns a Jew--the Irish gentleman torments a Catholic. These persons are not necessarily destitute of feeling. Each of them would shrink from any cruel employment, except that to which his situation has familiarized him.

There is only one way in which the West Indians will ever convince the people of England that their practice is merciful, and that is, by making their laws merciful. We cannot understand why men should so tenaciously fight for powers which they do not mean to exercise. If the oppressive privileges of the master be nominal and not real, let him cede them, and silence calumny at once and for ever. Let him cede them for his own honour. Let him cede them in compliance with the desire, the vain and superfluous desire, we will suppose, of the people of England. Is the repeal of laws which have become obsolete,--is the prohibition

{318}of crimes which are never committed, too great a return for a bounty of twelve hundred thousand pounds, for a protecting duty most injurious to the manufacturers of England and the cultivators of Hindustan, for an army which alone protects from inevitable ruin the lives and possessions of the Colonists?

The fact notoriously is, that West Indian manners give protection even to those extreme enormities against which the West Indian laws provide. We have already adverted to one of the most ordinary sophisms of our opponents. “Why,” they exclaim, “is our whole body to be censured for the depravity of a few? Every society has its miscreants. If we had our Hodge, you had your Thurtell. If we had our Huggins, you had your Wall. No candid reasoner will ground general charges on individual eases.” The refutation is simple. When a community does nothing to prevent guilt, it ought to bear the blame of it. Wickedness, when punished, is disgraceful only to the offender. Unpunished, it is disgraceful to the whole society. Our charge against the Colonists is not that crimes are perpetrated among them, but that they are tolerated. We will give a single instance. Since the West Indians are fond of referring to our Newgate Calendar, we will place, side by side, a leaf from that melancholy Register, and another from the West Indian Annals.

Mr. Wall was Governor at Goree. In that situation he flogged a man to death, on pretence of mutiny. On his return to England, he was indicted for murder. He escaped to the Continent. For twenty years he remained in exile. For twenty years the English people retained the impression of his crime uneffaced within their hearts. He shifted his residence--he disguised his person--he changed his name,--still their eyes were upon him, for evil, and not for good. At length, conceiving that all danger was at an end, he returned. He was tried, convicted, and hanged, amidst the huzzas of an innumerable multitude. (1)

Edward Huggins of Nevis, about fifteen years ago, flogged upwards of twenty slaves in the public market-place, with such severity as to produce the death of one, and to ruin the

(1) We should be far, indeed, from applauding those shouts, if they were the exultation of cruelty; but they arose from the apprehension that Court favour was about to save the criminal; and the feeling expressed was for the triumph of justice.

constitutions {319}of many. He had grossly violated the law of the Colony, which prescribes a limit to such inflictions. He had violated it in open day, and in the presence of a magistrate. He was indicted by the law officer of the crown. His advocate acknowledged the facts, but argued that the act on which he was tried, was passed only to silence the zealots in England, and was never intended to be enforced. Huggins was acquitted! But that was a trifle. Some members of the House of Assembly lost their seats at the next election, for taking part against him. A printer of a neighbouring island was convicted of a libel, merely for publishing an official report of the evidence, transmitted to him by authority. In a word, he was considered as a martyr to the common cause, and grew in influence and popularity; while a most respectable planter, an enlightened and accomplished gentleman, Mr. Tobin, who, nobly despising the prejudices of his class, had called the attention of the government to these diabolical outrages, was menaced with prosecutions, assailed with slanders, and preserved only by blindness from challenges.

Let these cases be compared. We do not say that Wall was not as bad a man as Huggins; but we do say that the English people have nothing to do with the crime of Wall, and that the public character of the people of Nevis suffers seriously by the crime of Huggins. They have adopted the guilt, and they must share in the infamy. We know that the advocates of slavery affect to deride this and similar narratives as old and threadbare. They sneer at them in conversation, and cough them down in the House

of Commons. But it is in vain. They are written on the hearts of the people; and they will be remembered when all the smooth nothings of all the official defenders of such transactions are forgotten.

The truth is simply this. Bad laws and bad customs, reciprocally producing and produced by each other, have given to the Whites in all the slave islands--Dutch, Spanish, French and English--a peculiar character, in which almost all the traits, which, in this quarter of the world, distinguish the different nations, are lost. We think we describe that character sufficiently when we call it the despotic character. In nothing does this temper more strongly appear than in the rage and contempt with which the Colonists receive{320} every command, and indeed every admonition, from the authorities of the mother country. When the territorial power and the commercial monopoly of the East India Company haws been at stake, has that great body conducted itself thus? Do even foreign powers treat us in this manner? We have often remonstrated with the greatest sovereigns of the Continent on the subject of the slave trade. We have been repulsed--we have been deluded. But by whom have we been insulted? The representations of the King and people of England have never been met with outrageous scorn and anger,--except by the men who owe their food to our bounties, and their lives to our troops. To the most gentle and moderate advice, to the suggestions of the most respectable of the West Indian proprietors resident in England, they reply only in ravings of absurd slander, or impotent defiance. The essays in their newspapers, the speeches of their legislators, the resolutions of their vestries, are, almost without exception, mere collections of rancorous abuse, unmixed with argument. If the Antislavery Society would publish a small tract, containing simply the leading articles of five or six numbers of the Jamaica Gazette, without note or comment, they would, we believe, do more to illustrate the character of their adversaries than by any other means which can be devised. Such a collection would exhibit to the country the real nature of

that malignant spirit which banished Salisbury, which destroyed Smith, and which broke the honest heart of Ramsay.

It is remarkable, that most of these zealots of slavery have little or no pecuniary interest in the question. If the colonies should be ruined, the loss will fall, not upon the book-keepers, the overseers, the herd of needy emigrants who make up the noisy circles of Jamaica; but upon the Ellises, the Hibberts, the Mannings, men of the most respectable characters and enlightened minds in the country. *They* might have been excused, if any person could be excused, for employing violent and abusive language. Yet they have conducted themselves, not perhaps exactly as we might wish them, but still like gentlemen, like men of sense, like men of feeling. Why is this? Simply because they live in England, and participate in English feelings. The Colonists, on the other hand, are degraded by familiarity with oppression. Let us not be deceived. The cry which resounds from the West {321}Indies is raised by men, who are trembling less for their property than for the privileges of their caste. These are the persons who love slavery for its own sake. The declarations so often made by the Parliament, by the Ministers, by the deadliest enemies of slavery, that the interests of all parties will be fairly considered, and that wherever a just claim to compensation can be established, compensation will be given, bring no comfort to them. They may have no possessions, but they have white faces. Should compensation be given, few of them will receive a sixpence; but they will lose the power of oppressing with impunity every man who has a black skin. And it is to these men, who have scarcely any interest in the value of colonial property, but who have a deep interest,--the interest of a petty tyranny, and a despicable pride in the maintenance of colonial injustice, that the British Parliament is required to give up its unquestionable right of superintendence over every part of our empire. If this were requested as a matter of indulgence, or recommended as a matter of expediency, we might well be surprised. But it is demanded as a constitutional right. On

what does this right rest? On what statute? On what charter? On what precedent? On what analogy? That the uniform practice of past ages has been against their claim, they themselves do not venture to deny. Do they mean to assert, that a parliament in which they are not represented ought not to legislate for them? That question we leave them to settle with their friends of the Quarterly Review and the John Bull newspaper, who, we hope, will enlighten them on the subject of virtual representation. If ever that expression could be justly used, it would be in the present case; for probably there is no interest more fully represented in both Houses of Parliament, than that of the colonial proprietors. But for ourselves we answer, What have you to do with such doctrines? If you will adopt the principles of liberty, adopt them altogether. Every argument which you can urge in support of your own claims, might be employed, with far greater justice, in favour of the emancipation of your bondsmen. When that event shall have taken place, your demand will deserve consideration. At present, what you require under the name of freedom is nothing but unlimited power to oppress. It is the freedom of Nero.

“But {322}we will rebel!” Who can refrain from thinking of Captain Lemuel Gulliver, who, while raised sixty feet from the ground on the hand of the King of Brohdignag, claps his hand on his sword and tells his Majesty that he knows how to defend himself? You will rebel! Bravely resolved, most magnanimous Grildrig! But remember the wise remark of Lord Beelington--“courage without power,” said that illustrious exile, “is like a consumptive running footman.” What are your means of resistance? Are there, in all the islands put together, ten thousand white men capable of hearing arms? Are not your forces, such as they are, divided into small portions which can never act in concert? But this is mere trifling. Are you, in point of fact, at this moment able to protect yourselves against your slaves without our assistance? If you can still rise up and lie down in security--if you can still eat the bread of the fatherless, and grind the faces of the poor--if you can still hold your petty

parliaments, and say your little speeches, and move, your little motions--if you can still outrage and insult the Parliament and people of England, to what do you owe it? To nothing but to our contemptuous mercy. If we suspend our protection--if we recall our troops--in a week the knife is at your throats!

Look to it, that we do not take you at your word. What are you to us that we should pamper and defend you? If the Atlantic Ocean should pass over you, and your place know you no more, what should we lose? Could we find no other cultivators to accept of our enormous bounties on sugar?--no other pestilential region to which we might send our soldiers to catch the yellow fever?--no other community for which we might pour forth our blood and lavish our money, to purchase nothing but injuries and insults? What do we make by you? If England is no longer to be the *mistress* of her colonies,--if she is to be only the handmaid of their pleasures, or the accomplice of their crimes, she may at least venture to ask, as a handmaid, what are to be the wages of her service,--as an accomplice, what is to be her portion of the spoil? If justice, and mercy, and liberty, and the law of God, and the happiness of man, be words without a meaning, we at least talk to the purpose when we talk of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Let us count our gains. Let us bring to the test the lofty phrases {323}of Colonial declamation. The West Indies, we are told, are a source of vast wealth and revenue to the country. They are a nursery of seamen. They take great quantities of our manufactures. They add to our political importance. They are useful posts in time of war. These absurdities have been repeated, till they have begun to impose upon the impostors who invented them. Let us examine them briefly.

Our commercial connexion with the West Indies is simply this. We buy our sugar from them at a higher price than is given for it in any other part of the world. The surplus they export to the Continent, where the price is

lower; and we pay them the difference out of our own pockets. Our trade with the West Indies is saddled with almost all the expense of their civil and military establishments, and with a bounty of 1,200,000l. Let these be deducted from the profits of which we hear so much, and their amount will shrink indeed. Let us then deduct from the residue the advantages which we relinquish in order to obtain it,--that is to say, the profits of a free sugar trade all over the world; and then we shall be able to estimate the boasted gains of a connexion to which we have sacrificed the Negroes in one hemisphere, and the Hindoos in the other.

But the West Indians take great quantities of our manufactures! They can take only a return for the commodities which they send us. And from whatever country we may import the same commodities, to that country must we send out the same returns. What is it that now limits the demands of our Eastern empire? Absolutely nothing but the want of an adequate return. From that immense market--from the custom of one hundred millions of consumers, our manufacturers are in a great measure excluded, by the protecting duties on East Indian sugar.

But a great revenue is derived from the West Indian trade! Here, again, we have the same fallacy. As long as the present quantity of sugar is imported into England, no matter from what country, the revenue will not suffer; and, in proportion as the price of sugar is diminished, the consumption, and, consequently, the revenue, must increase. But the West Indian trade affords extensive employment to British shipping and seamen! Why more than any equally extensive trade with any other part of the world? The more {324}active our trade, the more demand there will be for shipping and seamen; and every one who has learnt the alphabet of Political Economy, knows that trade is active, in proportion only as it is free.

There are some who assert that, in a military and political point of view, the West Indies are of great importance to this country. This is a

common, but a monstrous misrepresentation. We venture to say, that Colonial empire has been one of the greatest curses of modern Europe. What nation has it ever strengthened? What nation has it ever enriched? What have been its fruits? Wars of frequent occurrence and immense cost, fettered trade, lavish expenditure, clashing jurisdiction, corruption in governments, and indigence among the people. What have Mexico and Peru done for Spain, the Brazils for Portugal, Batavia for Holland? Or, if the experience of others is lost upon us, shall we not profit by our own? What have we not sacrificed to our infatuated passion for transatlantic dominion? This it is that has so often led us to risk our own smiling gardens and dear firesides for some snowy desert or infections morass on the other side of the globe: This inspired us with the project of conquering America in Germany: This induced us to resign all the advantages of our insular situation--to embroil ourselves in the intrigues, and fight the battles of half the Continent--to form coalitions which were instantly broken---and to give subsidies which were never earned: This gave birth to the fratricidal war against American liberty, with all its disgraceful defeats, and all its barren victories, and all the massacres of the Indian hatchet, and all the bloody contracts of the Hessian slaughterhouse: This it was which, in the war against the French republic, induced us to send thousands and tens of thousands of our bravest troops to die in West Indian hospitals, while the armies of our enemies were pouring over the Rhine and the Alps. When a colonial acquisition has been in prospect, we have thought no expenditure extravagant, no interference perilous. Gold has been to us as dust, and blood as water. Shall we never learn wisdom? Shall we never cease to prosecute a pursuit wilder than the wildest dream of alchemy, with all the credulity and all the profusion of Sir Epicure Mammon?

Those who maintain that settlements so remote conduce to the military or maritime power of nations, fly in the face of history. {325}The colonies of Spain were far more extensive and populous than ours. Has Spain, at

any time within the last two centuries, been a match for England either by land or by sea? Fifty years ago, our colonial dominions in America were far larger and more prosperous than those which we at present possess. Have we since that time experienced any decay in our political influence, in our opulence, or in our security? Or shall we say that Virginia was a less valuable possession than Jamaica, or Massachusetts than Barbadoes?

The fact is, that all the evils of our Colonial system are immensely aggravated in the West Indies by the peculiar character of the state of slavery which exists there. Our other settlements we have to defend only against foreign invasion. These we must protect against the constant enmity of the miserable bondsmen, who are always waiting for the moment of deliverance, if not of revenge. With our other establishments we may establish commercial relations advantageous to both parties. But these are in a state of absolute pauperism; for what are bounties and forced prices but an enormous poor-rate in disguise?

These are the benefits for which we are to be thankful. These are the benefits, in return for which we are to suffer a handful of managers and attorneys to insult the King, Lords, and Commons of England, in the exercise of rights as old and sacred as any part of our Constitution. It the proudest potentate in Europe, if the King of France, or the Emperor of all the Russias, had treated our Government as these creatures of our own have dared to do, should we not have taken such satisfaction as would have made the ears of all that heard of it to tingle? Would there not have been a stately manifesto, and a warlike message to both Houses, and vehement speeches from all parties, and unanimous addresses abounding in offers of lives and fortunes? If any *English mob*, composed of the disciples of Paine and Carlile, should dare to pull down a place of religious worship, to drive the minister from his residence, to threaten with destruction any other who should dare to take his place, would not the yeomanry be called out? Would not Parliament be summoned before the appointed time? Would there not be sealed bags and secret

committees, and suspensions of the Habeas Corpus act? In Barbadoes all this has been done.

It {326}has been done openly. It has *not* been punished. It is at this hour a theme of boasting and merriment. And what is the language of our rulers? “We must not irritate them. We must try lenient measures. It is better that such unfortunate occurrences should not be brought before the Parliament.” Surely the mantle, or rather the cassock, of Sir Hugh Evans, has descended on these gentlemen. “It is not meet the council hear a riot. There is no fear of Got in a riot. The council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot.” We have outdone all the most memorable examples of patience. The Job of Holy Writ, the Griselda of profane romance, were but types of our philosophy. Surely our endurance must be drawing to a close.

We do not wish that England should drive forth her prodigal offspring to wear the rags and feed on the husks which they have desired. The Colonists have deserved such a punishment. But, for the sake of the slaves, for the sake of those persons, residing in this country, who are interested in West Indian property, we should grieve to see it indicted. That the slaves, when no longer restrained by our troops, would, in no very long time, achieve their own liberation, cannot be doubted. As little do we doubt that such a revolution, violent as it would doubtless be, would be desirable, if it were the only possible means of subverting the present system. The horrors of a battle or a massacre force themselves upon our senses. The effects of protracted tyranny, the terror, the degradation, the blighted affections, the stunted intellects, the pining of the heart, the premature decay of the frame, are evils less obvious, but equally certain; and, when continued through successive generations, make up a greater sum of human misery than was ever indicted in the paroxysm of any revolution. Still we cannot doubt that savages, rude in understanding, exasperated by injuries, intoxicated by recent freedom,

would be much benefited by the wise and merciful control of an enlightened people.

We feel also for the West Indian proprietors who reside in England. Between them and the inhabitants of the Colonies we see a great distinction. There may be in this body individuals infected with the worst vices of the colonial character. But there are also among them many gentlemen of benevolent feelings and enlarged minds, who have done much to {327}alleviate the condition of their slaves, and who would willingly see the meliorating measures which his Majesty's ministers have suggested, adopted by the West Indian legislators. They have scarcely any thing in common with the Colonists, or with the scribblers whom the Colonists feed and clothe. They have taken little part in the controversy, ashamed probably of the infamous allies with whom they would have to cooperate. But what they have said has, upon the whole, been said manfully and courteously. Their influence, however, is at present exerted decidedly in favour of slavery, not, we verily believe, from any love of slavery in the abstract, but partly because they think that their own characters are in some degree affected by the attacks which are made on the Colonial system, and partly because they apprehend that their property is likely to suffer in consequence of the feeling which at present prevails throughout the country.

On both points they are mistaken. We are convinced that there is not, in any quarter, a feeling unfriendly to them, or an indisposition to give a fair consideration to their interests. The honest, but uninformed zeal, of individuals, may sometimes break forth into intemperate expressions: But the great body of the people make a wide distinction between the class of which we speak and the Colonial mob. Let it be their care to preserve that distinction indelible.

We call for their support. They are our natural allies. Scarcely have the Ministers of the Crown, scarcely have the Abolitionists themselves, been

more rancorously abused by the orators of Jamaica, than those persons. The objects of the two classes are wholly different. The one consists of English gentlemen, naturally solicitous to preserve the source from which they derive a part of their revenue. The other is composed, in a great measure, of hungry adventurers, who are too poor to buy the pleasure of tyranny, and are therefore attached to the only system under which they can enjoy it gratis. The former wish only to secure their possessions; the latter are desirous to perpetuate the oppressive privileges of the white skin. Against those privileges let us declare interminable war, war for ourselves, and for our children, and for our grand-children,--war without peace--war without truce--war without quarter! But we respect the rights of property as much as we detest the prerogatives of colour.

We {328}entreat these respectable persons to reflect on the precarious nature of the tenure by which they hold their property. Even if it were in their power to put a stop to this controversy,--if the subject of slavery were no longer to occupy the attention of the British public, could they think themselves secure from ruin? Are no ominous signs visible in the political horizon? How is it that they do not discern this time? All the ancient fabrics of colonial empire are falling to pieces. The old equilibrium of power has been disturbed by the introduction of a crowd of new States into the system. Our West-India posessions are not now surrounded, as they formerly were, by the oppressed and impoverished colonies of a superannuated monarchy, in the last stage of dotage and debility, but by young, and vigorous, and warlike republics. We have defended our colonies against Spain. Does it therefore follow that we shall be able to defend them against Mexico or Hayti? We are told, that a pamphlet of Mr. Stephen, or a speech of Mr. Brougham, is sufficient to excite all the slaves in our colonies to rebel. What, then, would be the effect produced in Jamaica by the appearance of three or four Black regiments, with thirty or forty thousand stand of arms? The colony would be lost. Would it ever be recovered? Would England engage in a contest

for that object, at so vast a distance, and in so deadly a climate? Would she not take warning by the fate of that mighty expedition which perished in St. Domingo? Let us suppose, however, that a force were sent, and that, in the field, it were successful. Have we forgotten how long a few Maroons defended the central mountains of the island against all the efforts of disciplined valour? A similar contest on a larger scale might be protracted for half a century, keeping our forces in continual employment, and depriving property of all its security. The country might spend fifty millions of pounds, and bury fifty thousand men, before the contest could be terminated. Nor is this all. In a servile war, the master *must* be the loser--for his enemies are his chattels. Whether the slave conquer or fall, he is alike lost to the owner. In the mean time, the soil lies uncultivated; the machinery is destroyed. And when the possessions of the planter are restored to him, they have been changed into a desert.

Our policy is clear. If we wish to keep the Colonies, we must take prompt and effectual measures for raising the condition {329}of the slaves. We must give them institutions which they may have no temptation to change. We have governed the Canadians liberally and leniently; and the consequence is, that we can trust to them to defend themselves against the most formidable power that anywhere threatens our Colonial dominions. This is the only safeguard. You may renew all the atrocities of Barbadoes and Demerara. You may inflict all the most hateful punishments authorised by the insular codes. You may massacre by the thousand, and hang by the score. You may even once more roast your captives in slow fires, and starve them in iron cages, or flay them alive with the cart-whip. You will only hasten the day of retribution. Therefore, we say, “Let them go forth from the house of bondage. For woe unto you, if you wait for the plagues and the signs, the wonders and the war, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm!”

If the great West Indian proprietors shall persist in a different line of conduct, and ally themselves with the petty tyrants of the Antilles, it matters little. We should gladly accept of their assistance: But we feel assured that their opposition cannot affect the ultimate result of the controversy. It is not to any particular party in the church or in the state; it is not to the right or to the left hand of the speaker; it is not to the cathedral or to the Meeting, that we look exclusively for support. We believe that, on this subject, the hearts of the English People burn within them. They hate slavery. They have hated it for ages. If has, indeed, hidden itself for a time in a remote nook of their dominions: but it is now discovered and dragged to light. That is sufficient. Its sentence is pronounced; and it never can escape! never, though all the efforts of its supporters should be redoubled,--never, though sophistry, and falsehood, and slander, and the jests of the pothouse, the ribaldry of the brothel, and the slang of the ring or fives' court, should do their utmost in its defence,--never, thoug44h fresh insurrections should be got up to frighten the people out of their judgment, and fresh companies to bubble them out of their money,--never, though it should find in the highest ranks of the peerage, or on the steps of the throne itself, the purveyors of its slander, and the mercenaries of its defence! (1)

(1) Since the above article was prepared for the press, we have met with a new and very important work on the subject of West-India Slavery. It is entitled, "The {330}West Indies as they are, or a real Picture of Slavery, particularly in Jamaica," by the Rev. H. Bickell, a clergyman of the Church of England, who resided a considerable time in that island. The work is ill written; and it might have been reduced with advantage to half its present size. It produces, however, an irresistible impression of the honesty and right intentions of the author, who was an eyewitness of the scenes he describes: and it continues, in a remarkable manner, all the leading statements which, on the authority of Mr. Cooper, Dr. Williamson, and Mr. Meabing, were laid before the public two years ago,

in the pamphlet called “Negro Slavery.” Mr. Bickell has also brought forward various new facts of the most damning description, in illustration both of the rigours of Negro bondage, and of the extraordinary dissoluteness of manners prevailing in Jamaica. We strongly recommend the work to general perusal, as a most seasonable antidote to those delusive tales of colonial amelioration, by which it has been attempted to abate the horror so universally felt in contemplating the cruel and debasing effects of the slave system.

THE LONDON UNIVERSITY. (1)

(Edinburgh, Review, February 1826.)

Few {331}things have ever appeared to us more inexplicable than the cry which it has pleased those who arrogate to themselves the exclusive praise of loyalty and orthodoxy, to raise against the projected University of London. In most of those publications which are distinguished by zeal for the Church and the Government, the scheme is never mentioned but with affected contempt, or unaffected fury. The Academic pulpits have resounded with invectives against it; and many even of the most liberal and enlightened members of the old foundations seem to contemplate it with very uncomfortable feelings.

We were startled at this. For surely no undertaking of equal importance was ever commenced in a manner more pacific and conciliatory. If the management has fallen, in a great measure, into the hands of persons whose political opinions are at variance with those of the dominant party, this was not the cause, but the effect of the jealousy which that party thought fit to entertain. Oxford and Cambridge, to all appearance, had nothing to dread. Hostilities were not declared. Even rivalry was disclaimed. The new Institution did not aspire to participate in the privileges which had been so long monopolised by those ancient corporations. It asked for no franchises, no lands, no advowsons. It did not interfere with that mysterious scale of degrees on which good churchmen look with as much veneration as the Patriarch on the ladder up which he saw angels ascending. It did not ask permission to search houses without warrants, or to take books from publishers without paying for them.

(1)*Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England.* 1826.

There {332}was to be no melo-dramatic pageantry, no ancient ceremonial, no silver mace, no gowns either black or red, no hoods either of fur or of satin, no public orator to make speeches which nobody hears, no oaths sworn only to be broken. Nobody thought of emulating the cloisters, the organs, the painted glass, the withered mummies, the busts of great men, and the pictures of naked women, which attract visitors from every part of the isand to the banks of Isis and Cam. The persons whose advantage was quietly in view belonged to a class of which very few ever find their way to the old colleges. The name of University was indeed assumed; and it has been said that this gave offence. But we are confident that so ridiculous an objection can have been entertained by very few. It reminds us of the whimsical cruelty with which Mercury, in Plautus, knocks down poor Soda for being so impudent as to have the same name with himself!

We know indeed that there are many to whom knowledge is hateful for its own sake,--owl-like beings, creatures of darkness, and rapine, and evil omen, who are sensible that their organs fit them only for the night,--and that, as soon as the day arises, they shall be pecked back to their nooks by those on whom they now prey with impunity. By the arts of those, enemies of mankind, a large and influential party has been led to look with suspicion, if not with horror, on all schemes of education, and to doubt whether the ignorance of the people be not the best security for its virtue and repose.

We will not at present attack the principles of these persons, because we think that, even on those principles, they are bound to support the London University. If indeed it were possible to bring back, in all their ancient loveliness, the times of venerable absurdities and good old nuisances--if we could hope that gentlemen might again put their marks to deeds without blushing--that it might again be thought a miracle if any body in a parish could read, except the Vicar, or if the Vicar were to read any thing but the Service,--that all the literature of the multitude might

again be comprised in a ballad or a prayer,--that the Bishop of Norwich might be burned for a heretic, and Sir Humphry Davy hanged for a conjurer,--that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might negotiate loans with Mr. Rothschild, by extracting {333}one of his teeth daily till he brought him to term--then indeed the case would be different. But, alas! who can venture to anticipate such a millennium of stupidity? The zealots of ignorance will therefore do well to consider, whether, since the evils of knowledge cannot be altogether excluded, it may not be desirable to set them in array against each other. The best state of things, we will concede to them, would be that in which all men should be dunces together. That might be called the age of gold. The silver age would be that in which no man should be taught to spell, unless he could produce letters of ordination, or, like a candidate for a German order of knighthood, prove his sixty-four quarters. Next in the scale would stand a community in which the higher and middling orders should be well educated, and the labouring people utterly uninformed. But the iron age would be that in which the lower classes should be rising in intelligence, while no corresponding improvement was taking, place in the rank immediately above them.

England is in the last of these states. From one end of the country to the other the artisans, the draymen, the very ploughboys, are learning to read and write. Thousands of them attend lectures. Hundreds of thousands read newspapers. Whether this be a blessing or a curse, we are not now inquiring. But such is the fact. Education is spreading amongst the working people, and cannot be prevented from spreading amongst them. The change which has taken place in this respect within twenty years is prodigious. No person surely, will venture to say that information has increased in the same degree amongst those who constitute what may be called the lower part of the middling class,--farmers for instance, shopkeepers, or clerks in commercial houses.

If there be any truth in the principles held by the enemies of education, this is the most dangerous state in which a country can be placed. They maintain that knowledge renders the poor arrogant and discontented. It will hardly be disputed, we presume, that arrogance is the result, not of the absolute situation in which a man may be placed, but of the relation in which he stands to others. Where a whole society is equably rising in intelligence; where the distance between its different orders remains the same, though every order advances, that feeling is not likely to be excited. An individual {334}is not more vain of his knowledge, because he participates in the universal improvement, than he is vain of his speed, because he is flying along with the earth and every thing upon it, at the rate of seventy thousand miles an hour. But if he feels that *he* is going forward, while those before him are standing still, the case is altered. If ever the diffusion of knowledge can be attended with the danger of which we hear so much, it is in England at the present moment. And this danger can be obviated in two ways only. Unteach the poor,--or teach those who may, by comparison, be called the rich. The former it is plainly impossible to do: And therefore, if those whom we are addressing be consistent, they will exert themselves to do the latter; and, by increasing the knowledge, increase also the power of an extensive and important class,--a class which is as deeply interested as the peerage or the hierarchy in the prosperity and tranquillity of the country; a class which, while it is too numerous to be corrupted by government, is too intelligent to be duped by demagogues, and which, though naturally hostile to oppression and profusion, is not likely to carry its zeal for reform to lengths inconsistent with the security of property and the maintenance of social order.

“But an University without religion!” softly expostulates the Quarterly Review.--“An University without religion!” roars John Bull, wedging in his pious horror between a slander and a double-entendre. And from

pulpits and visitation-dinners and combination-rooms innumerable, the cry is echoed and re-echoed, “An University without religion!”

This objection has really imposed on many excellent people, who have not adverted to the immense difference which exists between the new Institution and those foundations of which the members form a sort of family, living under the same roof, governed by the same regulations, compelled to eat at the same table, and to return to their apartments at the same hours. Have none of those who censure the London University on this account, daughters who are educated at home, and who are attended by different teachers? The music-master, a good Protestant, comes at twelve; the dancing-master, a French philosopher, at two; the Italian master, a believer in the blood of Saint Januarius, at three. The parents take upon themselves the office of instructing their child in religion. She hears the preachers whom they prefer, {335}and reads the theological works which they put into her hands. Who can deny that this is the case in innumerable families? Who can point ont any material difference between the situation in which this girl is placed, and that of a pupil at the new University? Why then is so crying an abuse suffered to exist without reprehension? Is there no Sacheverell to raise the old cry,--the Church is in danger,--that cry which was never uttered by any voice however feeble, or for any end however base, without being instantly caught up and repeated through all the dark and loathsome nooks where bigotry nestles with corruption? Where is the charge of the Bishop and the sermon of the Chaplain, the tear of the Chancellor and the oath of the Heir-apparent, the speech of Mr. William Bankes and the pamphlet of Sir Harcourt Lees? What means the silence of those filthy and malignant baboons, whose favourite diversion is to grin and sputter at innocence and beauty through the grates of their spunging-houses? Why not attempt to blast the reputation of the poor ladies who are so irreligiously brought up? Why not search into all the secrets of their families? Why not enliven

the Sunday breakfast-tables of priests and placemen with elopements of their great-aunts and the bankruptcies of their second cousins?

Or, to make the parallel still clearer, take the case of a young man, a student, we will suppose, of surgery, resident in London. He wishes to become master of his profession, without neglecting other useful branches of knowledge. In the morning he attends Mr. M'Culloch's lecture on Political Economy. He then repairs to the Hospital, and hears Sir Astley Cooper explain the mode of reducing fractures. In the afternoon he joins one of the classes which Mr. Hamilton instructs in French or German. With regard to religions observances, he acts as he himself, or those under whose care he is, may think most advisable. Is there any thing objectionable in this? Is it not the most common case in the world? And in what does it differ from that of a young man at the London University? Our surgeon, it is true, will have to run over half London in search of his instructors; and the other will find all the lecture-rooms which he attends standing conveniently together, at the end of Gower Street. Is it in the local situation that the mischief lies? We have observed that, since Mr. Croker, in the last session of {336}Parliament, declared himself ignorant of the site of Russell Square, the plan of forming an University in so inelegant a neighbourhood has excited much contempt amongst those estimable persons who think that the whole dignity of man consists in living within certain districts, wearing coats made by certain tailors, and eschewing certain meats and drinks. We should be sorry to think that the reports which any lying Mandeville from Bond Street may have circulated respecting that Terra Incognita, could seriously prejudice the new College. The Secretary of the Admiralty, however, has the remedy in his own hands. When Captain Franklin returns, as we trust he soon will, from his American expedition, he will, we hope, he sent to explore that other North-West passage which connects the city with the Regent's Park. It would then be found, that, though the natives generally belong to the same race with those Oriental

barbarians whose irruptions have long been the terror of Hamilton Place and Grosvenor Square, they are, upon the whole, quiet and inoffensive; that, though they possess no architectural monument which can be compared to the Pavilion at Brighton, their habitations are neat and commodious; and that their language has many roots in common with that which is spoken in St. James's Street. One thing more we must mention, which will astonish some of our readers, as much as the discovery of the Syrian Christians of St. Thomas on the coast of Malabar. Our religion has been introduced by some Xavier or Augustin of former times into these tracts. Churches, with all their appurtenances of hassocks and organs, are to be found there; and even the tithe, that great *articulum stantis aut labantis ecclesiae*, is by no means unknown.

The writer of the article on this subject in the last Number of the Quarterly Review, severely censures the omission of religious instruction, in a place styling itself an University,--never perceiving that, with the inconsistency which belongs to error, he has already answered the objection. "A place of education," says he, "is the least of all proper to be made the arena of disputable and untried doctrine." He severely censures those academies in which "a perpetual vacillation of doctrine is observable, whether in morals, metaphysics, or religion, according to the frequency of change in the professional chair." Now, we venture to say, that these {337}considerations, if they are worth any thing at all, are decisive against any scheme of religions instruction in the London University. That University was intended to admit not only Christians of all persuasions, but even Jews. But suppose that it were to narrow its limits, to adopt the formularies of the Church of England, to require subscription, or the sacramental test, from every professor and from every pupil; still, we say, there would be more field for controversy, more danger of that vacillation of doctrine which seems to the Reviewer to be so great an evil, on subjects of theology, than on all other subjects together. Take a science which is still young, a science of considerable

intricacy, a science, we may add, which the passions and interests of men have rendered more intricate than it is in its own nature, the science of Political Economy. Who will deny, that, for one schism which is to be found among those who are engaged in that study, there are twenty on points of divinity, *within the Church of England?*

Is it not notorious that Arminians, who stand on the very frontier of Pelagianism, and Calvinists, whom a line scarcely discernible separates from Antinomianism, are to be found among those who eat the bread of the Establishment? Is it not notorious that predestination, final perseverance, the operation of grace, the efficacy of the sacraments, and a hundred other subjects which we could name, have been themes of violent disputes between eminent churchmen? The ethics of Christianity, as well as its theory, have been the theme of dispute. One party calls the other latitudinarian and worldly. The other retorts accusations of fanaticism and asceticism. The curate has been set against the rector, the dean against the bishop. There is scarcely a parish in England into which the controversy has not found its way. There is scarcely an action of human life so trivial and familiar as not to be in some way or other affected by it. Whether it is proper to take in a Sunday newspaper, to shoot a partridge, to course a hare, to subscribe to a Bible Society, to dance, to play at whist, to read Tom Jones, to see Othello,--all these are questions on which the strongest difference of opinion exists between persons of high eminence in the hierarchy. The Quarterly Reviewer thinks it a very bad thing, that “the first object of a new professor should be to refute the fundamental positions of his predecessors.” What would be {338}the case if a High Churchman should succeed a Low Churchman, or a Low Churchman a High Churchman, in the chair of religion? And what possible security could the London University have against such an event? What security have Oxford or Cambridge now? In fact, all that we know of the state of religious parties at those place, fully bears out our statement. One of the most famous divines of our time. Dr.

Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough, Margaret Professor of Theology at Cambridge, and author of eighty-seven of the most unanswerable questions that ever man propounded to his fellow-men, published a very singular hypothesis respecting the origin of the Gospels. With the truth or falsehood of the hypothesis we have nothing to do. We have, however, heard another eminent Professor of the same University, high in the Church, condemn the theory as utterly unfounded, and of most dangerous consequence to the orthodox faith. Nay, the very pulpit of Saint Mary's has been "the arena of disputable and untried doctrine," as much as ever was the chair of any Scotch or German professor,--a fact, of which any person may easily satisfy himself, who will take the trouble to rescue from the hands of trunk-makers and pastry-cooks, a few of the sermons which have been preached there, and subsequently published. And if, in the course of his researches, he should happen to light on that which was preached by a very eminent scholar on a very remarkable occasion, the installation of the Duke of Gloucester, he will see, that not only dispute, but something very like abuse, may take place between those whose office it is to instruct our young collegians in the doctrines and duties of Christianity.

"But," it is said, "would it not be shocking to expose the morals of young men to the contaminating influence of a great city, to all the fascinations of the Fives' Court and the gaming table, the tavern and the saloon?" Shocking, indeed, we grant, if it were possible to send them all to Oxford and Cambridge, those blessed spots where, to use the imagery of their own prize-poems, the Saturnian age still lingers, and where white-robed Innocence has left the print of her departing footsteps. There, we know, all the men are philosophers, and all the women vestals. There, simple and bloodless repasts support the body without distressing the mind. There, while the sluggish world is still sleeping, the ingenious {339}youth hasten to pour forth their fervent orisons in the chapel; and in the evening, elsewhere the season of riot and license, indulge themselves

with a solitary walk beneath the venerable avenues, musing on the vanity of sensual pursuits, and the eternity and sublimity of virtue. But, alas! these blissful abodes of the Seven Cardinal Virtues are neither large enough nor cheap enough for those who stand in need of instruction. Many thousands of young men will live in London, whether an University be established there or not,--and that for this simple reason, that they cannot afford to live elsewhere. That they should be condemned to one misfortune because they labour under another, and debarred from knowledge because they are surrounded with temptations to vice, seems to be not a very rational or humane mode of proceeding.

To speak seriously, in comparing the dangers to which the morals of young men are exposed in London, with those which exist at the Universities, there is something to be said on both sides. The temptations of London may be greater. But with the temptation there is a way to escape. If the student live with his family, he will be under the influence of restraints more powerful, and, we will add, infinitely more salutary and respectable, than those which the best disciplined colleges can impose. Even if he be left completely to his own devices, he will still have within his reach two inestimable advantages, from which the students of Oxford and Cambridge are almost wholly excluded, the society of men older than himself, and of modest women.

There are no intimacies more valuable than those which a young man forms with one who is his senior by ten or twelve years. Those years do not destroy the sympathy and the sense of equality without which no cordiality can exist. Yet they strengthen the principles, and form the judgment. They make one of the parties a sensible adviser, and the other a docile listener. Such friendships it is almost impossible to form at College. Between the man of twenty and the man of thirty there is a great gulf, a distinction which cannot be mistaken, which is marked by the dress and by the seat, at prayers and at table. We do not believe that, of the young students at our ancient seats of learning, one in ten lives in

confidence and familiarity with any member of the University who is a Master of Arts. When the members of {340}the University are deducted, the society of Oxford and Cambridge is no more than that of an ordinary county town.

This state of things, it is clear, does more harm than all the exertions of Proctors and Proproctors can do good. The errors of young men are of a nature with which it is very difficult to deal. Slight punishments are inefficient; severe punishments generally and justly odious. The best course is to give them over to the arm of public opinion. To restrain them, it is necessary to make them discreditable. But how can they be made discreditable while the offenders associate only with those who are of the same age, who are exposed to the same temptations, and who are willing to grant the indulgence which they themselves may need? It is utterly impossible that a code of morality and honour, enacted by the young only, can be so severe against juvenile irregularities as that which is in force in general society, where manhood and age have the deciding voice, and where the partial inclinations of those whose passions are strong, and whose reason is weak, are withstood by those whom time and domestic life have sobered. The difference resembles that which would be found between laws passed by an assembly consisting solely of farmers, or solely of weavers, and those of a senate fairly representing every interest of the community.

A student in London, even though he may not live with his own relatives, will generally have it in his power to mix with respectable female society. This is not only a very pleasant thing, but it is one which, though it may not make him moral, is likely to make him decorous, and to preserve him from that brainless and heartless Yahooism, that disdain of the character of women, and that brutal indifference to their misery, which is the worst offence, and the severest punishment of the finished libertine. Many of the pupils will, in all probability, continue to reside with their parents or friends. We own that we can conceive no situation

more agreeable or more salutary. One of the worst effects of College habits is that distaste for domestic life which they almost inevitably generate. The system is monastic; and it tends to produce the monastic selfishness, inattention to the convenience of others, and impatience of petty privations. We mean no reproach. It is utterly impossible that the most amiable man in the world can be accustomed to live for {341}years independent of his neighbours, and to lay all his plans with a view only to himself, without becoming, in some degree, unfitted for a family. A course of education which should combine the enjoyments of a home with the excitements of a University, would be more likely than any other to form characters at once affectionate and manly. Homebred boys, it is often said, are idle. The cause, we suspect, is the want of competitors. We no more believe that a young man at the London University would be made idle by the society of his mothers and sisters, than that the old German warriors, or the combatants in the tournaments of the middle ages, were made cowards by the presence of female spectators. On the contrary, we are convinced that his ambition would be at once animated and consecrated by daily intercourse with those who would be dearest to him, and most inclined to rejoice in his success.

The eulogists of the old Universities are fond of dwelling on the glorious associations connected with them. It has often been said that the young scholar is likely to catch a generous enthusiasm from looking upon spots ennobled by so many great names--that he can scarcely see the chair in which Bentley sat, the tree which Alilton planted, the wadis within which Wickliffe presided, the books illustrated by the autographs of famous men, the halls hung with their pictures, the chapels hallowed by their tombs, without aspiring to imitate those whom he admires. Far be it from us to speak with disrespect of such feelings. It is possible that the memorials of those who have asserted the freedom, and extended the empire of the mind, may produce a strong impression on a sensitive and ardent disposition. But these instances are rare. “Coram Lepidis male

vivitur." Young academicians venture to get drunk within a few yards of the grave of Newton, and to commit solecisms, though the awful eye of Erasmus frowns upon them from the canvas. Some more homely sentiment, some more obvious association is necessary. For our part, when a young man is to be urged to persevering industry, and fortified against the seductions of pleasure, we would rather send him to the fireside of his own family, than to the abodes of philosophers who died centuries ago,--and to those kind familiar faces which are always anxious in his anxiety, and joyful in his success, than to the portrait of any waiter that ever wore cap and gown.

The {342}cry against the London University has been swelled by the voices of many really conscientious persons. Many have joined in it from the mere wanton love of mischief. But we believe that it has principally originated in the jealousy of those who are attached to Cambridge and Oxford, either by their interests, or by those feelings which men naturally entertain towards the place of their education, and which, when they do not interfere with schemes of public advantage, are entitled to respect. Many of these persons, we suspect, entertain a vague apprehension, scarcely avowed even to themselves, that some defects in the constitution of their favourite Academies will be rendered more glaring by the contrast which the system of this new College will exhibit.

That there are such defects, great and radical defects in the structure of the two Universities, we are strongly inclined to believe: and the jealousy which many of their members have expressed of the new Institution greatly strengthens our opinion. What those defects appear to us to be, we shall attempt to state with frankness, but, at the same time, we trust, with candour.

We are sensible that we have undertaken a dangerous task. There is perhaps no subject on which more people have made up their minds without knowing why. Whenever this is the case, discussion ends in

scurrility, the last resource of the disputant who cannot answer, and who will not submit. The scurrility of those who are scurrilous on all occasions, and against all opponents, by nature and by habit, by taste and by trade, can excite only the mirth or the pity of a well regulated mind. But we neither posess, nor affect to possess, that degree of philosophy, which would render us indifferent to the pain and resentment of sincere and respectable persons, whose prejudices we are compelled to assail. It is not in the bitterness of party spirit, it is not in the wantonness of paradox and declamation, that we would put to hazard the good will of learned and estimable men. Such a sacrifice must be powerful, and nothing but a sense of public duty would lead us to make it. We would earnestly entreat the admirers of the two Universities to reflect on the importance of this subject, the advantages of calm investigation, and the folly of trusting, in an age like the present, to mere dogmatism and invective. If the system which {343}they love and venerate rest upon just principles, the examination which we propose to institute, into the state of its foundations, can only serve to prove their solidity. If they be unsound, we will not permit ourselves to think, that intelligent and honourable men can wish to disguise a fact which, for the sake of this country, and of the whole human race, ought to be widely known. Let them, instead of reiterating assertions which leave the question exactly where they found it; instead of turning away from all argument, as if the subject were one on which doubt partook of the nature of sin; instead of attributing to selfishness or malevolence, that which may at worst be harmless error, join us in coolly studying so interesting and momentous a point.--As to this, however, they will please themselves. We speak to the English people. The public mind, if we are not deceived, is approaching to manhood. It has outgrown its swaddling-bands, and thrown away its play-things. It can no longer be amused by a rattle, or laid asleep by a song, or awed by a fairy tale. At such a time, we cannot doubt that we shall obtain an impartial hearing.

Our objections to Oxford and Cambridge may be summed up in two words, their Wealth and their Privileges. Their prosperity does not depend on the public approbation. It would therefore be strange if they deserved the public approbation. Their revenues are immense. Their degrees are, in some professions, indispensable. Like manufacturers who enjoy a monopoly, they work at such an advantage, that they can venture to work ill.

Every person, we presume, will acknowledge that, to establish an academic system on immutable principles, would be the height of absurdity. Every year sees the empire of science enlarged by the acquisition of some new province, or improved by the construction of some easier road. Surely the change which daily takes place in the state of knowledge, ought to be accompanied by a corresponding change in the method of instruction. In many cases the rude and imperfect works of early speculators ought to give place to the more complete and luminous performances of those who succeed them. Even the comparative value of languages is subject to great fluctuations. The same tongue which at one period may be richer than any other in valuable works, may, some centuries after, be poorer than any. That, while such revolutions {344}take place, education ought to remain unchanged, is a proposition too absurd to be maintained for a moment.

If it be desirable that education should, by a gradual and constant change, adapt itself to the circumstances of every generation, how is this object to be secured? We answer--only by perfect freedom of competition. Under such a system, every possible exigence would be met. Whatever language, whatever art, whatever science, it might at any time be useful to know, *that*, men would surely learn, and woidd as surely find instructors to teach. The professor who should persist in devoting his attention to branches of knowledge which had become useless, would soon be deserted by his pupils. There would be as much of every sort of

information as would afford profit and pleasure to the possessor--and no more.

But the riches and the franchises of our Universities prevent this salutary rivalry from taking place. In its stead is introduced an unnatural system of premiums, prohibitions, and apprenticeships. Enormous bounties are lavished on particular acquirements; and, in consequence, there is among our youth a glut of Greek, Latin, and Mathematics, and a lamentable scarcity of every thing else.

We are by no means inclined to depreciate the studies which are encouraged at Oxford and Cambridge. We should reprobate with the same severity a system under which a like exclusive protection should be extended to French or Spanish, Chemistry or Mineralogy, Metaphysics or Political Economy. Some of these branches of knowledge are very important. But they may not always be equally important. Five hundred years hence, the Burmese language may contain the most valuable books in the world. Sciences, for which there is now no name, and of which the first rudiments are still undiscovered, may then be in the greatest demand. Our objection is to the principle. We abhor intellectual perpetuities. A chartered and endowed College, strong in its wealth and in its degrees, does not find it necessary to teach what is useful, because it can pay men to learn what is useless. Every fashion which was in vogue at the time of its foundation, enters into its constitution and partakes of its immortality. Its abuses savour of the reality, and its prejudices vest in mortmain, with its lands. In the present instance, the consequences are notorious. We every day see clever {345}men of four and five-and-twenty, loaded with academical honours and rewards,---scholarships, fellowships, whole cabinets of medals, whole shelves of prize books,--enter into life with their education still to begin, unacquainted with the history, the literature, we might almost say, the language of their country, unacquainted with the first principles of the laws under which they live, unacquainted with the very rudiments of

moral and political science! Who will deny that this is the state of things? Or who will venture to defend it?

This is no new complaint. Long before society had so far outstripped the Colleges in the career of improvement as it has since done, the evil was noticed and traced to its true cause, by that great philosopher who most accurately mapped all the regions of science, and furnished the human intellect with its most complete Itinerary. “It is not to be forgotten,” says Lord Bacon, “that the dedicating of foundations and donations to professory learning, hath not only had a malign influence upon the growth of sciences, but hath also been prejudicial to states and governments: For hence it proceedeth, that princes find a solitude in respect of able men to serve them in causes of state, *because there is no education collegiate which is free*, where such as were so disposed might give themselves to histories, modern languages, books of policy and civil discourse, and other like enablements unto causes of state.”(1) The warmest admirers of the present system will hardly deny, that, if this was an evil in the sixteenth century, it must be a much greater evil in the nineteenth. The literature of Greece and Rome is now what it was then. That of every modern language has received considerable accessions. And surely, “books of policy and civil discourse” are as important to an English gentleman of the present day, as they could be to a subject of James the First.

We repeat, that we are not disparaging either the dead languages or the exact sciences. We only say, that if they are useful they will not need peculiar encouragement, and that, if they are useless, they ought not to receive it. Those who maintain that the present system is necessary to promote the study of classical and mathematical knowledge, are the persons who really depreciate those pursuits. They do in fact {346}declare, by implication, that neither amusement nor profit is to be derived from them, and that no man has any motive to employ his time upon them, unless he expects that they may help him to a fellowship.

(1) Advancement of Learning, Book II.

The utility of mathematical knowledge is felt in every part of the system of life, and acknowledged by every rational man. But does it therefore follow, that people ought to be paid to acquire it. A scarcity of persons capable of making almanacks and measuring land, is as little to be apprehended as a scarcity of blacksmiths. In fact, very few of our academical mathematicians turn their knowledge to such practical purposes. There are many wranglers who have never touched a quadrant. What peculiar title then has the mere speculative knowledge of mathematical truth to such costly remuneration? The answer is well known. It makes men good reasoners: it habituates them to strict accuracy in drawing inferences. In this statement there is unquestionably some truth. A man who understands the nature of mathematical reasoning, the closest of all kinds of reasoning, is likely to reason better than another on points not mathematical, as a man who can dance generally walks better than a man who cannot.. But no people walk so ill as dancing-masters, and no people reason so ill as mere mathematicians. They are accustomed to look only for one species of evidence; a species of evidence of which the transactions of life do not admit. When they come from certainties to probabilities, from a syllogism to a witness, their superiority is at an end. They resemble a man who, never having seen any object which was not either black or white, should be required to discriminate between two near shades of grey. Hence, on questions of religion, policy, or common life, we perpetually see these boasted demonstrators either extravagantly credulous, or extravagantly sceptical. That the science is a necessary ingredient in a liberal education, we admit. But it is only an ingredient, and an ingredient which is peculiarly dangerous, unless diluted by a large admixture of others. To encourage it by such rewards as are bestowed at Cambridge, is to make the occasional tonic of the mind its morning and evening nutriment.

The partisans of classical literature are both more numerous and more enthusiastic than the mathematicians; and the ignorant violence with which their cause has sometimes been assailed, {347}has added to its popularity. On this subject we are sure that we are at least impartial judges. We feel the warmest admiration for the great remains of antiquity. We gratefully acknowledge the benefits which mankind has owed to them. But we would no more suffer a pernicious system to be protected by the reverence which is due to them, than we would show our reverence for a saint by erecting his shrine into a sanctuary for criminals.

An eloquent scholar has said, that ancient literature was the ark in which all the civilization of the world was preserved during the deluge of barbarism. We confess it. But we do not read that Noah thought himself bound to live in the ark after the deluge had subsided. When our ancestors first began to consider the study of the classics as the principal part of education, little or nothing worth reading was to be found in any modern language. Circumstances have confessedly changed. Is it not possible that a change of system may be desirable?

Our opinion of the Latin tongue will, we fear, be considered heretical. We cannot but think that its vocabulary is miserably poor, and its mechanism deficient both in power and precision. The want of a definite article, and of a distinction between the preterite and the aorist tenses, are two defects which are alone sufficient to place it below any other language with which we are acquainted. In its most flourishing era it was reproached with poverty of expression. Cicero, indeed, was induced, by his patriotic feelings to deny the charge. But the perpetual recurrence of Greek words in his most hurried and familiar letters, and the frequent use which he is compelled to make of them, in spite of all his exertions to avoid them, in his philosophical works, fully prove that even this great master of the Latin tongue felt the evil which he laboured to conceal from others.

We do not think much better of the writers, as a body, than of the language. The literature of Rome was born old. All the signs of decrepitude were on it in the cradle. We look in vain for the sweet lisp and the graceful wildness of an infant dialect. We look in vain for a single great creative mind,--for a Homer or a Dante, a Shakspeare or a Cervantes. In their place we have a crowd of fourth-rate and fifth-rate authors, translators, and imitators without end. The rich heritage of Grecian philosophy and poetry was fatal {348}to the Romans. They would have acquired more wealth, if they had succeeded to less. Instead of accumulating fresh intellectual treasures, they contented themselves with enjoying, disposing in new forms, or impairing by an injudicious management, those which they took by descent. Hence, in most of their works, there is scarcely any thing spontaneous and racy, scarcely any originality in the thoughts, scarcely any idiom in the style. Their poetry tastes of the hot-house. It is transplanted from Greece, with the earth of Pindus clinging round its roots. It is nursed in careful seclusion from the Italian air. The gardeners are often skilful; but the fruit is almost always sickly. One hardy and prickly shrub, of genuine Latin growth, must indeed be excepted. Satire was the only indigenous produce of Roman talent; and, in our judgment, by far the best.

We are often told the Latin language is more strictly grammatical than the English; and that it is, therefore, necessary to study it, in order to speak English with elegance and accuracy. This is one of those remarks which are repeated till they pass into axioms, only because they have so little meaning, that nobody thinks it worth while to refute them at their first appearance. If those who say that the Latin language is more strictly grammatical than the English, mean only that it is more regular, that there are fewer exceptions to its general laws of derivation, inflection, and construction, we grant it. This is, at least for the purposes of the orator and the poet, rather a defect than a merit; but be it merit or defect, it can in no possible way facilitate the acquisition of any other language.

It would be about as reasonable to say, that the simplicity of the Code Napoleon renders the study of the laws of England easier than formerly. If it be meant, that the Latin language is formed in more strict accordance with the general principles of grammar than the English, that is to say, that the relations which words bear to each other are more strictly analogous to the relations between the ideas which they represent in Latin than in English, we venture to doubt the fact. We are quite sure, that not one in ten thousand of those who repeat the hackneyed remark on which we are commenting, have ever considered whether there be any principles of grammar whatever, anterior to positive enactment,--any solecism which is a *malum in se*, as distinct from a *malum prohibitum*.

Or, if {349}we suppose that there exist such principles, is not the circumstance, that a particular rule is found in one language and not in another, a sufficient proof that it is not one of those principles? That a man who knows Latin is likely to know English better than one who does not, we do not dispute. But this advantage is not peculiar to the study of Latin. Every language throws light on every other. There is not a single foreign tongue which will not suggest to a man of sense some new considerations respecting his own. We acknowledge, too, that the great body of our educated countrymen learn to grammaticise their English by means of their Latin. This, however, proves, not the usefulness of their Latin, but the folly of their other instructors. Instead of being a vindication of the present system of education, it is a high charge against it. A man who thinks the knowledge of Latin essential to the purity of English diction, either has never conversed with an accomplished woman, or does not deserve to have conversed with her. We are sure, that all persons who are in the habit of hearing public speaking must have observed, that the orators who are fondest of quoting Latin, are by no means the most scrupulous about marring their native tongue. We could mention several Members of Parliament, who never fail to usher in their scraps of Horace and Juvenal with half a dozen false concords.

The Latin language is principally valuable as an introduction to the Greek, the insignificant portico of a most chaste and majestic fabric. On this subject, our Confession of Faith will, we trust, be approved by the most orthodox scholar. We cannot refuse our admiration to that most wonderful and perfect machine of human thought, to the flexibility, the harmony, the gigantic power, the exquisite delicacy, the infinite wealth of words, the incomparable felicity of expression, in which are united the energy of the English, the neatness of the French, the sweet and infantine simplicity of the Tuscan. Of all dialects, it is the best fitted for the purposes both of science and of elegant literature. The philosophical vocabularies of ancient Rome, and of modern Europe, have been derived from that of Athens. Yet none of the imitations has ever approached the richness and precision of the original. It traces with ease distinctions so subtle, as to be lost in every other language. It draws lines where all the other instruments {350}of the reason only make blots. Nor is it less distinguished by the facilities which it affords to the poet. There are pages even in the Greek Dictionaries over which it is impossible to glance without delight. Every word suggests some pleasant or striking image, which, wholly unconnected as it is with that which precedes or that which follows, gives the same sort of pleasure with that which we derive from reading the Adonais of poor Shelley, or from looking at those elegant, though unmeaning friezes, in which the eye wanders along a line of beautiful faces, graceful draperies, stags, chariots, altars, and garlands. The literature is not unworthy of the language. It may boast of four poets of the very first order, Homer, Æschylus. Sophocles, and Aristophanes,--of Demosthenes, the greatest of orators--of Aristotle, who is perhaps entitled to the same rank among philosophers, and of Plato, who, if not the most satisfactory of philosophers, is at least the most fascinating. These are the great names of Greece; and to these is to be added a long list of ingenious moralists, wits, and rhetoricians, of poets who, in the lower departments of their art, deserve the greatest praise,

and of historians who, at least in the talent of narration, have never been equalled.

It was justly said by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, that to learn a new language was to acquire a new soul. He who is acquainted only with the writers of his native tongue, is in perpetual danger of confounding what is accidental with what is essential, and of supposing that tastes and habits of thought, which belong only to his own age and country, are inseparable from the nature of man. Initiated into foreign literature, he finds that principles of politics and morals, directly contrary to those which he has hitherto supposed to be unquestionable, because he never heard them questioned, have been held by large and enlightened communities; that feelings, which are so universal among his contemporaries, that he had supposed them instinctive, have been unknown to whole generations; that images, which have never failed to excite the ridicule of those among whom he has lived, have been thought sublime by millions. He thus loses that Chinese cast of mind, that stupid contempt for every thing beyond the wall of his celestial empire, which was the effect of his former ignorance. New associations take place among his ideas. He doubts where he formerly dogmatised. He tolerates {351}where he formerly execrated. He ceases to confound that which is universal and eternal in human passions and opinions with that which is local and temporary. This is one of the most useful effects which results from studying the literature of other countries; and it is one which the remains of Greece, composed at a remote period, and in a state of society widely different from our own, are peculiarly calculated to produce.

But, though we are sensible that great advantages may be derived from the study of the Greek language, we think that they may be purchased at too high a price: And we think that seven or eight years of the life of a man who is to enter into active life at two or three-and-twenty, is too high a price. Those are bad economists who look only to the excellence of the article for which they are bargaining, and never ask about the cost. The

cost, in the present instance, is too often the whole of that invaluable portion of time during which a fund of intellectual pleasure is to be stored up and the foundations of wisdom and usefulness laid. No person doubts that much knowledge may be obtained from the Classics. It is equally certain that much gold may be found in Spain. But it by no moans necessarily follows, that it is wise to work the Spanish mines, or to learn the ancient languages. Before the voyage of Columbus, Spain supplied all Europe with the precious metals. The discovery of America changed the state of things. New mines were found, from which gold could be procured in greater plenty, and with less labour. The old works were therefore abandoned--it being manifest those who persisted in laying out capital on them would be undersold and ruined. A new world of literature and science has also been discovered. New veins of intellectual wealth have been laid open. But a monstrous system of bounties and prohibitions compels us still to go on delving for a few glittering grains in the dark and laborious shaft of antiquity, instead of penetrating a district which would reward a less painful search with a more lucrative return. If, after the conquest of Pern, Spain had enacted that, in order to enable the old mines to maintain a competition against the new, a hundred pistoles should be given to every person who should extract an ounce of gold from them, the parallel would be complete.

We will admit that the Greek language is a more valuable language {352}than the French, the Italian, or the Spanish. But whether it be more valuable than all the three together, may be doubted; and that all the three may be acquired in less than half the time in which it is possible to become thoroughly acquainted with the Greek, admits of no doubt at all. Nor does the evil end here. Not only do the modern dialects of the Continent receive less attention than they deserve, but our own tongue, second to that of Greece alone in force and copiousness, our own literature, second to none that ever existed, so rich in poetry, in eloquence, in philosophy, is unpardonably neglected. All the nineteen

plays of Euripides are digested, from the first bubbling froth of the Hecuba to the last vapid dregs of the Electra; while our own sweet Fletcher, the second name of the modern drama, in spite of all the brilliancy of his wit, and all the luxury of his tenderness, is suffered to be neglected. The Essay on the Human Understanding is abandoned for the Theatetus and the Phaedon. We have known the dates of all the petty skirmisher, of the Peloponnesian war carefully transcribed and committed to memory, by a man who thought that Hyde and Clarendon were two different persons! That such a man has paid a dear price for his learning, will be admitted. But, it may be said, he has at least something to show for it. Unhappily he has sacrificed, in order to acquire it, the very things without which it was impossible for him to use it. He has acted like a man living in a small lodging, who, instead of spending his money in enlarging his apartments and fitting them up commodiously, should lay it all out on furniture fit only for Chatsworth or Belvoir. His little rooms are blocked up with bales of rich stuffs and heaps of gilded ornaments, which have cost more than he ean afford, yet which he has no opportunity and no room to display. Elegant and precious in themselves, they are here utterly out of place; and their possessor finds that, at a ruinous expense, he has bought nothing but inconvenience and ridicule. Who has not seen men to whom ancient learning is an absolute curse, who have laboured only to accumulate what they cannot enjoy? They come forth into the world, expecting to find only a larger university. They find that they are surrounded by people who have not the least respect for the skill with which they detect etymologies, and twist corrupt Epodes into something like meaning. Classical knowledge is indeed valued by all intelligent {353}men; but not such classical knowledge as theirs. To be prized by the public, it must be refined from its grosser particles, burnished into splendour, formed into graceful ornaments, or into current coin. Learning in the ore, learning with all the dross around it, is nothing to the common spectator. He prefers the cheapest tinsel; and

leaves the rare and valuable clod, to the few who have the skill to detect its qualities, and the curiosity to prize them.

No man, we allow, can be said to have received a complete and liberal education, unless he have acquired a knowledge of the ancient languages. But not one gentleman in fifty can possibly receive what we should call a complete and liberal education. That term includes not only the ancient languages, but those of France, Italy, Germany, and Spain. It includes mathematics, the experimental sciences, and moral philosophy. An intimate acquaintance both with the profound and polite parts of English literature is indispensable. Few of those who are intended for professional or commercial life can find time for all these studies. It necessarily follows, that some portion of them must be given up: And the question is, what portion? We say, provide for the mind as you provide for the body,--first necessaries,--then conveniences,--lastly luxuries. Under which of those heads do the Greek and Latin languages come? Surely under the last. Of all the pursuits which we have mentioned, they require the greatest sacrifice of time. He who can afford time for them, and for the others also, is perfectly right in acquiring them. He who cannot, will, if he is wise, be content to go without them. If a man is able to continue his studies till his twenty-eighth or thirtieth year, by all means let him learn Latin and Greek. If he must terminate them at one-and-twenty, we should in general advise him to be satisfied with the modern languages. If he is forced to enter into active life at fifteen or sixteen, we should think it best that he should confine himself almost entirely to his native tongue, and thoroughly imbue his mind with the spirit of its best writers. But no! The artificial restraints and encouragements which our academic system has introduced have altogether *reversed* this natural and salutary order of things. We deny ourselves what is indispensable, that we may procure what is superfluous. We act like a day-labourer who should stint himself in bread, that he might now and then treat {354}himself with a pottle of

January strawberries. Cicero tells us, in the Offices, a whimsical anecdote of Cato the Censor. Somebody asked him what was the best mode of employing capital, he said, To farm good pasture land. What the next? To farm middling pasture land. What next? To farm bad pasture land. Now the notions which prevail in England respecting classical learning seem to us very much to resemble those which the old Roman entertained with regard to his favourite method of cultivation. Is a young man able to spare the time necessary for passing through the University? Make him a good classical scholar! But a second, instead of residing at the University, must go into business when he leaves school. Make him then a tolerable classical scholar! A third has still less time for snatching up knowledge, and is destined for active employment while still a boy. Make him a bad classical scholar! If he does not become a Flaminius, or a Buchanan, he may learn to write nonsense verses. If he does not get on to Horace, he may read the first book of Cæsar. If there is not time even for such a degree of improvement, he may at least be flogged through that immemorial vestibule of learning. “Quis docet? Who teacheth? Magister docet. The master teacheth.” Would to heaven that he taught something better worth knowing!

All these evils are produced by the state of our Universities. Where they lead, those who prepare pupils for them, are forced to follow. Under a free system, the ancient languages would be less read, but quite as much enjoyed. We should not see so many lads who have a smattering of Latin and Greek, from which they derive no pleasure, and which, as soon as they are at liberty, they make all possible haste to forget. It must be owned, also, that there would be fewer young men really well acquainted with the ancient tongues. But there would be many more who had treasured up useful and agreeable information. Those who were compelled to bring their studies to an early close, would turn their attention to objects easily attainable. Those who enjoyed a longer space of literary leisure, would still exert themselves to acquire the classical

languages. They would study them, not for any direct emolument which they would expect from the acquisition, but for their own intrinsic value. Their number would be smaller, no doubt, than that of present aspirants after {355}classical honours. But they would not, like most of those aspirants, leave Homer and Demosthenes to gather dust on the shelves, as soon as the temporary purpose had been served. There would be fewer good scholars of twenty-five; but we believe that there would be quite as many of fifty.

Hitherto we have argued on the hypothesis most favourable to the Universities. We have supposed that the bounties which they offer to certain studies are fairly bestowed on those who excel. The fact however is, that they are in many cases appropriated to particular counties, parishes, or names. The effect of the former system is to encourage studies of secondary importance, at the expense of those which are entitled to preference. The effect of the latter is to encourage total idleness. It has been also asserted, that at some Colleges the distributors of fellowships and scholarships have allowed themselves to be influenced by party spirit, or personal animosity. On this point, however, we will not insist. We wish to expose the vices, not of individuals, but of the system. Indeed, in what we have hitherto written, we have generally had in our eye a College which exhibits that system in the most favourable light,--a College in which the evils which we have noticed are as much as possible alleviated by an enlightened and liberal administration,--a College not less distinguished by its opulence and splendour, than by the eminent talents of many of its members, by the freedom and impartiality of its elections, by the disposition which it has always shown to adopt improvements not inconsistent with its original constitution, and by the noble spirit with which it has supported the cause of civil and religious liberty.

We have hitherto reasoned as if all the students at our Universities learnt those things which the Universities profess to teach. But this is,

notoriously, not the fact--and the cause is evident. All who wish for degrees must reside at College; but only those who expect to obtain prizes and fellowships apply themselves with vigour to classical and mathematical pursuits. The great majority have no inducement whatever to exert themselves. They have no hope of obtaining the premium; and no value for the knowledge without the premium. For the acquisition of other kinds of knowledge the Universities afford no peculiar facilities.

Hence {356}proceeds the general idleness of collegians. Not one in ten we venture to say, ever makes any considerable proficiency in those pursuits to which every thing else is sacrificed. A very large proportion carry away from the University less of ancient literature than they brought thither. It is quite absurd to attribute such a state of tilings to the indolence and levity of youth. Nothing like it is seen elsewhere. There are idle lads, no doubt, among those who walk the hospitals, who sit at the desks of bankers, and serve at the counters of tradesmen. But what, after all, is the degree of *their* idleness, and what proportion do they bear to those who are active? Is it not the most common thing in the world, to see men who have passed their time at College in mere trifling, display the greatest energy as soon as they enter on the business of life, and become profound lawyers, skilful physicians, eminent writers? How can those things be explained, but by supposing that most of those who are compelled to reside at the Universities have no motive to learn what is taught there? Who ever employed a French master for four years without improving himself in French? The reason is plain. No man employs such a master, but from a wish to become acquainted with the language; and the same wish leads him to apply vigorously to it. Of those who go to our Universities, on the other hand, a large proportion are attracted, not by their desire to learn the things studied there, but by their wish to acquire certain privileges, which residence confers alike on the idle and on the diligent. Try the same experiment with the French language. Erect the teachers of it into a corporation. Give them the power of conferring

degrees. Enact that no person who cannot produce a certificate, attesting that he has been for a certain number of years a student at this academy, shall be suffered to keep a shop; and we will venture to predict, that there will soon be thousands, who, after having wasted their money and their time in a formal attendance on lectures and examinations, will not understand the meaning of *Parlez-vous Français?*

It is the general course of those who patronise an abuse to attribute to it every thing good which exists in spite of it. Thus, the defenders of our Universities commonly take it for granted, that we are indebted to them for all the talent which they have not been able to destroy. It is usual, when their merits {357}come under discussion, to enumerate very pompously all the great men whom they have produced; as if great men had not appeared under every system of education. Great men were trained in the schools of the Greek sophists and Arabian astrologers, of the Jesuits and the Jansenists. There were great men when nothing was taught but School Divinity and Canon Law; and there would still be great men if nothing were taught but the fooleries of Spurzheim and Swedenberg. A long list of eminent names is no more a proof of the excellence of onr Academic institutions, than the commercial prosperity of the country is a proof of the utility of restrictions in trade. No financial regulations, however absurd and pernicious, can prevent a people amongst whom property is secure, and the motive to accumulate consequently strong, from becoming rich. The energy with which every individual struggles to advance, more than counteracts the retarding force, and carries him forward, though at a slower rate, than if he were left at liberty. It is the same with restrictions which prevent the intellect from taking the direction which existing circumstances point out. They do harm. But they cannot wholly prevent other causes from producing good. In a country in which public opinion is powerful, in which talents properly directed are sure to raise their professor to distinction, ardent and aspiring minds will surmount all the obstacles which may oppose

their career. It is amongst persons who are engaged in public and professional life that genius is most likely to be developed. Of these a large portion is necessarily sent to our English Universities. It would, therefore, be wonderful if the Universities could not boast of many considerable men. Yet, after all, we are not sure whether, if we were to pass in review the Houses of Parliament and the English and Scottish Bar, the result of the investigation would be so favourable as is commonly supposed to Oxford and Cambridge. And of this we are sure, that many persons who, since they have risen to eminence, are perpetually cited as proofs of the beneficial tendency of English education, were at College never mentioned but as idle, frivolous men, fond of desultory reading, and negligent of the studies of the place. It would be. indelicate to name the living; but we may venture to speak more particularly of the dead. It is truly curious to observe the use which is made in such discussions {358}as those, of names which we acknowledge to be glorious, but in which the Colleges have no reason to glory,--that of Bacon, who reprobated their fundamental constitution; of Dryden, who abjured his *Alma Mater*, and regretted that he had passed his youth under her cure; of Locke, who was censured and expelled; of Milton, whose person was outraged at one University, and whose works were committed to the flames at the other!

That in particular cases an University education may have produced good effects, we do not dispute. But as to the great body of those who receive it, we have no hesitation in saying, that their minds permanently suffer from it. All the time which they can devote to the acquisition of speculative knowledge is wasted, and they have to enter into active life without it. They are compelled to plunge into the details of business, and are left to pick up general principles as they may. From all that we have seen and heard, we are inclined to suspect, in spite of all our patriotic prejudices, that the young men, we mean the very young men, of England, are not equal as a body to those of France, Germany, or Russia.

They reason less justly, and the subjects with which they are chiefly conversant are less manly. As they grow older, they doubtless improve. Surrounded by a free people, enlightened by a free press, with the means of knowledge placed within their reach, and the rewards of exertion sparkling in their sight, it would indeed be strange if they did not in a great measure recover the superiority which they had lost. The finished men of England may, we allow, challenge a comparison with those of any nation. Yet our advantages are not so great that we can afford to sacrifice any of them. We do not proceed so rapidly, that we can prudently imitate the example of Lightfoot in the Nursery Tale, who never ran a race without tying his legs. The bad effects of our University system may be traced to the very last, in many eminent and respectable men. They have acquired great skill in business, they have laid up great stores of information. But something is still wanting. The superstructure is vast and splendid; but the foundations are unsound. It is evident that their knowledge is not systematised; that, however well they may argue on particular points, they have not that amplitude and intrepidity of intellect which it is the first object of education to produce. They hate abstract reasoning. {359}The very name of theory is terrible to them. They seem to think that the use of experience is not to lead men to the knowledge of general principles, but to prevent them from ever thinking about general principles at all. They may play at bo-peep with truth; but they never get a full view of it in all its proportions. The cause we believe is, that they have passed those years during which the mind frequently acquires the character which it ever after retains, in studies, which, when exclusively pursued, have no tendency to strengthen or expand it.

From these radical defects of the old foundations the London University is free. It cannot cry up one study or cry down another. It has no means of bribing one man to learn what it is of no use to him to know, or of exacting a mock attendance from another who learns nothing at all. To be prosperous, it must be useful.

We would not be too sanguine. But there are signs of these times, and principles of human nature, to which we trust as firmly as ever any ancient astrologer trusted to the rules of his science. Judging from these, we will venture to cast the horoscope of the infant Institution. We predict, that the clamour by which it has been assailed will die away,--that it is destined to a long, a glorious, and a beneficent existence,--that, while the spirit of its system remains unchanged, the details will vary with the varying necessities and facilities of every age,--that it will be the model of many future establishments--that even those haughty foundations which now treat it with contempt, will in some degree feel its salutary influence,--and that the approbation of a great people, to whose wisdom, energy and virtue, its exertions will have largely contributed, will confer on it a dignity more imposing than any which it could derive from the most lucrative patronage, or the most splendid ceremonial.

Even those who think our hopes extravagant, must own that no positive harm has been even suggested as likely to result from this Institution. All the imputed sins of its founders are sins of omission. Whatever may be thought of them, it is surely better that something should be omitted, than that nothing should be done. The Universities it can injure in one way only--by surpassing them. This danger no sincere admirer of these bodies can apprehend. As for those who, believing that the project really tends to the good of {360}the country, continue to throw obloquy upon it--and that there are such men we believe--to them we have nothing to say. We have no hope of converting them; no wish to revile them. Let them quibble, declaim, sneer, calumniate. Their punishment is to be what they are.

For us, our part has been deliberately chosen--and shall be manfully sustained. We entertain a firm conviction that the principles of liberty, as in government and trade, so also in education, are all-important to the happiness of mankind. To the triumph of those principles we look

forward, not, we trust, with a fanatical confidence, but assuredly with a cheerful and steadfast hope. Their nature may be misunderstood. Their progress may be retarded. They may be maligned, derided, nay at times exploded, and apparently forgotten. But we do, in our souls, believe that they are strong with the strength, and quick with the vitality of truth; that when they fall, it is to rebound; that when they recede, it is to spring forward with greater elasticity; that when they seem to perish, there are the seeds of renovation in their very decay--and that their influence will continue to bless distant generations, when infamy itself shall have ceased to rescue from oblivion the arts and the names of those who have opposed them, the dupe, the dissembler, the bigot, the hireling--the buffoon and the sarcasm, the liar and the lie!

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CAPACITIES OP NEGROES. (1)

(*Edinburgh Review*, March, 1827.)

It {361}was not till a short time back that we entertained the slightest intention of criticising the speculations of Major Moody. We had supposed that they would of course pass in their infancy to that Limbo which is ordained for Laureate Odes, old Court Kalendars, and Sermons printed at the request of Congregations. That a Commissioner should write a dull Report, and that the Government should give him a place for it, are events by no means so rare as to call for notice. Of late, however, we have with great surprise discovered, that the books of the Major have been added to the political canon of Downing-Street, and that it has become quite a fashion among statesmen who are still in their novitiate, to talk about physical causes and the philosophy of labour. As the doctrines which, from some inexplicable cause, have acquired so much popularity, appear to us both false and pernicious, we shall attempt, with as much brevity as possible, to expose their absurdity.

There are stars, it is said, of which the light has not yet travelled through the space that separates them from the eye of man; and it is possible that the blaze of glory which dazzles all the young politicians between Charing-Cross and Westminster Hall may not yet have reached our more

(1) Art. VI. 1. *Papers relating to Captured Negroes. No. I. Tortola* Schedules. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 16th, March 1825.

2. *Further Papers relating to Captured Negroes. No. II. Separate Report of John Dougan, Esq. No. III. Separate Report of Major Thomas Moody.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 10th Mardi 1825.

3. _Second Part of Major Moody's Report_. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 24th February 1820.

remote {362}readers. In order, therefore, that our remarks on the Report of Major Moody may he clearly understood, we shall give a short account of the circumstances under which it appeared.

By the Act which abolished the trade in slaves, the King was empowered to make regulations for the employment and support of Negroes, who, under the provisions of that Act, or in the course of hostilities with foreign States, might be rescued from their kidnappers. Some of these liberated Africans were, in consequence, admitted into the army and the navy. Others were bound apprentices in the colonies: and of these last many were settled at Tortola.

In the year 1821, the House of Commons presented an address to the King, requesting that commissioners might be sent to ascertain the condition of these people, and to report it to the Government. Major Moody was selected for this purpose by the Colonial Office. Mr. Dougan, a gentleman to whose talents and integrity the Major bears the highest testimony, was joined with him in the commission. But Mr. Dougan, whatever his good qualities may have been, was under the influence of some unhappy prejudices, from which his colleague appears to have been wholly free, he had been led to adopt the extravagant notion that the Africans were his fellow-creatures; and this delusion betrayed him into errors which Major Moody, to his eternal honour, endeavours to palliate, but which a less candid and amiable censor would have

stigmatized with the severest reprehension. Our readers will be shocked to hear that an English gentleman actually desired a black apprentice, during a long examination, to take a seat! and they will be touched by the delicacy and generosity of the Major, who mentions this disgrace! Its occurrence “only,” as he says, “to show the bias on the mind of his colleague when one of the African race was concerned with a white person.” (1)

At length some female Africans in the service of a person named Maclean, were brought before the Commissioners. By their statement, and by the confession of the master himself, it appeared that they had been cruelly treated. Maclean, too, it appeared, had no legal right to them: for they had been originally apprenticed to another person, and the

(1) First Part of Major Moody’s Report, page 103.

indentures {363}had never been transferred. Mr. Dougan thought it desirable to take advantage of this circumstance, and at once to place them in a more comfortable situation; and he prevailed on his colleague to concur with him in recommending the case to the particular consideration of the collector. In the mean time, however, Maclean wrote to the Commissioners, requesting them to revise their proceedings, and most impudently telling them, at the same time, *that he had whipped the apprentices with tamarind switches for daring to bear evidence against him!* Mr. Dougan seems to have imagined that such conduct was grossly insulting to the Commissioners, and to the government which employed them. He probably thought, too, that to re-examine persons who had been flogged for what they had stated on a former examination, would be to violate every principle of equity and reason. On this point, it appears that Major Moody was of a different opinion; and conceived that truth was likely enough to be obtained from a witness who had just learned that if his evidence be disagreeable to the accused party, he will undergo severe chastisement. A rupture took place. The apprentices, we should perhaps

say the slaves, remained with Maclean; and Mr. Dougan returned to England.

But we really cannot continue to speak ironically on a subject so serious. We do earnestly and gravely assure Major Moody, that we think his conduct, on this occasion, most unjust and unreasonable. Lord Bathurst seems to have entertained the same opinion: For in consequence of orders sent out from England, the wretched women were taken from Maclean and apprenticed to another master.

Mr. Dougan now returned to the West Indies; and the disputes between him and his colleague recommenced. At length both were recalled. Mr. Dougan drew up a report of the proceedings under the commission. The Major refused to concur in it, and presented a separate statement in answer to it. Mr. Dougan, while labouring under a fatal malady, prepared a reply. This document has, since his death, been transmitted to the Colonial Office, and will, of course, be published with all expedition.

Mr. Dougan thought it sufficient to perform the duty with which he was charged. His report is therefore, what it professes to be, an account of the condition of the liberated Africans. {364}But the genius of the Major was not to be confined within limits so narrow. He had command, without stint, of the public paper and the publie type. He conceived that the opportunity was not to be lost--that now or never was the time to be a philosopher like his neighbours, and to have a system of his own, which might be called after his name. The history of the liberated Africans forms, therefore, a mere episode in his plan. His report is, in substance, a defence of West Indian slavery, on certain new principles, which constitute what he is pleased to call the Philosophy of Labour.

His theory has met with a very flattering reception from those who are favourably inclined to the Colonial system, because they dread innovation, because they hate the saints, or because they have mortgages on West Indian plantations. Unable themselves to defend their opinion,

but obstinately determined not to renounce it, they are pleased with a writer who abounds in phrases which sound as if they meant something, and which, in the chat of a drawing-room, or in the leading article of a newspaper, supply the place of a reason very creditably.

We come to the consideration of the Report with no such bias upon our minds, and we have, therefore, formed a very different estimate of it. We think that it is, in matter and manner, the worst state-paper that we ever saw. The style is the jargon of a tenth-rate novelist, engrafted on that of a tenth-rate pamphleteer. It abounds with that vague diction which the political writers of France have invented, and by which they often contrive to keep up appearances in spite of the most abject mental poverty. At certain distances, and in certain lights, this paltry and pinchbeck logic serves its purpose respectably; and to this, unquestionably, the Major owes the greater part of his reputation. The highest compliment which we can, with any sincerity, pay to him, is to say, that he has some faults in common with Montesquieu--a writer whom he evidently regards with great admiration. He calls one of the silliest remarks of the lively president profound--an epithet which would have amazed us if we had not recollected that the terms in which we describe magnitudes, whether material or intellectual, are only relative,--that the Grildrig of Brobdignag may be the Quinbus Flestrin of Lilliput. The theories of Montesquieu are gone where the {365}theories of the Major will soon go. But though Montesquieu could not keep his doctrines alive, he understood how to embalm them. Their mummies are beyond all price. The mouldering remains are valued, for the sake of the intricate folds in which they are swathed up, the sweet and pungent spices with which they are seasoned, and the gilded hieroglyphics with which they are emblazoned. The Major has no such skill. Abundance of italics, and occasional flowers of speech from the Emmelines and Adelines of the Minerva Press, are the only ornaments which set off his speculations. If our object were to render him ridiculous, we could easily

fill our pages with solecisms, with affected phrases, with sentences of which the obscurity would leave the most sagacious interpreter at a fault. But this is not our intention. We shall direct our attacks against the great principles of his theory. To find these out, indeed, is no easy task. For the work has neither beginning nor end. The author, instead of taking the trouble to state his propositions, and class his arguments for himself, has left the whole of that task to his opponents, and has made it as difficult as possible by the most elaborate artifice of disorder. We shall do our best, however, to perform it faithfully, and to separate the most important passages from much curious matter concerning the feudal system--the chisel of Phidias--the marriage in Cana of Galilee--the difference between Theory and Practice--the choice of Hercules--the peace and happiness of rural life--the rape of the Sabines--the Supreme Being--and Major Moody himself.

The first great principle, then, which the Major professes to have discovered is this, that there exists between the White and Black races an instinctive and unconquerable aversion, which must forever frustrate all hopes of seeing them unite in one society on equal terms. We shall consider in succession the facts from which he draws this bold conclusion.

By the constitution of Hayti, it seems, no white man of any nation can be a master or proprietor in that island. From this circumstance the Major deduces the following inferences.

"*It seems as if each party, when in power, acts as if it was mutually thought the two races could not exist together, in the same community, with equal political powers, from the operation of some powerful causes, {366}which do not appear to have been felt in England in former ages, when lier inhabitants were composed of freemen and slaves, or when national distinctions among people living in the same country formed a*

political barrier between Britons and Romans, or Saxons and Normans."(1)

Moreover a young Haytian, named Moyse, about thirty years ago, complained of the attention which Toussaint Louverture paid to the interests of the Europeans, and declared that he should never like the whites till they should restore to him the eye which he had lost in battle, with them! This last important anecdote, the Major prints in italics, as quite decisive. (2) The poor Haytian must have been best acquainted with the origin of his own feelings; and, as he ascribed them to a cause which might well account for them, it is difficult to divine why any other should be assigned. The liberality of Toussaint, also, is at least as strong an argument against the hypothesis of Major Moody, as the animosity of Moyse can be in its favour.

From the law which declares white men incapable of becoming proprietors in Hayti, nothing can be inferred. Such prohibitions are exceedingly foolish; but they have existed, as every person knows who knows any thing of history, in cases where no natural antipathy can be supposed to have produced them. We need not refer to the measures which the Kings of Spain adopted against their Moorish subjects--to that tyranny of nation over nation which has, in every age, been the curse of Asia--or to the jealous policy which excludes strangers, of all races, from the interior of China and Japan. Our own country will furnish an example strictly in point. By the common law of England, no alien whatever can hold land, even as a tenant. The natives of Scotland remained under this incapacity, till the two divisions of the island were united under James the First: and even then, the national prejudice was strong against the removal of the disability. The House of Commons was decidedly averse to it. The Court, in consequence, had recourse to a measure grossly unconstitutional. The Judges were persuaded to *declare* that to be law which the Parliament could not be persuaded to *make* law; and even thus

it was found impossible to remove the restriction from Scotchmen born before the Union of the Crowns.

(1) Major Moody's Second Report, p. 29.

(2) Ibid. p. 45.

The {367}Major ought to be well acquainted with these proceedings. For Lord Bacon, of whom he professes himself a disciple, appeared as counsel for the post-nati. It is amusing to consider what the feelings of that illustrious man would have been, if some half-taught smatterer of his philosophy had risen to oppose him with such arguments as these. "The English can never amalgamate with any foreign nation. The existence and the popularity of such a law as this sufficiently prove that some powerful cause operates upon our countrymen, which does not act elsewhere. Our ancestors always felt that, although in other countries foreigners may be permitted and even encouraged by the natives to settle among them, no such mixture could take place here. I have been credibly informed also, that a Scotchman whose eye was struck out in a fray forty years back, swore that he never could bear the sight of a Southern after." With what a look would Sir Francis have risen to annihilate such an argument! What mirth would have shone in his eyes! What unsavoury similitudes would have risen to his lips! With what confusion would the dabbler in experimental science have shrunk from a conflict with that all-embracing and all-penetrating mind, which fancy had elevated but not inebriated, which professional study had rendered subtle, but could not render narrow. As the Major seems very willing to be an experimental philosopher, if he knew how to set about it, we will give him one general rule, of which he seems never to have heard. It is this. When the phenomena can be explained by circumstances which, on grounds distinct from those phenomena, we know to exist, we must not resort to hypothetical solutions. We are not entitled to attribute the hatred which the Haytian Blacks may have felt towards the Whites to any latent

physical cause, till we have shown that the ordinary principles of human nature will not explain it. Is it not natural, then, that men should hate those by whom they have been held in slavery, and to whom they have subsequently been opposed in a war of peculiar ferocity? Is it not also perfectly agreeable to that law of association, from which so large a portion of our pains and pleasures is derived, that what we have long regarded as a distinguishing badge of those whom we hate should itself become hateful to us? If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the aversion {368}which the Haytian Negroes are said to entertain towards the Whites is at once explained.

The same remark applies to all that the Major has said respecting the state of public feeling in North America. The facts of the case he has stated quite correctly. It is true that, even in those States of the Union which have abolished slavery, the free Blacks are still regarded with disgust and contempt. The most benevolent inhabitants of New England and New York, conceive that liberty itself will scarcely be a blessing to the African, unless measures be taken for removing him to some country where he may not be reminded of his inferiority by daily insults and privations. Hence Major Moody thought himself, as he tells us,--"*justified in the inference, that some powerful causes must be in action, and that those of a physical nature had not been overcome by mere legal exactments*." (1)

It cannot be doubted that some powerful cause has been in action. But that it is a physical cause, is not quite so clear. The old laws have no doubt produced a state of public feeling, which their repeal cannot at once correct. In all the States the Negro colour *has been* the livery of servitude. In some it still *is* so. The connexion between the different commonwealths of the confederation is so close, that the state of feeling in one place must be influenced by the state of the laws in another. This consideration is surely sufficient to explain all the circumstances to which the Major refers. It is for him to show, that an aversion for which

slavery alone will sufficiently account is really the effect of *blackness*. He would, we believe, find it as easy to prove that there is something *naturally* and universally loathsome in the cut and colour of a prison uniform.

That the complexion of the free African renders his condition more unfortunate, we acknowledge. But why does it produce this effect? Not, surely, because *it is* the degrading circumstance, but because it is clear, instantaneous, and irrefragable *evidence* of the degrading circumstance. It is the only brand which cannot be counterfeited, and which cannot be effaced. It is borne by slaves and their descendants; and it is borne by no others. Let the Major prove, that, in any society where personal bondage has never existed, the

(1) Second Part of Major Moody's Report, p. 27.

whites {369}and blacks have felt this mutual dislike. Till he can show this, he does nothing.

But, it seems, an anonymous writer in South America, some years ago, declared, that the blacks never could amalgamate with the whites. (1) That a man who had passed his life among negro *slaves* should transfer to their colour the feelings of contempt with which he regarded their condition, and the mean vices to which that condition necessarily gave birth, was perfectly natural. That he should suppose a feeling, of which he could not remember the origin, to be instinctive, was also natural. The most profound thinkers have fallen into similar errors. But that a man in England should believe all this, only because a man at Bogota chose to write it, argues a strange degree of credulity. Such vague authority is not sufficient to establish a fact. To quote it in support of a general proposition, is an insult to common sense. The expressions of this Columbian prove only, what the refusal of the Major to let a negro sit in his presence proves as satisfactorily, that there are very weak and very prejudiced people in the world.

Feelings exactly similar to those which are unhappily so common among the whites of the United States, have often existed in cases where it is impossible to attribute them to physical causes. From a time beyond the researches of historians, an impassable gulf has separated the Brahmin from the Paria. The Jews were long regarded by the Spaniards and Portuguese with as much contempt and hatred as the white North American feels for the man of colour. The cases, indeed, are strikingly similar. The national features and rites of the Hebrews, like the black skin and woolly hair of the Africans, visibly distinguished them from the rest of the community. Every individual of the race bore about him the badges of the synagogue. Baptism itself could not wash away the distinction. Conversion might save him from the flames; but the stigma was indelible--he bore it to the grave--he bequeathed it to his children--his descendants, as long as their genealogy could be traced, were objects of scorn to the poorest Castilian peasant, who gloried in the name of an old Christian.

But we will not multiply examples in a case so plain. We hasten to another argument, on which Major Moody

(1) Second Part of Major Moody's Report, p. 23. 24

dwells {370}with peculiar complacency. At this, indeed, we do not much wonder. It is entirely his own. He is the first writer who ever used it, and we venture to prophesy that he will be the last. We speak of his remarks on the influence of the sexual passion. We will give his own words:--

"_In such committees as I have referred to, an observer will not fail to discover the want of a certain class of sympathies, which are daily seen in action when men of the same race live together, even in republics, like the United States of America, although a portion of the community consisted of men of different nations and habits, but yet resembling each other in external form, colour, features, &c.

“I allude to the extraordinary rarity of virtuous unions having taken place between the males and females of the pure Negroes and the pure Whites in America. I certainly have heard of such unions as in certain classes of society are seen in London; but in America, they were considered rather as very extraordinary occurrences, particularly if the male should be a pure negro, and the female a pure white. On the other hand, when the female is an African, lust, aided by fear or avarice, has often led to an illicit union between the sexes....

“In the New World of America, virtuous unions between the extreme colours of black and white are always considered something in violation of the ordinary sympathies which spring from a pure affection, and therefore derogatory to the feelings of caste; for even the free coloured females, I understand, would have a reluctance, if advanced in civilization, to form a virtuous union with a pure negro....

“Some of the intelligent free negroes of the United States, with whom I often conversed, for the express purpose of personal observation, felt the ban under which they were put, by the influence of prejudice, as they considered it, after the laws of the country had declared them free, and equal to any other citizen of the State; and, in the confidence inspired by my inquiries about their situation, I was often asked if, in England, white women did not marry black men? And, with apparent simplicity, it was inquired why the American white women were so prejudiced against black men?...

“Those who merely refer the degraded state of the free Africans or blacks to their having been formerly slaves, and leave out of their consideration the consequences arising from physical differences in form, colour, feature, and smell, influencing those general ideas of beauty, creating that passion of love that most commonly leads to a virtuous union of the sexes of different nations, must be considered as having taken a very narrow view of the question, from the prevalent custom of merely

referring to moral causes alone, and omitting all references to those of a physical nature, though still more powerful in their effect._” (1)

This extraordinary argument is concluded by a touching representation of the refinement which modesty gives to pleasure, and of the happiness of being cherished and beloved, which, we hope, will edify the young gentlemen of the

(1) Second Part of Major Moody’s Report, pages 19 and 20.

Colonial {371}Office, but which has, we think, little to do with the question. This, therefore, we omit, as well as the pious appeal to the God of Truth, which follows it.

Is it possible that the Major does not perceive how directly all his statement leads towards a conclusion, diametrically opposite to that at which, by some inconceivable process, he has managed to arrive? We will give him an answer. But we really hope that he is the only one of our readers who will need it.

The passion of the sexes is a natural appetite. Marriage is a civil and religious institution. Where, therefore, between two classes of people, the passion exists, but marriage is not practised, it is evident that nature impels them to unite, and that acquired feelings only keep them asunder.

Now, Major Moody just reverses this mode of reasoning. Because the Whites form with the Blacks those illicit unions, to which the motive is physical, but do not form those legitimate unions to which the motive is moral, he actually infers that the cause which separates the races is not moral, but physical! In the same manner, we presume, he would maintain, that a man who dines heartily without saying grace, is deficient, not in devotion, but in appetite.

The story which he tells respecting the free blacks, with whom he conversed in the United States, is alone sufficient to show the absurdity

of his hypothesis. From his own account, it is plain that these blacks had no antipathy to white women. The repugnance was all on one side. And on which side? On that of the privileged class, of those whose superiority was till lately recognised by law, and is still established by custom. Is this a phenomenon so extraordinary that we must have recourse to a new instinct to account for it? Or may it not be explained into the same causes which in England prevent a lady from marrying a tinker, though the tinker would gladly marry the lady?

In the last century, the dissipated nobles of France lavished their wealth with the wildest profusion on actresses and opera girls. The favour of a distinguished heroine of this class, was thought to be cheaply purchased at the price of jewels, gilded coaches, palaces blazing with mirrors, or even of some drops of aristocratic blood. Yet the poorest gentleman in the kingdom would not have married Clairon. This, Major Moody would say, proves that men who wear swords, feather, {372}and red-heeled shoes, entertain a natural aversion to women who recite verses out of Andromaque and Tartuffe. *We* think that we could hit on a different explanation.

It happed, indeed, rather unluckily, that, of the phenomena which the Major recounts, there is none which cannot be satisfactorily explained into moral cause, and none which can possibly be explained into physical causes. White women, says he, much more rarely form licentious connections with black men, than white men with black women. And this is a proof that the aversion of the two races is natural. Why, if it were natural, does it not influence both sexes alike? The principles to which these facts must be referred, are principles which we see in daily operation among ourselves. Men of the highest rank in our country, are frequently engaged in low amours. The wife or daughter of an English gentleman very seldom forgets herself so far. But who ever thought of attributing this to physical causes?

The Major, however, is resolved not to leave himself unrefuted in any point. “Even the free coloured females,” says he, “would have a reluctance, if advanced in civilization, to form a virtuous union with a pure negro.” He cannot pretend to believe that any physical cause operates here: and, indeed, distinctly attributes the reluctance of the coloured female to her advancement in civilization. That is to say, he distinctly acknowledges that certain acquired habits, and certain advantages of rank and education, are alone sufficient to produce those effects which, according to his own theory laid down in the same page, can only result from natural organization.

The Major tells us, the colour, the features, and the other peculiarities of the black race, excite the disgust of Europeans. Here his testimony is at variance with that of almost all the writers on the subject with whom we are acquainted. Travellers and historians innumerable, have asserted, that white men in the torrid zone, generally prefer black females to those of their own country, Raynal, if we remember rightly, gives a very rational explanation of the circumstance. It is needless, however, to attack the Major with authorities from other writers. He may easily be refuted out of his own mouth. How can the physical peculiarities of {373}the African race be more offensive in the wife than in the concubine? It is quite needless to inquire into the origin of the different opinions which people, in different situations, form on the subject of beauty. It is quite enough for us at present to discover, that if a man does not think a woman too ugly to make her his mistress, it cannot surely be on account of her ugliness that he does not make her his wife.

In England white women not unfrequently marry black men. We have ourselves known several such instances. Yet if the external appearance of the negro were such as naturally to inspire aversion, that feeling would be more strongly excited in a country of which the inhabitants are not familiarized by use to the revolting spectacle. This consideration alone would satisfy us that the real cause of the horror with which the Whites in

some other countries shrink from the thought of marriage with an African is to be found, not in physical, but in political and moral circumstances. We entertain little doubt, that when the laws which create a distinction between the races shall be completely abolished, a very few generations will mitigate the prejudices which those laws have created, and which they still maintain. At that time, the black girl, who, as a slave, would have attracted a white lover, will, when her father has given her a good education, and can leave her a hundred thousand dollars, find no difficulty in procuring a white husband.

We have perhaps dwelt too long on the feeble and inconsistent arguments which the Major has urged in support of his hypothesis. But we were desirous, before we entered on that part of his work which relates to questions of more difficulty, to furnish our readers with a specimen of his logical powers. They will perhaps be inclined to suspect, that a man who reasons thus on one subject, is not very likely to reason justly on any.

We now come to the second great principle which Major Moody conceives himself to have established. It may be stated thus. The inhabitants of countries lying within the torrid zone ean be induced to engage in steady agricultural labour only by necessity. The barrenness of the soil, or the density of the population, may create that necessity. In Hindostan, for example, the peasant must work or starve. But where a few inhabitants are thinly scattered over the {374}country, they will be able to procure a subsistence with very little exertion. With a subsistence they will be content. The heat renders agricultural labour so painful that those who are their own masters will prefer the enjoyment of repose to any of the comforts which they might be able to procure by regular industry. For this evil the only remedy is coercion, or, in other words, slavery. Such are the elements of the new philosophy of labour.

It may be doubted whether these doctrines, if admitted, would amount to a vindication of slavery. It does not appear to us quite certain that we are

justified in compelling our fellow-creatures to engage in a particular employment, merely because that employment gives them exquisite pain. If a large portion of the human race be really placed in regions where rest and shade are the most delightful luxuries which they can enjoy, a benevolent man may perhaps be of opinion that they ought to be suffered to doze in their huts, except when necessity may drive them to employ an occasional hour in angling, gathering berries, or scattering a little rice in the marshes. We are entitled to demand that this point shall be saved to us; but we do not foresee that we shall need it. We assert, and will prove, that Major Moody has not established his theory; that he has not even raised a presumption in its favour; and that the facts on which he relies are either such as have no relation to the question, or such as occur daily in every climate of the globe.

We will begin with the case with which Major Moody would have done well both to begin and end--the case of the liberated Africans who were placed in Tortola. We must premise, that no experiment was ever made under circumstances less favourable. The Negroes, when received from the holds of the slave ships, were in a state of extreme weakness and disease. Of six hundred and seventeen Blacks who were taken from the Venus and the Manuella, two hundred and twenty-two died before they could be settled as apprentices. (1) The constitutions of many who survived were completely broken. By the masters to whom they were apprenticed, they were frequently treated with inhumanity. The laws and institutions of Tortola, framed for

(1) Mr. Dougan’s Report, p. 7.

a {375}society made up of masters and slaves, were, as the Major himself states, by no means fitted for the regulation of such a class of persons as the apprenticed Africans. The poorer freemen of every colour felt an enmity towards people who were about to intrude themselves into those trades of which they possessed a monopoly. The planters were not

inclined to look with favour on the first fruits of the abolition. Apprentices are, in every part of the world, noted for idleness. The degree of that idleness is in general proportioned to the length of the term for which they are bound to an unrequited service. The man who expects soon to be his own master, may exert himself to acquire skill in the business by which he is to subsist. He, on the other hand, who expects to waste half of his life in labour without remuneration, will generally do as little as he possibly can. The liberated Africans were most injudiciously apprenticed for fourteen years, and some even for a longer time. They had neither the motive of the freeman, nor that of the slave. They could not legally demand wages. They could not legally be subjected to the driver. Under these disadvantages was the trial made. And what was the result?

Major Moody examined into the conduct of sixty-one apprenticed negroes who had been rescued from the Manuella. The masters and mistresses were carefully interrogated. It appears from the schedules signed by the Major himself, that good characters were given to forty. Nine only appeared to be idle and disorderly. With respect to twelve, no decisive information was obtained. A similar inquiry took place respecting fifty-five apprentices who had formed a part of the cargo of the Venus. Good accounts were received of forty. Only six were described as idle and disorderly.

Among sixty-five negroes who had been taken from the Candelario, there was not a single instance of grossly bad conduct. Fifty-seven received fair characters for honesty and industry.

Lastly, of one hundred and ten negroes who had been on board of the Atrevido, only four are characterized as decidedly worthless. Nine may be considered as doubtful. A favourable report is given of the remaining ninety-seven.

These facts, as we have said, we find in the papers signed by the Major himself. He has not, it is true, thought it necessary {376}to give us the result of his inquiries in the Report so compendiously as we now exhibit it. He dwells at great length on particular cases which prove nothing. He fills page after page with the nonsense of planters who had no apprentices, who evidently knew nothing about the apprentices, and who, in general terms, proving nothing but their own malevolence, characterized the whole race as idle, disorderly, quarrelsome, drunken, greedy. But, from the beginning to the end of the Report, he has not been able to spare three lines for the simple fact, that four fifths of these vilified people receive excellent characters from their actual employers, from those who must have been best acquainted with their disposition, and who would have lost most by their idleness. Whoever wishes to know how Daniel Quabott broke his wife's nose--how Penelope glum whipped a slave who had the yaws, how the Major, seventeen years ago, went without his supper in Guiana--how the arts and sciences proceeded northward from Carthage till they were stopped by the frozen zone, may find in the Report all this interesting information, and much more of the same kind. But those who wish to know that which Major Moody was commissioned to ascertain, and which it was his peculiar duty to state, must turn over three hundred folio pages of schedules. The Report does not, as far as we have been able to discover, give the most distant hint of the discoveries which they will make there.

We have no idea of charging the Major with intentional unfairness. But his prejudices really seem to have blinded him as to the effect of the evidence which he had himself collected. He hints that his colleague had privately prepared the apprentices for the examination. Of the justice of this charge we shall be better able to judge when the answer of Mr. Dougan shall make its appearance. But be it well founded or not, it cannot affect *our* argument. The Major does not pretend to insinuate, that any arts were practised with *the masters*, and it is on the testimony of the

masters alone that we are willing to rest our case. Indeed, the evidence which was collected by the Major in the absence of his colleague, and which we must therefore suppose to be perfectly pure, tends to the same effect, and would alone be sufficient to show, that the apprentices have, as a body, conducted themselves in a manner which, under any circumstances, would have been most satisfactory.

It {377}is perfectly true, that a knot of slave-owners, forming the legislature of Tortola, petitioned the Government to remove these apprentices from the island. From internal evidence, from the peculiar cant in which the petition abounds, and from the sprinkling of bad grammar which adorns it, we are half inclined to suspect that it is the Major's own handywork. At all events, it is curious to see how he reasons on it. It is curious to see how the Major reasons on this fact:--

"_Doubtless, the legislature of Tortola may be mistaken in their opinions; but the mere fact of their agreeing to sign such a petition, shows they really did think, that the labour of the African apprentices, when free, would not be useful to them or the colonists generally.

"And this fact alone, my Lord, is calculated to excite important reflections, as to the character of the free Africans, for industry in West Indian agriculture.

"Is it probable, that mere prejudice against the colour of a man's skin could ever induce anybody of people, like the Tortola petitioners, to make a request so apparently absurd, as that of removing from their colony a numerous body of Africans, consisting of able bodied men and women, If they were as willing as they were capable of working, and increasing the value of the land now given to pasturage, for want of cultivators to be employed therein._" (1)

We earnestly request our readers to observe the consistency of Major Moody. When his object is to prove, that whites and blacks cannot

amalgamate on equal terms, in one political society, he exaggerates every circumstance which tends to keep them asunder. The physical differences between the races, he tells us, practically defeat benevolent laws. No Act of Parliament, no order in Council, can surmount the difficulty. (2) Where these differences exist, the principles of republican equality are forgotten by the strongest republican. Marriage becomes an unnatural prostitution. The Haytian refuses to admit the white to possess property within the sphere of negro domination. The most humane and enlightened citizen of the United States, can discover no means of benefiting the free African, but by sending him to a distance from men of European blood. “I should ill-perform my duty,” says the Major, “if I suppressed all mention of a physical cause like this, which in practice is found to have an effect so powerful, however the philanthropist

(1) First Part of Major Moody’s Report, p. 125.

(2) Second Part of Major Moody’s Report, p. 20 and 21

{378}or the philosopher may regret it, and however it may be beyond their power to remove it by legislative means.” (1) But, when it is desirable to prove the idleness of the free African, this omnipotent physical cause, this instinct against which the best and wisest men struggle in vain, which counteracts the attraction of sex, and defies the authority of law, sinks into a “mere prejudice against the colour of a man’s skin,” an idle fancy, which never could induce any body of people to remove able bodied men and women from their country, if those men and women were willing to work. Are all the free negroes of North America infirm, or are they all unwilling to work? They live in a temperate climate, and to them the Major’s theory does not apply. Yet the whites are subscribing to transport them to another country. Why should we suppose the planters of Tortola to be superior to feelings which some of the most respectable men in the world are disposed to

gratify, by sending thousands of people, at a great expense, from a country greatly understocked with hands?

It is true that the apprenticed Africans were not employed in the cultivation of the soil. The cause is evident. They could not legally be so employed. The Older in Council under the authority of which they were put out to service, provided that no woman should be employed in tillage. The blank form of indenture sent out by the government contained a similar restriction with regard to the males.

We are, however, inclined to believe with the Major, that these people, if they had been left to take their own course, would not have employed themselves in agriculture. Those who have become masters of their time, rarely do so employ themselves. We will go further. We allow that very few of the free blacks in our West Indian Islands, will undergo the drudgery of cultivating the ground. Major Moody seems to think that, when this is grunted, all his principles follow of course. But we can by no means agree with him. In order to prove that the natives of tropical countries entertain a peculiar aversion to agricultural labour, it is by no means sufficient to show that certain freemen, living in the torrid zone, do not choose to engage in agricultural labour. It is, we humbly conceive, necessary also to show, that the wages of agricultural labour are, at the place and time in

(1) Second Part of Major Moody’s Report, p. 21.

question, {379}at least as high as those which can be obtained by industry of another description. It by no means follows, that a man feels an insurmountable dislike to the business of setting canes, because he will not set eanes for sixpence a day, when he can earn a shilling by making baskets. We might as well say, that the English people dislike agricultural labour, because Major Moody prefers making systems to making ditches.

Obvious as these considerations are, it is perfectly clear that Major Moody has overlooked them. From the Appendix to his own Report it appears, that in every West Indian island the wages of the artisan are much greater than those of the cultivator. In Tortola, for example, a carpenter earns three shillings sterling a day, a cartwright or a cooper four shillings and sixpence, a sawyer six shillings; an ablebodied field negro, under the most advantageous circumstances, nine pounds a year, about seven pence a day, allowing for holidays. And because a free African prefers six shillings to seven pence, we are told that he has a natural and invincible aversion to agriculture!--because he prefers wealth to poverty, we are to conclude that he prefers repose to wealth. Such is the mode of reasoning which the Major designates as the philosophy of labour.

But, says the Major, all employments, excepting those of the cultivator and the domestic servant, are only occasional. There is little demand for the labour of the carpenter, the cooper, and the sawyer. Let us suppose the demand to be so incredibly small, that the carpenter can obtain work only one day in six, the cooper one day in nine, and the sawyer one day in twelve; still the amount of their earnings will be greater than if they broke clods almost daily through the whole year. Of two employments which yield equal wages, the inhabitants of all countries, both within and without the tropics, will choose that whieh requires the least labour Major Moody seems throughout his Report to imagine, that people in the temperate zone work for the sake of working; that they consider labour, not as an evil to be endured for the sake of a good produced by it, but as a blessing, from which the wages are a sort of drawback; that they would rather work three days for a shilling, than one day for half a crown. The case, he may be assured, is by no means such as he supposes. If he will make proper inquiries he will {380}learn, that, even where the thermometer stands at the lowest, no man will choose a laborious employment, when he can obtain equal remuneration with less trouble in

another line. But it, is unnecessary to resort to this argument; for it is perfectly clear, on Major Moody's own showing, that the demand for mechanical industry, though occasional and small, is still sufficient to render the business of an artisan much more lucrative than that of a field labourer.

"I have shown," says he, "that the sugar-planter himself, obtaining 287 days labour on the very cheapest terms, could not have afforded to give more than about 9l. per annum for labourers, and therefore, that he never could hope to induce any liberated African to work steadily for such wages, when the liberated African could obtain from 15l. to 21l. per annum by the irregular labour of occasionally cutting firewood, grass, or catching fish, &c....

"This is the most favourable view of the case; for the fact is, the sugar-planter, on the very best soils in Tortola, could only a fiord to give 91. per annum; but in soils of average fertility, he could only afford 6l. 15s. per annum to the labourer, even if the planter gave up all profits on his stock, consisting of lands, buildings, and machinery. If the liberated Negro would not labour steadily for 9l. per annum, it is clear he would be less likely to work for 6l. 15s. per annum; but if he did not work for less than that sum, the planter in Tortola could obtain no profit on stock, and consequently could have no motive for employing any person to work for such wages. The white race, being unable to work, must in this, as in all similar cases, perish, or abandon their country and property to the blacks, who can work, but who, as I have shown, are not likely to make use of more voluntary steady exertion than will afford the means of subsistence in the lowlands of the torrid zone, where the pleasure of repose forms so great an ingredient in the happiness of mankind, whether whites, blacks, or Indians."

We really stand aghast at the extravagance of a writer who supposes that the principle which leads a man to prefer light labour and twenty-one

pounds, to hard labour and six pounds fifteen shillings, is a principle of which the operation is confined to the torrid zone! But the matter may be put on a very short issue. Let Major Moody find any tropical country in which the inhabitants prefer mechanical trades to field labour when higher advantages are offered to the field labourer than to the mechanic. He will then have done what he has not done hitherto. He will have adduced one fact bearing on the question.

If the circumstances which we have been considering prove any thing, they appear to prove the inexpediency of the {381}coercive system. The effect of that system in the West Indies has been to produce a glut of agricultural labour, and a scarcity of mechanical dexterity. The discipline of a plantation may stimulate a sluggish body; but it has no tendency to stimulate a sluggish mind. It calls forth a certain quantity of muscular exertion; but it does not encourage that ingenuity which is necessary to the artisan. This is the only explanation which at present occurs to us of the enormous price which skilled labour fetches in a country in which the cultivator can barely obtain a subsistence. We offer it, however, with diffidence, as the result of a very hasty consideration of the subject. But it is with no feeling of diffidence that we pronounce the whole argument of the Major absurd. That he has convinced himself we do not doubt. Indeed he has given the best proof of sincerity: For he has acted up to his theory; and left us, we must confess, in some doubt whether to admire him more as an active or as a speculative politician.

Many of the African apprentices emigrated from Tortola to the Danish island of St. Thomas, some with the consent of their masters, and others without it. Why they did so, is evident from the account which the Major himself gives. The wages were higher in St. Thomas than in Tortola. But such theorists as the Major are subject to illusions as strange as those which haunted Don Quixote. To the visionary Knight every inn was a castle, every ass a charger, and every basin a helmet. To the Major every fact, though explicable on ten thousand obvious suppositions, is a

confirmation of his darling hypothesis. He gives the following account of his opinions and of his consequent measures.

“The occupations followed by the apprentices in the Danish island of St. Thomas, on these occasions were generally the irregular and occasional industry of porters, servants on hoard vessels, &e., in which they often got comparatively high wages, which enabled them to work for money at one time in order to live, without working for a longer or shorter period; such a mode of existence being more agreeable to them than steady and regular industry affording employment during the whole year.

“From this irregular application to certain kinds of labour and dislike to that of agriculture, it was my wish to turn the attention of the African apprentices, and therefore I was anxious to prevent their running away to the Danish island of St. Thomas, or being sent there. His Excellency Governor Van Seholton afforded me every facility in removing them; but they soon returned again. It will also be seen that in St. Thomas they were liable to be taken up and sold as slaves, it was actually the case with one apprentice. It is not undeserving of remark, that not one of the apprentices who thus withdrew themselves from Tortola, ever {382}hired themselves to agricultural labor for any fixed period.”

“The occasional high wages in irregular kinds of industry, however uncertain, appear to have pleased them better than the permanent rewards procured by an employment less exposed to uncertainty, but which required a steady exertion.”

What the permanent rewards of agricultural labour were in Tortola, we have seen. The planter would have found it ruinous on most estates to give more than six pounds fifteen shillings a year, or about fourpence a day. Unless, therefore, they were much higher in St. Thomas, it is surely not extraordinary that they did not induce these apprentices to quit the employments to which, not by their own choice, but by the orders of the Government, they had been trained, for a pursuit uncongenial to all their

habits. How often is it that an Englishman, who has served his apprenticeship to an artisan, hires himself to agricultural labour when he can find work in his own line?

But we will pass by the absurdity of condemning people for preferring high wages with little labour, to low wages with severe labour. We have other objections to make. The Major has told us that the African apprentices could not legally be employed in agriculture on the island of Tortola. If so, we wish to know how their dislike of agricultural labour could be their motive for quitting Tortola, or how, by bringing them back to Tortola, he could improve their habits in that respect? To bring a man by main force from a residence which he likes, and to place him in the hands of an employer acknowledged to be cruel, for fear that he may possibly be made a slave, seems to us also a somewhat curious proceeding, and deserves notice, as being the only indication of zeal for liberty which the Major appears to have betrayed during the whole course of his mission.

The Major might perhaps be justified in exerting himself to recover those apprentices who had emigrated without the consent of their masters. But with regard to the rest, his conduct {383}appears to have been equally absurd and mischievous. He repeatedly tells us that Tortola is a poor island. It appears from the schedules, that he was in the habit of asking the masters and mistresses, whether their apprentices, after the term of service should have expired, would be able to support themselves. In the ease of some most respectable and industrious workmen, the answer was, that they possessed all the qualifications which would enable them to earn a livelihood; but that Tortola was too poor to afford them an adequate field: And this was evidently the cause which induced so many to transport themselves to St. Thomas. Of all the innumerable instances in which public, functionaries have exposed their ignorance by officiously meddling with matters of which individuals ought to be left to

judge for themselves, we remember none more conspicuous than that which Major Moody has thus recorded against himself.

But it seems the industry of these emigrants, and indeed of the free Blacks generally, is not regular or steady. These are words of which Major Moody is particularly fond, and which he generally honours with Italics. We have, throughout this article, taken the facts as he states them, and contented ourselves with exposing the absurdity of his inferences. We shall do so now. We will grant that the free blacks do not work so steadily as the slaves, or as the labourers in many other countries. But how does Major Moody connect this unsteadiness with the climate? To us it appears to be the universal effect of an advance in wages, an effeet not confined to tropical countries, but daily and hourly witnessed in England by every man who attends to the habits of the lower orders. Let us suppose, that an English manufacturer can provide himself with those indulgences which use has rendered necessary to his comfort for ten shillings a week, and that he ean earn ten shillings a week by working steadily twelve hours a day. In that case, he will probably work twelve hours a day. But let us suppose that the wages of his labour rise to thirty shillings. Will he still continue to work twelve hours a day, for the purpose of trebling his present enjoyments, or of laying up a hoard against bad times? Notoriously not. He will perhaps work four days in the week, and thus earn twenty shillings, a sum larger than that whieh he formerly obtained, but less than that which he might obtain if he chose to labour as he formerly laboured.

When {384}the wages of the workman rise, he Everywhere takes out, if we may so express ourselves, some portion of the rise in the form of repose. This is the real explanation of that unsteadiness on which Major Moody dwells so much--an unsteadiness which cannot surprise any person who has ever talked with an English manufacturer, or ever heard the name of Saint Monday. It appears by his own report, that a negro slave works from Monday morning to Saturday night on the sugar

grounds of Tortola, and receives what is equivalent to something less than half-a-crown in return, then he ceases to be a slave, and becomes his own master; and then he finds that by cutting firewood, an employment which requires no great skill, he can earn eight shillings and fourpence a week. By working every other day he can procure better food and better clothes than ever he had before. In no country from the Pole to the Equator, would a labourer under such circumstances work steadily. The Major considers it as a strange phenomenon, peculiar to the torrid zone, that these people lay up little against seasons of sickness and distress--as if this were not almost universally the case among the far more intelligent population of England--as if we did not regularly see our artisans thronging to the alehouse when wages are high, and to the pawnbroker's shop when they are low--as if we were not annually raising millions, in order to save the working classes from the misery which otherwise would be the consequence of their own improvidence.

We are not the advocates of idleness and imprudence. The question before us is, not whether it be desirable that men all over the world should labour more steadily than they now do; but whether the laws which regulate labour within the tropics differ from those which are in operation elsewhere. This is a question which never can be settled, merely by comparing the quantity of work done in different places. By pursuing such a course, we should establish a separate law of labour for every country, and for every trade in every country. The free African does not work so steadily as the Englishman. But the wild Indian, by the Major's own account, works still less steadily than the African. The Chinese labourer, on the other hand, works more steadily than the Englishman. In this island, the industry of the porter or the waterman, is less steady than the industry {385}of the ploughman. But the great general principle is the same in all. All will work extremely hard rather than miss the comforts to which they have been habituated; and all, when they find it possible to obtain their accustomed comforts with less than

their accustomed labour, will not work so hard as they formerly worked, merely to increase them. The real point to be ascertained, therefore, is, whether the free African is content to miss his usual enjoyments, not whether he works steadily or not; for the Chinese peasant would work as irregularly as the Englishman, and the Englishman as irregularly as the negro, if this could be done without any diminution of comforts. Now, it does not appear from any passage in the whole Report, that the free blacks are retrograding in their mode of living. It appears on the contrary, that their work, however irregular, does in fact enable them to live more comfortably than they ever did as slaves. The unsteadiness, therefore, of which they are accused, if it be an argument for coercing them, is equally an argument for coercing the spinners of Manchester and the grinders of Sheffield.

The next ease which we shall notice is, that of the native Indians within the tropics. That these savages have a great aversion to steady labour, and that they have made scarcely any advances toward civilization we readily admit. Major Moody speaks on this subject with authority; for it seems that, when he visited one of their tribes, they forgot to boil the pot for him, and put him off with a speech, which he has reported at length, instead of a meal. He, as usual, attributes their habits to the heat of the climate. But let us consider that the Indians of North America, with much greater advantages, live in the same manner. A most enlightened and prosperous community has arisen in their vicinity. Many benevolent men have attempted to correct their roving propensities, and to inspire them with a taste for those comforts which industry alone can procure. They still obstinately adhere to their old mode of life. The independence, the strong excitement, the occasional periods of intense exertion, the long intervals of repose, have become delightful and almost necessary to them. It is well known that Europeans, who have lived among them for any length of time, are strangely fascinated by the pleasures of that state {386}of society, and even by its sufferings and hazards. Among

ourselves, the Gypsey race, one of the most beautiful and intelligent on the face of the earth, has lived for centuries in a similar manner. Those singular outcasts have been surrounded on every side by the great works of human labour. The advantages of industry were forced upon their notice. The roads on which they travelled, the hedges under which they rested, the hen-roosts which furnished their repast, the silver which crossed their palms--all must have constantly reminded them of the conveniences and luxuries which are to be obtained by steady exertion. They were persecuted under a thousand pretexts, whipped for vagrants, imprisoned for poachers, ducked for witches. The severest laws were enacted against them. To consort with them was long a capital offence. Yet a remnant of the race still preserves its peculiar language and manners--still prefers a tattered tent and a chance-meal of carrion to a warm house and a comfortable dinner. If the habits of the Indians of Guiana prove that slavery is necessary within the tropics, the habits of the Mohawks and Gypsies will equally prove, that it is necessary in the temperate zone. The heat cannot be the cause of that which is found alike in the coldest and in the hottest countries.

Major Moody gives a long account of the Maroon settlements near Surinam. These settlements were first formed by slaves, who fled from the plantations on the coast, about the year 1667. The society was, during the following century, augmented from time to time by fresh reinforcements of fugitive negroes. This supply, however, has now been for many years stopped. It is perfectly true, that these people were long contented with a bare subsistence, and that little of steady agricultural industry has ever existed amongst them. The Major again recurs to physical causes, and the heat of the sun. A better explanation may be given in one word, insecurity. During about one hundred years, the Maroons were absolutely run down like mad dogs. It appears from the work of Captain Stedman, to which the Major himself alludes, that those who fell into the hands of the whites were hung up by hooks thrust into

their ribs, torn to pieces on the rack, or roasted on slow fires. They attempted to avoid the danger, by frequently changing, and carefully concealing their residence. The accidental crowing of a cock, {387}had brought destruction on a whole tribe. That a people thus situated should labour to acquire property which they could not enjoy--that they should engage in employments which would necessarily attach them to a particular spot, was not to be expected. Their habits necessarily became irregular and ferocious. They plundered the colony--they plundered each other--they lived by hunting and fishing. The only productions of the earth which they cultivated, were such as could be speedily reared, and easily concealed. But during the last fifty years, these tribes have enjoyed a greater degree of security; and from the statement of Major Moody, who has himself visited that country, and who, though a wretched logician, is an unexceptionable witness, it appears, that they are rapidly advancing in civilization; that they have acquired a sense of new wants, and a relish for new pleasures; that agriculture has taken a more regular form; and that the vices and miseries of savage life are disappearing together.

“The young men among the Maroons acknowledged, that the conduct of the chiefs had become much better, in respect of not interfering with the wives of others, and that everybody now could have his own wife.”.....

“I observed, that they had adopted the system of sometimes domesticating wild animals, and rearing those already domesticated for food; that instead of always boucaning their meats, like the Indians, they now often used salt when they could get it; and, finally, that instead of depending on the forests for fruits, or cultivating roots which were soon reaped, and conld easily be concealed, they had generally adopted the banana and plantain as a food, which requires about twelve months to produce its fruits, and the tree obtains a considerable height.”....

“I also found, that a certain degree of occasional industry had taken place among the Maroons. Some of these young men had devoted a few days in the year to cutting down trees which nature had planted. From such occasional labour they were enabled to procure finery for a favourite female, a better, gun, or a new axe.”

Surely this statement is most encouraging. No sooner was security given to these Maroons, than improvement commenced. A single generation has sufficed to change these hunters into cultivators of the earth, to teach them the use of domestic animals, to awaken among them a taste for the luxuries and distinctions of polished societies. That their labour is still only occasional, we grant. But this, we cannot too often repeat, is not the question. If occasional labour {388}will supply the inhabitant of the temperate zone with comforts greater than those to which he is accustomed, he will labour only occasionally. These negroes are not only willing to work rather than forego their usual comforts, but are also willing to make some addition to their labour, for the sake of some addition to their comforts. Nothing more can be said for the labourers of any country. The principle which has made England and Holland what they are, is evidently at work in the thickets of Surinam.

That the habits of the fugitives were altogether idle and irregular till within the last fifty years, is nothing to the purpose. How much of regular industry was formerly to be found among the outlawed moss-troopers of our Border, or in the proscribed elan of the Macgregors? Down to a very late period, a large part of the Scotch people were as averse to steady industry as any tribe of Maroons. In the year 1698, Fletcher of Saltonn called the attention of the Scottish Parliament to this horrible evil. “This country,” says he, “has always swarmed with such numbers of idle vagabonds as no laws could ever restrain. There are at this day in Scotland two hundred thousand people begging from door to door, living without any regard or subjection to the laws of the land, or to even those of God and nature. No magistrate could ever discover or be informed

which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptised." He advises the Government to set them to work; but he strongly represents the difficulty of such an undertaking. That sort of people is so desperately wicked, such enemies of all work and labour, and, which is yet more amazing, so proud in esteeming their own condition above that which they will be sure to call slavery, that, unless prevented by the utmost industry and diligence, upon the first publication of any orders for putting in execution such a design, they will rather die with hunger in caves and dens, and murder their young children. Fletcher was a brave, honest, and sensible man. He had fought and suffered for liberty. Yet the circumstances of his country shook his faith in the true principles of government. He looked with dismay on the mountains occupied by lawless chiefs and their gangs, and the lowlands cursed by the depredations of some plunderers and the protection of others. Everywhere he saw swarms of robbers and beggars. He contrasted this desolate prospect {389}with the spectacle which Holland presented, the miracles which human industry had there achieved, a country rescued from the ocean, vast and splendid cities, ports crowded with ships, meadows cultivated to the highest point, canals along which hundreds of boats were constantly passing, mercantile houses of which the daily payments exceeded the whole rental of the Highlands, an immense population whose habits were sober and laborious, and who acquired their comforts, not by injuring, but by benefiting their neighbours. He did not sufficiently consider that this state of things sprung from the wisdom and vigour of a government, which insured to every man the fruits of his exertions, and protected equally the pleasures of every class, from the pipe of the mechanic to the picture-gallery and the tulip-garden of the Burgomaster;--that in Scotland, on the contrary, the police was feeble, and the gentry rich in men and destitute of money; that robbery was in consequence common; that people will not build barns to be burned, or rear cattle to be lifted; that insecurity produced idleness, and idleness crimes, that these crimes again augmented the insecurity from which they

had sprung. He overlooked these circumstances, and attributed the evil to the want of coercion. He censured the wreak humanity of those fathers of the church who had represented slavery as inconsistent with Christianity. He cited those texts with which the controversies of our own times have rendered us so familiar. Finally, he proposed to convert the lower classes into domestic bondsmen. His arguments were at least as plausible as those of Major Moody. But how signally has the event refuted them! Slavery was not established in Scotland. On the contrary, the changes which have taken place there have been favourable to personal liberty. The power of the chiefs has been destroyed. Security has been given to the capitalist and to the labourer. Could Fletcher now revisit Scotland, he would find a country which might well bear a comparison with his favourite Holland.

The History of the Maroons of Surinam appears to us strictly analogous to that of the Scottish peasantry. In both cases insecurity produced idleness. In both security produces industry. The African community indeed, in the middle of the last century was far more barbarous than any part of the Scotch nation has ever been since the dawn of authentic {390}history. Not one of the fugitives had ever been taught to read and write. The traces of civilization which they brought from the colony were very slight, and were soon effaced by the habits of a lawless and perilous life. Of late, however, their progress has been rapid. Judging of the future by the past, we entertain a strong hope that they will soon form a flourishing and respectable society. At all events, we are sure that their condition affords no ground for believing that the labourer, within the tropics, acts on principles different from those which regulate his conduct elsewhere.

We now come to the case of Hayti, a ease on which Major Moody and his disciples place the strongest reliance. The report tells us, that Toussaint, Christophe and Boyer, have all found it necessary to compel the free negroes of that island to employ themselves in agriculture--that

exportation has diminished--that the quantity of coffee now produced is much smaller than that which was grown under the French government--that the cultivation of sugar is abandoned--that the Haytians have not only ceased to export that article, but have begun to import it--that the men indulge themselves in repose, and force the women to work for them; and, finally, that this dislike of labour can be explained only by the heat of the climate, and can be subdued only by coercion.

Now we have to say, in the first place, that the proofs which the Major brings refute each other. If, as he states, the Haytians are coerced, and have been coerced during the last thirty years, their idleness maybe an excellent argument against slavery, but can be no argument against liberty. If it be said that the coercion employed in Hayti is not sufficiently severe, we answer thus:--We never denied, that of two kinds of coercion, the more severe is likely to be the more efficient. Men can be induced to work only by two motives, hope and fear; the former is the motive of the free labourer, the latter of the slave. We hold that, in the long run, hope will answer best. But we are perfectly ready to admit, that a strong fear will stimulate industry more powerfully than a weak fear. The case of Hayti, therefore, can at most only prove that severe slavery answers its purpose better than lenient slavery. It can prove nothing for slavery against freedom. But the Major is not entitled to use two contradictory {391}arguments. One or the other he must abandon. It' he chooses to reason on the decrees of Toussaint and Christophe, he has no right to talk of the decrease of production. If, on the other hand, he insists on the idleness of the Haytians, he must admit their liberty. If they are not free, their idleness can be no argument against freedom.

But we will do more than expose the inconsistency of the Major. We will take both suppositions successively, and show that neither of them can affect the present question.

First, then, let it be supposed that a coercive system is established in Hayti. Major Moody seems to think that this fact, if admitted, is sufficient to decide the controversy.

“The annexed regulations,” says he, “of Toussaint, Desformomi, and Christophe, as well as those of President Boyer, intended for people in circumstances similar to those of the liberated Africans, appear to prove practically that some such measures are necessary as those which I have submitted as the result of my own personal observation and experience, in the control of human labour in different climes, and under various circumstances.”

We must altogether dissent from this doctrine. It does not appear to us quite self-evident, that every law which every government may choose to make is necessarily a wise law. We have sometimes been inclined to suspect that, even in this enlightened country, legislators have interfered in matters which should have been left to take their own course. An English Parliament formerly thought fit to limit the wages of labour. This proceeding does not perfectly satisfy us, that wages had previously been higher than they should have been. Elizabeth, unquestionably the greatest sovereign that ever governed England, passed those laws for the support of the poor, which, though in seeming and intention most humane, have produced more evil than all the cruelties of Nero and Maximin. We have just seen that, at the close of the seventeenth century, a most respectable and enlightened Scotch gentleman thought slavery the only cure for the maladies of his country. Christophe was not destitute of talent:-. Toussaint was a man of great genius and unblemished integrity, a brave soldier, and in many respects a wise statesman. But both these men had been slaves. Both were ignorant of history and political economy. That idleness {392}and disorders should follow a general civil war, was perfectly natural. That rulers, accustomed to a system of compulsory labour, should think such a system the only cure for those evils, is

equally natural. But what inference can be drawn from such circumstances?

The negligence with which Major Moody has arranged his Appendix, is most extraordinary. He has, with strange inconsistency, given us no copy of the decree of Toussaint in the original, and no translation of the decree of Christophe. The decree of Boyer, the most important of the three, he has not thought fit to publish at all; though he repeatedly mentions it in terms which seem to imply that he has seen it. Our readers are probably aware, that the decree of Toussaint, or rather the Major's translation of it, was retouched by some of the statesmen of Jamaica, docked of the first and last paragraphs, which would at once have betrayed its date, and sent over by the Assembly to England, as a new law of President Boyer. This forgery, the silliest and most impudent that has been attempted within our remembrance, was at once exposed. The real decree, if there be such a decree, is not yet before the public.

The decree of Toussaint was issued in a time of such extreme confusion, that even if we were to admit its expediency, which we are very far from doing, we should not be bound to draw any general conclusion from it. All the reasonings which Major Moody founds on the decree of Christophe, maybe refuted by this simple answer--that decree lays at least as many restraints on the capitalist as on the labourer. It directs him to provide machinery and mills. It limits the amount of his live-stock. It prescribes the circumstances under which he may form new plantations of coffee. It enjoins the manner in which he is to press his canes and to clean his cotton. The Major reasons: Christophe compelled the field-negroes to work. Hence it follows, that men who live in hot climates will not cultivate the soil steadily without compulsion. We may surely say, with equal justice, Christophe prescribed the manner in which the proprietor was to employ his capital, it is, therefore, to be inferred, that a capitalist in a hot climate cannot judge of his own interests, and that the government ought to take the management of his concerns out of

his hands. If the Major will not adopt this conclusion, he must abandon {393}his own. All our readers will admit, that a Prince who could lay the capitalists under such restrictions as those which we have mentioned, must have been ignorant of political science, and prone to interfere in cases where legislative interference is foolish and pernicious. What conclusion, then, can be justly drawn from the restraints imposed by such a ruler on the freedom of the peasant?

We have thus disposed of the first hypothesis, namely, that the Haytians are coerced. We will proceed to the second. Let it be supposed, that the Haytians are not coerced. In that case we say, that if they do not export as much as formerly, it will not necessarily follow that they do not work as much as formerly; and that, if they do not work as much as formerly, it still will not follow that their idleness proceeds from physical causes, or forms any exception to the general principles which regulate labour.

The first great cause which depresses the industry of the Haytians, is the necessity of keeping up large and costly establishments. All who, since the expulsion of the French, have governed that country, have wisely and honourably sacrificed every other consideration to the preservation of independence. Large armies have been kept up. A considerable part of the population has consequently been supported in an unproductive employment; and a heavy burden has been laid on the industry of the rest. Major Moody quotes the following passage from the narrative of a most respectable and benevolent American, Mr. Dewey:--

“Throughout the island the women perform the principal part of the labour in the field and in the house.... I was often moved with pity for their lot, though I rejoiced that the burden was now voluntary, and admired the spirit of women who could so readily perform the work of the men, that the men may be employed in the defence and preservation of their liberties.”

The Major pounces on the fact stated by Mr. Dewey; but, with the amiable condescension of a superior nature, gently corrects his inferences.

“That Mr. Dewey, and pious persons like him, do state the facts which he observed correctly, I am quite convinced: but when he, and those who reason in his manner, assign causes as solely producing the effect, it is then that error glides into their statements.”

We are not so completely convinced as the Major seems to {394}be, that all pious persons state correctly such facts as Mr. Dewey has observed: but we are sure, that Mr. Dewey must be the most ungrateful of men, if he is not grateful for such compliments. Indeed, the style which the Major always adopts towards philanthropists reminds us of Dogberry patting Verges on the back:--“A good old man. Sir! he will be talking. Well said, i’faith, neighbour. An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i’faith, as ever broke bread. But God is to be worshipped. All men are not alike.” But we must go on with the argument of our philosophical commissioner.

“Any person who has travelled among people in a backward state of knowledge and social civilization, people who never experienced what slavery was, must have observed, as I have done, that the burden of agricultural labour is generally imposed on the females, by the arbitrary power exercised over them by the males....”

“Whilst an examination into the actual population of Hayti, and the real number of the males actually withdrawn from agricultural pursuits for those of military service, at the time Mr. Dewey made his observations, would show, that, though the cause assigned by him might have some effect, that, in point of fact, a more powerful influence would probably be found in the action of causes springing from a different source than that assigned by him as the true cause; and whilst these other powerful causes

are left in action, little practical good is effected by the removal of a minor influence." (1)

We have not time to notice the innumerable beauties of this headless and endless sentence, in which a double allowance of thats compensates for the absence of a nominative case and a verb:--those who study the works of the Major must take such grammar as they can get, and be thankful. But, does be advance any reason, or the shadow of tiny reason, for dissenting from the opinion formed by a man whose honesty he acknowledges, on a point on which it is scarcely possible to be mistaken? No man of common sense can live three days in a country without finding out, whether it is by idleness, or by military duties, that the males are prevented from working. But Major Moody reasons thus--Savages, from their propensity to indolence, make their women work for them. The Haytians make their women work for them; therefore the Haytians are indolent savages;--an exquisite specimen of syllogistic reasoning! Horses are quadrupeds: but a pig is a quadruped; therefore a pig is a horse. The

(1) Ibid. p. 39.

dullest {395}of the gravediggers in Hamlet would have been ashamed of such an argal.

The Major surely does not mean to deny, that, in civilized and industrious nations, circumstances similar to those which exist in Hayti, have compelled the women to engage in agricultural labour. History abounds with such instances. When, fourteen years ago, the Prussians rose against the French, almost the whole harvest of Silesia and Upper Saxony was gathered in by females. The conscriptions of Buonaparte frequently produced the same effect. The Major says, indeed, or rather we, endowing his purposes with Syntax, say for him, that if the numbers of the Haytian people and of the Haytian army were ascertained, the causes assigned by Mr. Dewey would be found to have produced only

part of the effect. But what evidence does he offer? Where are his facts, and his reasonings on these facts? Does he know what the population of Hayti may be? Does he know how large its army may be? If he knows, why does he not tell us? If he does not know, how can he tell what might be the result of an examination into those particulars? It is something too much that a writer, who, when he tries to demonstrate, never demonstrates any thing but his own ignorance of the art of reasoning, should expect to be implicitly believed, when he merely dogmatizes.

We grant, that the Haytians do not rear any great quantity of sugar. But can this circumstance be explained only by supposing that they are averse to the labour necessary for that purpose? When capital is withdrawn from a particular trade, a political economist is commonly inclined to suspect that the profits are smaller than those which may be obtained in other lines of business. Now, it is a notorious fact, that the profits which the cultivation of sugar yields are, in all our West Indian islands, extremely low; that the business is carried on only because a large quantity of capital has already been fixed in forms useless for every other purpose; and that, if this fixed capital were to be suddenly destroyed, no fresh investment would take place. A man who has purchased a costly apparatus for the purpose of carrying on a particular manufacture, will not necessarily change his business because he finds that his gains are smaller than those which he might obtain elsewhere, he will generally prefer a small profit to a dead loss, and rather take two per cent upon {396}his first investment than let that investment perish altogether, suffer his machinery to be idle, and turn the remains of his fortune to a pursuit in which he might make five per cent. This, we believe, is the only cause which keeps up the cultivation of sugar in Jamaica and Antigua.

In Hayti this cause has ceased to operate. Most of the fixed capital necessary for the sugar-trade was destroyed by the war which followed the liberation of the negroes. The machinery which remained was

employed as formerly. But it was not replaced as it fell to decay. This at once explains the gradual decrease of production. A similar decrease, from similar causes, is taking place in our oldest colonies. But let us even suppose that the cultivation of sugar was likely, under ordinary circumstances, to flourish in Hayti, it still remains to be considered what security capital invested in that business would have enjoyed. A short time back it seemed by no means improbable that France would assert her rights to the sovereignty of the island by arms. In the year 1814, the strongest apprehensions were entertained. A murderous and devastating war, a war in which quarter would neither have been given or taken, was to be expected. The plan of defence which the rulers of Hayti contemplated was suited to so terrible a crisis. It was intended to turn the coast into a desert, to set fire to the buildings, to fall back on the interior fastnesses of the country, and by constant skirmishes, by hunger, and by the effects of a climate so fatal to Europeans, to wear out the invading army. This design was avowed by the Government in publications which have found their way to England. It was justified by circumstances, and it could scarcely have failed of success. But it is evident that the remotest prospect of such an emergency would alone have deterred any capitalist from sinking his property in the extensive and valuable machinery necessary to a sugar-planter.

It is true that there is a diminution in the quantity of coffee exported from Hayti. But the cause of the diminution is obvious. The taxes on that article are exorbitantly high. The territorial impost raised on the plantation, and the customs which must be paid previous to exportation, make up a duty of sixty per cent, on the prime cost. If the Haytians are to be free, they must have an army. If they are to have an army, they must raise money; and this may possibly {397}be the best way of raising it. But it is evidently impossible that a commodity thus burdened can maintain a competition with the produce of countries where no taxes exist.

We therefore think it by no means improbable that the Haytians may have abandoned the cultivation of sugar and coffee, not from idleness, but from prudence; that they may have been as industriously employed as their enslaved ancestors, though in a different manner. All the testimony which we have ever been able to procure tends to prove that they are at least industrious enough to live comfortably, and multiply rapidly under the weight of a very heavy taxation.

We have shown that the decrease in the exports of Hayti does not necessarily prove a decrease in the industry of the people. But we also maintain, that, even if we were to admit that the Haytians work less steadily than formerly, Major Moody has no right to attribute that circumstance to the influence of climate. His error in this and in many other parts of his work proceeds from an utter ignorance of the habits of labourers in the temperate zone. What those habits are, we have already stated. If an English labourer, who has hitherto been unable to obtain the enjoyments to which he is accustomed without working three hundred days a year, should find himself able to obtain those enjoyments by working a hundred days a year, he will not continue to work three hundred days a year. He will make some addition to his pleasures, but he will abate largely of his exertions. He will probably work only on the alternate days. The ease of the Haytian is the same. As a slave he worked twelve months in the year, and received perhaps as much as he would have been able to raise in one month, if he had worked on his own account. He was liberated--he found that, by working for two months, he could procure luxuries of which he had never dreamed. If he worked unsteadily, he did only what an Englishman, in the same circumstances, would have done. In order to prove that labour in Hayti follows a law different from that which is in operation among ourselves, it is necessary to prove, not merely that the Haytian works unsteadily, but that he will forego comforts to which he is accustomed, rather than work steadily.

This Major Moody has not even asserted of the Haytians, or {398}of any other class of tropical labourers. He has, therefore, altogether failed to show, that the natives of the torrid zone cannot be safely left to the influence of those principles which have most effectually promoted civilization in Europe. If the law of labour be everywhere the same, and he has said nothing which induces us to doubt that it is so, that unsteadiness of which he speaks will, at least in its extreme degree, last only for a time, which, compared with the life of a nation, is but as a day in the life of man. The luxuries of one generation will become the necessaries of the next. As new desires are awakened, greater exertions will be necessary. This cause, cooperating with that increase of population of which the Major himself admits the effect, will, in less than a century, make the Hayti an labourer what the English labourer now is.

The last case which we shall consider is, that of the free negroes who emigrated from North America to Hayti. They were in number about six thousand. President Boyer undertook to defray the whole expense of their passage, and to support them for four months after their arrival--a clear proof that the people of Hayti are industrious enough to place at the disposal of the Government funds more than sufficient to defray its ordinary charges. We give the sixth and seventh articles of Boyer's instruction to the agent employed by him on this occasion, as Major Moody states them. It is on these that his whole argument turns.

"Article VI.--To regulate better the interests of the emigrants, it will be proper to let them know in detail, what the government of the republic is disposed to do, to assure their future well-being and that of their children, on the sole condition of their being good and industrious citizens. You are authorized, in concert with the agents of the different societies, and before civil authority, to make arrangements with heads of families, or other emigrants who can unite twelve people able to work, and also to stipulate that the government will give them a portion of land sufficient to employ twelve persons, and on which may be raised coffee, cotton,

maize, peas and other vegetables and provisions; and after they have well improved the said quantity of land which will not be less than thirty-six acres in extent, government will give a perpetual title to the said land to these twelve people, their heirs, and assigns.

"Article VII.--Those of the emigrants who prefer applying themselves individually to the culture of the earth, either by renting lands already improved, which they will till, or by working in the field to share the produce with the proprietor, must also engage themselves by a legal act that, on arriving in Hayti, they will make the above mentioned {399}arrangements; and this they must do before judges of the peace; so that, on their arrival here, they will be obliged to apply themselves to agriculture, and not be liable to become vagrants." (1)

On these passages the Major reasons thus--

"In Hayti, even at present, tinder the judicious government of President Boyer, we find the free and intelligent American Blacks receiving land for nothing, having their expenses paid, and the produce of the land to be for their own advantage, obliged, by a legal act, to apply themselves to a kind of labour which is manifestly and clearly intended to better their condition.

"Why should a free man be thus obliged to act in a manner which the most ignorant person might discover was a duty incumbent on him, and that the result would be for his advantage? The legal act and its penalties, after such a grant of land, would appear pre-eminently absurd in England." (2)

We, for our own parts, can conceive nothing more preeminently absurd, than for a man to quote and comment on what he has never read. This is clearly the case with the Major. The emigrants who were to be obliged by a legal act to apply themselves to labour, were not those who were to receive land for nothing, but those who were to rent it, or to hire

themselves out as labourers under others.. The Major has applied the provisions of the Seventh Article to the class mentioned in the Sixth. So disgraceful an instance of carelessness we never saw in any official document.

Whether the President acted well or ill, is not the question. The principle on which he proceeded cannot be mistaken. He was about to advance a considerable sum for the purpose of transporting these people to Hayti. He appears, as far as we can judge from these instructions, to have exacted no security from the higher and most respectable class. But he thought it probable, we suppose, that many of those idle and profligate persons who abound in all great cities, and who are peculiarly likely to abound in a degraded caste, beggars and thieves, the refuse of the North American bridewells, might accept his proposals, merely that they might live for some months at free costs, and then return to their old habits. He therefore naturally required some assurance that the poorer emigrants intended to support themselves by their industry before he would agree to advance their subsistence.

1 Second Tart of Major Moody's Report, p. 30.

2 Ibid, p 32.

The {400}Major proceeds thus:--

"Your Lordship may observe, in the instructions of the President, that onlv certain modes of rewarding the labour of the free American Black are mentioned, viz. renting land already improved, working in the field to share the produce with the labourer, or, by being proprietors of land, to cultivate on their own account without either rent or purchase, having land from the free gift of the Government.

"The ordinary mode of rewarding the labourer by the payment of wages. as in England or the East Indies, where the country is fully peopled, is never once mentioned or alluded to by President Boyer, who may be

fairly supposed to understand the situation of the country which he governs." (1)

For the sake of the Haytians, we hope that Boyer understands the country which he governs better than the Major understands the subject on which he writes. Who before, ever thought of mentioning the renting of land as a mode of rewarding the labourer? The renting of land is a transaction between the proprietor of the soil and the capitalist. Can Major Moody possibly imagine, that, in any part of the world, the labourer, as a labourer, pays rent, or receives it? He surely must know, that those emigrants who rented land, must have rented it in the capacity, not of labourers, but of capitalists; that they must have paid the rent out of the profits of their stock, not out of the gains of their labour; that even when a man works on his own account, the gains of his labour, though not generally called wages, are wages to all intents and purposes, and though popularly confounded with his profits, follow a law altogether different. But Boyer, says Major Moody, never mentions wages. How can wages be better defined, than as the share of the produce allowed to the labourer? Does Major Moody conceive that wages can be paid only in money, or that money wages represent any thing but that share of the produce of which the President speaks? he goes on, however, floundering deeper and deeper in absurdity at every step.

"In the present constitution of Hayti, as administered by President Boyer, in "Titre sur l'Etat Politique des Citoyens," I find, under the act, that the rights of citizenship are suspended, as regards domestics working for wages (par l'etât de domestique à gages), in that very republican country, where a person, ignorant of the effect of physical causes, would naturally conclude that it would be most unjust to deprive a man of his right of citizenship, because he preferred one mode of subsisting himself to another, which the Government wished to encourage."

(1) Second Part of Major Moody's Report, p. 32.

Physical {401}causes again! We should like to know whether these physical causes operate in France. In the French Constitution of the year 1791, we find the following Article.

“To be an active citizen, it is necessary not to be in a menial situation, namely, that of a servant receiving wages.”

It seems, therefore, that this law which, in the opinion of Major Moody, nothing but the heat of the torrid zone will explain--this law, which any person, ignorant of physical causes, would consider as grossly unjust, is copied from the Institutions of a great and enlightened European nation. We can assure him, that a little knowledge of history is now and then very useful to a person who undertakes to speculate on politics.

We must return for a moment to the North American emigrants. Much mismanagement seems to have taken place with respect to them. They were received with cordiality, and pampered with the utmost profusion, by the liberal inhabitants of Port-au-Prince. They had left a country where they had always been treated as the lowest of mankind; they had landed in a country where they were overwhelmed with caresses and presents. The heads of many were turned by the change. Many came from cities, and, totally unaccustomed to agricultural labour, found themselves transported into the midst of an agricultural community. The Government, with more generosity than wisdom, suffered them to eat their rations in idleness. This is a short summary of the narrative of Dr. Dewey, who was himself on the spot. He continues thus.

“Although these and other circumstances damped the ardour of some of the emigrants, and rendered them dissatisfied with their situation, yet I have uniformly found the industrious and the most respectable, and such as were fitted to be cultivators of the soil, contented with their condition and prospects, and convinced that great advantages were put within their reach. By far the greater part of the emigrants I saw were satisfied with their change of country, and many were so much pleased that they would

not return on any consideration, and said, that they never felt at home before, that they have never felt what it was to be in a country where their colour was not despised. But these were such as went out expecting to meet difficulties and not to live in the city; and they are so numerous, and pursuing their course with so much enterprise, that I feel there is no more reason for surprise at the industry and contentment which they exhibit, than at the dissatisfaction which has brought back 200, and will perhaps bring back a few more." (1)

(1) Second Part of Major Moody's Report, p. 35. 26

All {402}this statement the Major quotes as triumphantly as if it were favourable to his hypothesis, or as if it were not of itself sufficient to refute every syllable that he has written. Those who came from towns shrunk from agricultural labour. Is this a circumstance peculiar to any climate? Lei Major Moody try the same experiment in this country with the footmen and shopmen of London, and see what success he will have. But those who were accustomed to tillage, applied themselves to it with vigour; and this though they came from a cold country, and must therefore be supposed to have been peculiarly sensible of the influence of tropical heat. It is clear, therefore, that their desire to better their Condition surmounted that love of repose which, according to the new philosophy of labour, can, in warm, fertile, and thinly peopled countries, be surmounted only by the fear of punishment.

We have now gone through the principal topics of which the Major has treated. We have done him more than justice. We have arranged his chaotic mass of facts and theories; we have frequently translated his language into English; we have refrained from quoting the exquisitely ridiculous similitudes and allusions with which he has set off his reasonings; we have repeatedly taken on ourselves the burden of the proof in cases where, by all the rules of logic, we might have imposed it on him. Against us, he cannot resort to his ordinary modes of defence. He

cannot charge us with ignorance of local circumstances, for almost all the facts on which we have argued are taken from his own report. He cannot sneer at us as pious, benevolent people, misled by a blind hatred of slavery, eager in the pursuit of a laudable, end, but ignorant of the means by which alone it can be obtained. We have treated the question as a question purely scientific. We have reasoned as if we had been reasoning, not about men and women, but about spinning-jeanies and power-looms.

Point by point we have refuted his whole theory. We have shown that the phenomena which he attributes to the atmosphere of the torrid zone, are found in the most temperate climates; and that, if coercion be desirable in the case of the West Indian labourer, the stocks, the branding iron, and the forty stripes save one, ought to be, without delay introduced into England.

There {403}are still some parts of the subject on which, if the article were not already too long, we should wish to dwell. Coercion, according to Major Moody, is necessary only in those tropical countries in which the population does not press on the means of subsistence. He holds, that the multiplication of the species will at length render it superfluous. It would be easy to show that this remedy is incompatible with the evil; that the deadly labour, or, as he would call it, the steady labour, which the West Indian sugar-planter exacts, destroys life with frightful rapidity; that the only colonics in which the slaves keep up their numbers are those in which the cultivation of sugar has altogether ceased, or has greatly diminished; and that, in those settlements in which it is extensively and profitably carried on, the population *decreases* at a rate which portends its speedy extinction. To say, therefore, that the negroes of the sugar colonies must continue slaves till their numbers shall have greatly increased, is to say, in decent and humane phraseology, that they must continue slaves till the whole race is exterminated.

At some future time we may resume this subject. We may then attempt to explain a principle, which, though established by long experience, still appears to many people paradoxical, namely, that a rise in the price of sugar, while it renders the slave more valuable, tends at the same time to abridge his life. We may then also endeavour to show how completely such a system is at variance with the principles on which alone colonization can be defended. When a great country scatters, in some vast and fertile wilderness, the seeds of a civilized population, fosters and protects the infant community through the period of helplessness, and rears it into a mighty nation, the measure, is not only beneficial to mankind, but may answer as a mercantile speculation. The sums which were advanced for the support and defence of a few emigrants, struggling with difficulties and surrounded by dangers, are repaid by an extensive and lucrative commerce with flourishing and populous regions, which, but for those emigrants, would still have been inhabited only by savages and beasts of prey. Thus, in spite of all the errors which our ancestors committed, both during their connexion with the North American provinces, and at the time of separation, we are inclined to think that England has, on the whole, obtained great benefits from them. From our dominions in New South Wales, if judiciously governed, great advantages may {404}also be derived. But what advantage can we derive from colonies in which the population, under a cruel and grinding system of oppression, is rapidly wasting away? The planter, we must suppose, knows his own interest. If he chooses to wear his slave to death by exacting from him an exorbitant quantity of work, we must suppose that he gains more by the work than he loses by the death.

But his capital is not the only capital which has been sunk in those countries. Who is to repay the English nation for the treasure which has been expended in governing and defending them? If we had made Jamaica what we have made Massachusetts, if we had raised up in Guiana a population like that of New York, we should indeed have been

repaid. But of such a result under the present system there is no hope. It is not improbable that some who are now alive may see the last negro disappear from our Transatlantic possessions. After having squandered a sum, which, if judiciously employed, might have called into existence a great, rich, and enlightened people, which might have spread our arts, our laws, and our language from the banks of the Maragnon to the Mexican sea, we shall again leave our territories deserts as we found them, without one memorial to prove that a civilized man ever set foot on their shores.

But we must absolutely conclude. This subject is far too extensive to be fully discussed at present; and we have another duty to perform. With the Major we began, and with the Major we mean to end. That he is a very respectable officer, and a very respectable man, we have no reason to doubt. But we do, with all seriousness and good-will assure him, that he has no vocation to be a philosopher. If he has set his heart on constructing theories, we are sorry for him; for we cannot flatter him with the faintest hope of success. A few undigested facts, and a few long words that mean nothing, are but a slender stock for so extensive a business. For a time he may play the politician among philosophers, and the philosopher among politicians. He may bewilder speculative men with the cant of office, and practical men with the cant of metaphysics. But at last he must find his level. He is very fit to be a collector of facts, a purveyor of details to those who know how to reason on them; but he is no more qualified to speculate on political science, than a bricklayer is to rival Palladio, or a nurseryman to confute Linuæus.

THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. (1)

(*Edinburgh Review*,) June, 1827.

We {405}ought to apologize to our readers for prefixing to this article the name of such a publication. The two numbers which lie on our table contain nothing which could be endured, even at a dinner of the Pitt Club, unless, as the newspapers express it, the hilarity had been continued to a very late hour. We have met, we confess, with nobody who has ever seen them; and, should our account excite any curiosity respecting them, we fear that an application to the booksellers will already be too late. Some tidings of them may perhaps be obtained from the trunk-makers. In order to console our readers, however, under this disappointment, we will venture to assure them, that the only subject on which the reasonings of these Antijacobin Reviewers throw any light, is one in which we take very little interest--the state of their own understandings; and that the only feeling which their pathetic appeals have excited in us, is that of deep regret for our four shillings, which are gone and will return no more.

It is not a very cleanly, or a very agreeable task, to rake up from the kennels of oblivion the remains of drowned abortions, which have never opened their eyes on the day, or even been heard to whimper, but have been at once transferred from the filth in which they were littered, to the filth with which they are to rot. But unhappily we have no choice. Bad as this work is, it is quite as good as any which has appeared against the present administration. We have looked everywhere, without being able to find any antagonist who can possibly be as much ashamed of defeat as we shall be of victory.

(1) *The New Antijacobin Review*.--Nos. I. and II. 8vo. London, 1827.

The {406}manner in which the influence of the press has, at this crisis, been exercised, is indeed, very remarkable. All the talent has been on one side. With an unanimity which, as Lord Londonderry wisely supposes, can be ascribed only to a dexterous use of the secret-service money, the able and respectable journals of the metropolis have all supported the new government. It has been attacked, on the other hand, by writers who make every cause which they espouse despicable or odious,--by one paper which owes all its notoriety to its reports of the slang uttered by drunken lads who are brought to Bow Street for breaking windows--by another, which barely contrives to subsist on intelligence from butlers, and advertisements from perfumers. With these are joined all the scribblers who rest their claim to orthodoxy and loyalty on the perfection to which they have carried the arts of ribaldry and slander. What part these gentlemen would take in the present contest, seemed at first doubtful. We feared, for a moment, that their servility might overpower their malignity, and that they would be even more inclined to flatter the powerful than to calumniate the innocent. It turn-out that we were mistaken; and we are most thankful for it. They have been kind enough to spare us the discredit of their alliance. We know not how we should have borne to be of the same party with them. It is bad enough, God knows, to be of the same species.

The writers of the book before us, who are also, we believe, the great majority of its readers, can scarcely be said to belong to this class. They rather resemble those snakes with which Indian jugglers perform so many curious tricks: The bags of venom are left, but the teeth are extracted. That they might omit nothing tending to make them ridiculous. they have adopted a title on which no judicious writer would have ventured; and challenged comparison with one of the most ingenious and amusing volumes in our language. Whether they have assumed this name on the principle which influenced Mr. Shandy in christening his children,

or from a whim similar to that which induced the proprietors of the most frightful Hottentot that ever lived, to give her the name of Venus, we shall not pretend to decide; but we would seriously advise them to consider, whether it is for their interest, that people should be reminded of the celebrated imitations of Darwin and Kotzebue, while they are reading {407}such parodies on the Bible as the following:--"In those days, a strange person shall appear in the land, and he shall cry to the people. Behold, I am possessed by the Demon of Ultra-Liberalism; I have received the gift of incoherence; I am a political philosopher, and a professor of paradoxes."

We would also, with great respect, ask the gentleman who has lampooned Mr. Canning in such Drydenian couplets as this:

"When he said if they would but let him in,

He would never try to turn them out again,"

whether his performance gains much by being compared with New Morality? and, indeed, whether such satire as this is likely to make anybody laugh but himself, or to make anybody wince but his publisher?

But we must take leave of the *New Antijacobin Review*; and we do so, hoping that we have secured the gratitude of its conductors. We once heard a schoolboy relate, with evident satisfaction and pride, that he had been horsewhipped by a Duke: we trust that our present condescension will be as highly appreciated.

But it is not for the purpose of making a scarecrow of a ridiculous publication, that we address our readers at the present important crisis. We are convinced, that the cause of the present Ministers is the cause of liberty, the cause of toleration, the cause of political science,--the cause of the people, who are entitled to expect from their wisdom and liberality many judicious reforms,--the cause of the aristocracy, who, unless those reforms be adopted, must inevitably be the victims of a violent and

desolating revolution. We are convinced, that the government of the country was never intrusted to men who more thoroughly understood its interest, or were more sincerely disposed to promote it--to men who, in forming their arrangements, thought so much of what they could *do*, and so little of what they could *get*. On the other side, we see a party which, for ignorance, intemperance, and inconsistency, has no parallel in our annals,--which, as an Opposition, we really think, is a scandal to the nation, and, as a Ministry, would speedily be its ruin. Under these circumstances, we think it our duty to give our best support to those with whose power are inseparably bound up all the dearest interests of the community,--the freedom {408}of worship, of discussion, and of trade,--our honour abroad, and our tranquillity at home.

In undertaking the defence of the Ministers, we feel ourselves enbarrassed by one difficulty: we are unable to comprehend distinctly of what they are accused. A statement of facts may be contradicted; but the gentlemen of the Opposition do not deal in statements. Reasonings may be refuted; but the gentlemen of the Opposition do not reason. There is something impassive and elastic about their dulness, on which all the weapons of controversy are thrown away. It makes no resistance, and receives no impression. To argue with it, is like stabbing the water, or cudgelling a woolpack. Buonaparte is said to have remarked, that the English soldiers at Waterloo did not know when they were beaten. The Duke of Wellington, equally fortunate in polities and in war, has the rare felicity of being supported a second time by a force of this description,--men whose desperate hardihood in argument sets all assailants at defiance,--who fight on, though borne down on every side by overwhelming proofs, rush enthusiastically into the mouth of an absurdity, or stake themselves with cool intrepidity on the horn of a dilemma. We doubt whether this unconquerable pertinacity be quite as honourable in debate as in battle; but we are sure, that it is a very difficult

task for persons trained in the old school of logical tactics to contend with antagonists who possess such a quality.

The species of argument in which the members of the Opposition appear chiefly to excel, is that of which the Marquis, in the *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, showed himself so great a master:--

"Tarte, à la creme--morbleu, tarte à la creme!"

"Hé bien, que veux tu dire, tarte à la erême?"

"Parbleu, tarte à la crème, chevalier!"

"Mais encore?"

"Tarte à la crème!"

"Dî-nous un peu tes raisons."

"Tarte à la crème!"

"Mais il faut expliquer ta pensée, ce me semble."

"Tarte à la crème, Madame."

"Que trouvez-vouz là à redire?"

"Moi, rien;--tarte à la crème!" With equal taste and judgment, the writers and speakers of the Opposition repeat their favourite phrases,--"deserted principles," "unnatural coalition," "base love of office." They have not, we must allow, been unfortunate in their choice of a topic. The English are but too much accustomed to consider every public virtue as comprised in consistency; and {409}the name of coalition has to many ears a startling and ominous sound. Of all the charges brought, against the Ministry, this alone, as far as we can discover, has any meaning; and even to this we can allow no force.

To condemn coalitions in the abstract, is manifestly absurd: Since in a popular government, no good can be done without concert, and no concert can be obtained without compromise. Those who will not stoop to compliances which the condition of human nature renders necessary, are fitter to be hermits than to be statesmen. Their virtue, like gold which is too refined to be coined, must be alloyed before it can be of any use in the commerce of society. But most peculiarly inconsistent and unreasonable is the conduct of those who, while they profess strong Party-feelings, yet entertain a superstitious aversion to Coalitions. Every argument which can be urged against coalitions, as such, is also an argument against party connexions. Every argument by which party connexions can be defended, is a defence of coalitions. What coalitions are to parties, parties are to individuals. The members of a party, in order to promote some great common object, consent to wave all subordinate considerations:--That they may co-operate with more effect where they agree, they contrive, by reciprocal concessions, to preserve the semblance of unanimity, even where they differ. Men are not thought unprincipled for acting thus; because it is evident that without such mutual sacrifices of individual opinions, no government can be formed, nor any important measures carried, in a world of which the inhabitants resemble each other so little, and depend on each other so much,--in which there are as many varieties of mind as of countenance, yet in which great effects can be produced only by combined exertions. We must extend the same indulgence to a coalition between parties. If they agree on every important practical question, if they differ only about objects which are either insignificant or unattainable, no party man can, on his own principles, blame them for uniting. These doctrines, like all other doctrines, may be pushed to extremes by the injudicious, or employed by the designing as a pretext for profligacy. But that they are not in themselves unreasonable or pernicious, the whole history of our country proves.

The Revolution itself was the fruit of a coalition between parties, {410}which had attacked each other with a fury unknown in later times. In the preceding generation their hostility had covered England with blood and mourning. They had subsequently exchanged the sword for the axe: But their enmity was not the less deadly because it was disguised by the forms of justice. By popular clamour, by infamous testimony, by perverted law, they had shed innocent and noble blood like water. Yet all their animosities were forgotten in the sense of their common danger. Whigs and Tories signed the same associations. Bishops and field-preachers thundered out the same exhortations. The doctors of Oxford and the goldsmiths of London sent in their plate with equal zeal. The administration which, in the reign of Queen Anne, defended Holland, rescued Germany, conquered Flanders, dismembered the monarchy of Spain, shook the throne of France, vindicated the independence of Europe, and established the empire of the sea, was formed by a junction between men who had many political contests and many personal injuries to forget. Somers had been a member of the ministry which had sent Marlborough to the Tower. Marlborough had assisted in harassing Somers by a vexatious impeachment. But would these great men have acted wisely or honourably if, on such grounds, they had refused to serve their country in concert? The Cabinet which conducted the seven years' war with such distinguished ability and success, was composed of members who had a short time before been leaders of opposite parties. The Union between Fox and North is, we own, condemned by that argument which it will never be possible to answer in a manner satisfactory to the great body of mankind,--the argument from the event. But we should feel some surprise at the dislike which some zealous Pittites affect to entertain for coalitions, did we not know that a Pittite means, in the phraseology of the present day, a person who differs from Mr. Pitt on every subject of importance. There are, indeed, two Pitts,--the real and the imaginary,--the Pitt of history, a Parliamentary reformer, an enemy of the Test and Corporation Acts, an

advocate of Catholic Emancipation and of free trade,--and the canonized Pitt of the legend,--as unlike to his namesake as Virgil the magician to Virgil the poet, or St. James the slayer of Moors to St. James the fisherman. What may have been the opinions of that unreal being whose birthday {411}is celebrated by libations to Protestant Ascendency, on the subject, of coalitions, we leave it to his veracious hagiographers, Lord Eldon and Lord Westmoreland, to determine. The sentiments of the real Mr. Pitt may be easily ascertained from his conduct. At the time of the revolutionary war he admitted to participation in his power those who had formerly been his most determined enemies. In 1804 he connected himself with Mr. Fox, and, on his return to office, attempted to procure a high situation in the government for his new ally. One more instance we will mention, which has little weight with us, but which ought to have much weight with our opponents. They talk of Mr. Pitt;--but the real object of their adoration is unquestionably the late Mr. Percival, a gentleman whose acknowledged private virtues were but a poor compensation to his country for the narrowness and feebleness of his policy. In 1809 that minister offered to serve, not only *with* Lord Grenville and Earl Grey, but even *under* them. No approximation of feeling between the members of the government and their opponents had then taken place: there had not even been the slightest remission of hostilities. On no question of foreign or domestic policy were the two parties agreed. Yet under such circumstances was this proposition made. It was, as might have been anticipated, rejected by the Whigs and derided by the country. But the recollection of it ought certainly to prevent those who concurred in it, and their devoted followers, from talking of the baseness and selfishness of coalitions.

These general reasonings, it may be said, are superfluous. It is not to coalitions in the abstract, but to the present coalition in particular, that objection is made. We answer, that an attack on the present coalition can only be maintained by succeeding in the most signal way in an attack on

coalitions in the abstract. For never has the world seen, and never is it likely to see, a junction between parties agreeing on so many points, and differing on so few. The Whigs and the supporters of Mr. Canning were united in principle. They were separated only by names, by badges, and by recollections. Opposition, on such grounds as these, would have been disgraceful to English statesmen. It would have been as unreasonable and as profligate as the disputes of the blue and green factions in the Hippodrome of Constantinople. {412}One man admires Mr. Pitt, and another Mr. Fox. Are they therefore never to act together? Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were themselves willing to coalesce while they were alive; and it would therefore be strange, if, after they have been lying for twenty years in Westminster Abbey, their names should keep parties asunder. One man approves of the revolutionary war. Another thinks it unjust and impolitic. But the war is over. It is now merely a matter of historical controversy. And the statesman who should require his colleagues to adopt his confession of faith respecting it, would act as madly as Don Quixote when he went to blows with Cardenio about the chastity of Queen Madasima. On these points, and on many such points as these, our new Ministers, no doubt, hold different opinions. They may also, for aught we know, hold different opinions about the title of Perkin Warbeck, and the genuineness of the [Greek] But we shall hardly, on such grounds as these, pronounce their union a sacrifice of principle to place.

It is, in short, of very little importance whether the parties which have lately united entertain the same sentiments respecting things which have been done and cannot be undone. It is of as little importance whether they have adopted the same speculative notions on questions which could not at present be brought forward with the slightest chance of success, and which, in all probability, they will never be required to discuss. The real questions are these: Do they differ as to the policy which present circumstances require? Or is any great cause, which they may have

heretofore espoused, placed in a more unfavourable situation by their junction?

That this is the ease, no person has even attempted to prove. Bold assertions have indeed been made by a class of writers, who seem to think that their readers are as completely destitute of memory as they themselves are of shame. For the last two years they have been abusing Mr. Canning for adopting the principles of the Whigs; and they now claim that, in joining Mr. Canning, the Whigs have abandoned all their principles! “The Whigs,” said one of their writers, but a few months ago, “are exercising more real power by means of the present Ministers than if they were themselves in office.”

“The Ministers,” said another, “are no longer Tories. What they call conciliation is mere Whiggism.” {413}A third observed that the jest of Mr. Canning about Dennis and his thunder had lost all its point, and that it was a lamentable truth, that all the late measures of the government seemed to have been dictated by the Whigs. Yet these very authors have now the effrontery to assert that the Whigs could not possibly support Mr. Canning without renouncing every opinion which they had formerly professed.

We confidently affirm, on the other hand, that no principle whatever has been sacrificed. With respect to our foreign relations and our commercial policy, the two parties have for years been perfectly agreed. On the Catholic question the views of the Whigs are the same with those of a great majority of their new colleagues. It is true that, in an illustrious assembly, which was formerly suspected of great dulness and great decorum, and which has of late effectually redeemed itself from one half of the reproach, the conduct of the Whigs towards the Catholics has been represented in a very unfavourable light. The arguments employed against them belong, we suppose, to a kind of logic which the privileged orders alone are qualified to use, and which, with their other

constitutional distinctions, we earnestly pray that they may long keep to themselves. An ingenious member of this assembly is said to have observed, that the Protestant alarmists were bound to oppose the new Ministers as friends to the Catholic cause, and that the Catholics ought to oppose them as traitors to the same cause. He reminded the former of the infinite danger of trusting power to a Cabinet composed principally of persons favourable to emancipation: and, at the same time, pointed the indignation of the latter against the perfidy of the pretended friends who had not stipulated that emancipation should be made a ministerial measure! We cannot sufficiently admire the exquisite dexterity of an assailant who, in the same breath, blames the same people for doing, and for *not* doing the same thing. To ordinary plebeian understandings we should think it undeniable that the Catholic question must be now--either in the same situation in which it was before the late change; or it must have lost; or it must have gained. If it have gained, the Whigs are justified; if it have lost, the enemies of the claims ought zealously to support the new government; if it be exactly where it was before, no person who acted with Lord Liverpool can, on this ground, consistently oppose Mr. Canning.

In {414}this view, indeed, the cause of the Whigs is the cause of the ministers who have seceded from the Cabinet. Both parties have put in the same plea; and both must be acquitted or condemned together. If it be allowed that the elevation of Mr. Canning was not an event favourable to the Catholic cause, the Whigs will certainly stand convicted of inconsistency. But at the same time, the only argument by which the ex-Ministers have attempted to vindicate their secession, must fall to the ground; and it will be difficult to consider that proceeding in any other light than as a factious expedient to which they have resorted, in order to embarrass a colleague whom they envied. If, on the other hand, the effect of the late change were such, that it became the duty of those who objected to Catholic Emancipation, to decline all connexion with the

Ministry, it must surely have become, at the same time, the duty of the friends of Emancipation to support the Ministry. Those who take the one ground, when their object is to vindicate the seceders, and the other, when their object is to blacken the Whigs, who, in the same speech, do not scruple to represent the Catholic cause as triumphant and as hopeless, may, we fear, draw down some ridicule on themselves, but will hardly convince the country. But why did not the Whigs stipulate that some proposition for the relief of the Catholics should be immediately brought forward, and supported by the whole influence of the Administration? We answer, simply because they could not obtain such conditions, and because, by insisting upon them, they would have irreparably injured those whom they meant to serve, and have thrown the government into the hands of men who would have employed all its power and patronage to support a system which, we do not scruple to say, is the shame of England, and the curse of Ireland. By the course which they have taken, they have insured to the sister kingdom every alleviation which its calamities can receive from the lenient administration of an oppressive system. Under their government, it will at least be no man's interest to espouse the side of bigotry. Truth will have a fair chance against prejudice. And whenever the dislike with which the majority of the English people regard the Catholic claims shall have been overcome by discussion, no other obstacle will remain to be surmounted.

The friends of the Catholics have, indeed, too long kept out {415}of sight the real difficulty which impedes the progress of all measures for their relief. There has been a nervous reluctance--perhaps a natural unwillingness, to approach this subject. Yet it is of the utmost importance that it should at last be fully understood. The difficulty, we believe, is neither with the King nor with the Cabinet,--neither with the Commons nor with the Lords. It is with the People of England; and not with the corrupt, not with the servile, not with the rude and uneducated, not with the dissolute and turbulent, but with the great body of the middling

orders;--of those who live in comfort, and have received some instruction. Of the higher classes, the decided majority is, beyond all dispute, with the Catholics. The lower classes care nothing at all about the question. It is among those whose influence is generally exerted for the most salutary purposes,--among those from whom liberal statesmen have, in general, received the strongest support,--among those who feel the deepest detestation of oppression and corruption, that erroneous opinions on this subject are most frequent. A faction with which they have no other feeling in common, has, on this question, repeatedly made them its tools, and has diverted their attention more than once from its own folly and profligacy, by raising the cry of No Popery. They have espoused their opinions, not from want of honesty, not from want of sense, but simply from want of information and reflection. They think as the most enlightened men in England thought seventy or eighty years ago. Pulteney and Pelham would no more have given political power to Papists than to ourang-outangs. A proposition for mitigating the severity of the penal laws would, in their time, have been received with suspicion. The full discussion which the subject has since undergone, has produced a great change. Among intelligent men in that rank of life from which our ministers and the members of our legislature are selected, the feeling in favour of concession is strong and general. But, unfortunately, sufficient attention has not been paid to a lower, but most influential and respectable class. The friends of the Catholic claims, content with numbering in their ranks all the most distinguished statesmen of two generations, proud of lists of minorities and majorities adorned by every name which commands the respect of the country, have not sufficiently excited themselves to {416}combat popular prejudices. Pamphlets against Emancipation are circulated, and no answers appear. Sermons are preached against it, and no pains are taken to obliterate the impression. The rector carries a petition round to every shop-keeper and every farmer in his parish, talks of Smithfield and the inquisition, Bishop Bonner and Judge Jeffries. No person takes the trouble to canvass on the other side.

At an election, the candidate who is favourable to the Catholic claims, is almost always content to stand on the defensive, he shrinks from the odium of a bold avowal. While his antagonist asserts and reviles, he palliates, evades, and distinguishes. he is unwilling to give a pledge: he has not made up his mind: he hopes that adequate securities for the Church may be obtained: he will wait to see how the Catholic States of South America behave themselves! And thus, as fast as he can, he gets away from the obnoxious subject, to retrenchment, reform, or negro slavery. If such a man succeeds, his vote does not benefit the Catholics half so much as his shuffling injures them. How can the people understand the question, when those whose business it is to enlighten them, will not state it to them plainly? Is it strange that they should dislike a cause of which almost all its advocates seem to be ashamed? If, at the late election, all our public men who are favourable to Emancipation had dared to speak out, had introduced the subject of their own accord, and discussed it day after day, they might have lost a few votes; they might have been compelled to face a few dead cats; but they would have put down the prejudice effectually. Five or six friends of the claims might have been unseated, but the claims would have been carried.

The popular aversion to them is an honest aversion; according to the measure of knowledge which the people possess, it is a just aversion. It has been reasoned down wherever the experiment has been fearlessly tried. It may be reasoned down everywhere. The war should be carried on in every quarter. No misrepresentation should be suffered to pass unrefuted. When a silly letter from Philo-Melancthon, or Anti-Doyle, about the Coronation Oath, or divided allegiance, makes its appearance in the corner of a provincial newspaper, it will not do merely to say, “What stuff!” We must remember that such statements constantly reiterated, and seldom answered, will assuredly be believed.

Plain, {417}spirited, moderate treatises on the subject, should find their way into every cottage;--not such rancorous nonsense as that for which the Catholics formerly contracted with the fiercest and basest libeller of the age, the apostate politician, the fraudulent debtor, the ungrateful friend, whom England has twice spewed out to America; whom America, though far from squeamish, has twice vomited back to England. They will not, they may be assured, serve their cause by pouring forth unmeasured abuse on men whose memory is justly dear to the hearts of a great people;--men mighty even in their weaknesses, and wise even in their fanaticism;--the goodly fellowship of our reformers,--the noble army of our martyrs. Their scandal about Queen Elizabeth, and their wood-cuts of the devil whispering in the ear of John Fox, will produce nothing but disgust. They must conduct the controversy with good sense and good temper, and there cannot be the slightest doubt of the issue. But of this they may be fully assured, that, while the general feeling of the Nation remains unchanged, a Ministry which should stake its existence on the success of their claims, would ruin itself, without benefiting them.

The conduct of the Catholics, on the present occasion, deserves the highest praise. They have shown that experience has at last taught them to know their enemies from their friends. Indeed there are few scenes in this tragicomic world of ours more amusing than that which the leaders of the Opposition are now performing. The very men who have so long obstructed Emancipation,---who have stirred up the public feeling in England against Emancipation,--who, in fine, have just resigned their offices, because a supporter of Emancipation was placed at the head of the government,--are now weeping over the disappointed hopes of the poor Papists, and execrating the perfidious Whigs who have taken office without stipulating for their relief! The Catholics are, in the mean time, in the highest spirits, congratulating themselves on the success of their old friends, and laughing at the condoling visages of their new champions.

Something not very dissimilar is taking place with respect to Parliamentary Reform. The reformers are delighted with the new Ministry. Their opponents are trying to convince them that they ought to be dissatisfied with it. The Whigs, we suppose, ought to have insisted that Reform should {418}be made a Ministerial measure. We will not at present inquire whether they have, as a body, ever declared any decided opinion on the subject. A much shorter answer will suffice, be Reform good or bad, it is at present evidently unattainable. No man can, by coming into office, or by going out of office, either effect it or prevent it. As we are arguing with people who are more influenced by one name than by ten reasons, we will remind them of the conduct pursued by Mr. Pitt with regard to this question. At the very time when he publicly pledged himself to use his whole power "*as a man and as a minister, honestly and boldly*" to carry a proposition of Parliamentary Reform, he was sitting in the same Cabinet with persons decidedly hostile to every measure of the kind. At the present juncture, we own that we should think it as absurd in any man to decline office for the sake of this object, as it would have been in Sir Thomas More to refuse the Great Seal, because he could not introduce all the institutions of Utopia into England. The world would be in a wretched state indeed, if no person were to accept of power, under a form of government which he thinks susceptible of improvement. The effect of such scrupulosity would be, that the best and wisest men would always be out of place; that all authority would be committed to those who might be too stupid or too selfish to see abuses in any system by which they could profit, and who, by their follies and vices, would aggravate all the evils springing from defective institutions.

But were we to admit the truth of every charge which personal enemies or professional slanderers have brought against the present ministers of the Crown, were we to admit that they had abandoned their principles, that they had betrayed the Catholics and the Reformers, it would still remain to be considered, whether we might not change for the worse. We

trust in God that there is no danger. We think that this country never will, never can, be subjected to the rule of a party so weak, so violent, so ostentatiously selfish, as that which is now in Opposition. Has the Cabinet been formed by a coalition? How, let us ask, has the Opposition been formed? Is it not composed of men who have, all their lives, been thwarting and abusing each other, Jacobins, Whigs, Tories, friends of Catholic Emancipation, enemies of Catholic Emancipation,--men united only by their common {419}love of high rents, by their common envy of superior abilities, by their common wish to depress the people and to dictate to the throne? Did Lord Lansdowne at any time differ so widely from Mr. Canning as Lord Redesdale from Lord Lauderdale--sometime needle-maker, and candidate for the shrievalty of London? Are the Ministers charged with deserting their opinions? and can we find no instances of miraculous conversion on the left of the woolsack? What was the influence which transformed the *Friend of the People* into an aristocrat, "resolved to stand or fall with his order?" Whence was the sudden illumination, which at once disclosed to all the discarded Ministers the imperfections of the Corn Bill? Let us suppose that the Whigs had, as a party, brought forward some great measure before the late changes, that they had carried it through the Commons, that they had sent it up, with the fairest prospect of success, to the Lords, and that they had then, in order to gratify Mr. Canning, consented, in the face of all their previous declarations, to defeat it, what a tempest of execration and derision would have burst upon them! Yet the conduct of the ex-Ministers, according to the best lights we can obtain upon it, was even more culpable than this. Not content with doing a bad thing, they did it in the worst way. The bill which had been prepared by the leader for whom they professed boundless veneration, which had been brought in under their own sanction, which, as they positively declared, had received their fullest consideration, which one of themselves had undertaken to conduct through the House of Lords, that very bill they contrived to defeat:--and, in the act of defeating it, they attempted to lay upon the colleagues whom

they had deserted, the burden of public resentment which they alone had incurred. We would speak with indulgence of men who had done their country noble service before--and of many of whom, individually, it must be impossible to think otherwise than with respect. But the scene lately passed in that great assembly has afflicted and disgusted the country at large; and it is not the least of its evil consequences, that it has lessened in the public estimation, not only a body which ought always to be looked up to with respect, but many individuals of whose motives we cannot bring ourselves to judge unfavourably, and from whose high qualities we trust the country may yet receive {420}both benefit and honour. Mr. Peel fortunately did not expose himself quite as effectually as his associates; though we regret that the tone he adopted was so undecided and equivocal. It was not for him to pronounce any judgment on the wisdom of their conduct. He was fully convinced of the purity of their motives. And finally it was the eighteenth of June!--a day on which, it seems, the Duke of Wellington is privileged to commit all sorts of mischief with impunity to the end of his life. The Duke of Wellington, however, though the part which he took was unfortunately prominent, seems to have been comparatively innocent. He might not, while in office, have paid much attention to the measure in its original form. He might not have understood the real nature of his own unlucky amendment. But what were the motives of Earl Bathurst? Or where were they when he undertook the care of the bill in its former shape? Nothing had been changed since, excepting his own situation. And it would be the very madness of charity to believe, that, if he had still been a colleague of Lord Liverpool, or had been able to come to terms with Mr. Canning, he would have pursued such a line of conduct. Culpably as all his coadjutors have acted in this transaction, his share of it is the most indefensible.

And it is for these men,--for men who, before they have been two months out of office, have retracted the declarations which they made on a most important subject just before they quitted office,--that we are to discard

the present ministers as inconsistent and unprincipled! And these men are the idols of those who entertain so virtuous a loathing for unnatural coalitions, and base compromises. These men think themselves entitled to boast of the purity of their public virtues, and to repel, with indignant amazement, any imputation of interested or factious motives.

We dwell long on this event; because it is one which enables the country to estimate correctly the practical principles of those who, if the present ministers should fall, will assuredly take their places. To call their conduct merely factious, is to deal with it far too mildly. It has been factious at the expense of consistency, and of all concern for the wishes and interests of the people. Was there no other mode of embarrassing the government? Could no other opportunity be found or made for a division? Was there no other {421}pledge which could be violated, if not with less awkwardness to themselves, at least with less injury to the state? Was it necessary that they should make a handle of a question on which the passions of the people were roused to the highest point, and on which its daily bread might depend, that they should condemn the country to another year of agitation, and expose it to dangers, which, only a few months before, they had themselves thought it necessary to avert, by advising an extraordinary exercise of the prerogative? There is one explanation, and only one. They were out, and they longed to be in. Decency, consistency, the prosperity and peace of the country, were as dust in the balance. They knew this question had divided men who were generally united, and united others who were usually opposed; and though they themselves had already taken their part with their colleagues in office and the more intelligent part of their habitual opponents, they did not scruple, for the sake of embarrassing those they had deserted, to purchase the appearance of a numerous following, by opposing a measure which they had themselves concocted, and pledged themselves to support. From the expedients to which they have resorted in

Opposition, we may judge of what we have to expect if they should ever return to office.

They will return too, it must be remembered, not, as before, the colleagues of men by whose superior talents they were overawed, and to whose beneficial measures they were often compelled to yield a reluctant consent. The late change has separated the greater part of them from all such associates forever: it has divided the light from the darkness: it has set all the wisdom, all the liberality, all the public spirit on one side; the imbecility, the bigotry, and the rashness on the other. If they rule again, they will rule alone.

They will return to situations which they will owe neither to their talents nor to their virtues, neither to the choice of their King nor to the love of their country; but solely to the support of an Oligarchical Faction, richly endowed with every quality which ensures to its possessors the hatred of a nation,--a faction arbitrary, bigoted, and insolent,--a faction which makes parade of its contempt for the dearest interests of mankind, which loves to make the people feel of how little weight, in its deliberations, is the consideration of their happiness.

On {422}this party, and on this alone, must such ministers, returning from such a secession, rely to uphold them against the public opinion, against the wishes of a King who has wisely and nobly performed his duty to the state, against the most beloved and respected portion of the aristocracy, against a formidable union of all the great statesmen and orators of the age. It was believed by those of whose wisdom Lord Eldon and the Duke of Newcastle think with reverence, that, in the bond between a sorcerer and his familiar demon, there was a stipulation that the gifts bestowed by the Powers of Evil should never be employed but for purposes of evil. Omnipotent for mischief, these obligors of the fiend were powerless for good. Such will be the compact between the Ex-Ministers, if ever they should return to power, and the only party

which can then support them. That they may be masters, they must be slaves. They will be able to stand only by abject submission and by boundless profusion--by giving up the People to be oppressed, first for the profit of the Great, and then for their amusement,--by corn-laws, and game-laws, and pensions for Lord Robert, and places for Lord John.

They will return pledged to oppose every reform, to maintain a constant struggle against the spirit of the age, to defend abuses to which the nation is every day becoming more quick-sighted. Even Mr. Peel, if, unluckily, he should at last identity himself with their faction, must restrain his propensity to innovation. Mutterings have already been heard in high places against his tendencies to liberality; and all his schemes for the reformation of our code or our courts must be abandoned.

Then will come all those desperate and cruel expedients of which none but bad governments stand in need. The press is troublesome. There must be fresh laws against the press. Secret societies are formed. The Habeas Corpus act must be suspended. The people are distressed and tumultuous. They must be kept down by force. The army must be increased; and the taxes must be increased. Then the distress and tumult are increased: and then the army must be increased again! The country will be governed as a child is governed by an ill-tempered nurse,--first beaten till it cries, and then beaten because it cries!

Our firm conviction is, that if the seceders return to office, they will act thus; and that they will not have the power, even {423}if they should have the inclination, to act otherwise. And what must the end of these things be? We answer, without hesitation, that, if this course be persisted in, if these counsels and these counsellors are maintained, the end must be, a revolution, a bloody and unsparing revolution--a revolution which will make the ears of those who hear of it tingle in the remotest countries, and in the remotest times. The middling orders in England are, we well know, attached to the institutions of their country, but not with a blindly

partial attachment. They see the merits of the system; but they also see its faults; and they have a strong and growing desire that these faults should be removed. If, while their wish for improvement is becoming stronger and stronger, the government is to become worse and worse, the consequences are obvious. Even now, it is impossible to disguise, that there is arising in the bosom of that class a Republican sect, as audacious, as paradoxical, as little inclined to respect antiquity, as enthusiastically attached to its ends, as unscrupulous in the choice of its means, as the French Jacobins themselves,--but far superior to the French Jacobins in acuteness and information--in caution, in patience, and in resolution. They are men whose minds have been put into training for violent exertion. All that is merely ornamental--all that gives the roundness, the smoothness, and the bloom, has been exuded. Nothing is left but nerve, and muscle, and bone. Their love of liberty is no boyish fancy. It is not nourished by rhetoric, and it does not evaporate in rhetoric. They care nothing for Leonidas, and Epaminondas, and Brutus, and Codes. They profess to derive their opinions from demonstration alone; and are never so little satisfied with them as when they see them exhibited in a romantic form. Metaphysical and political science engage their whole attention. Philosophical pride has done for them what spiritual pride did for the Puritans in a former age; it has generated in them an aversion for the fine arts, for elegant literature, and for the sentiments of chivalry. It has made them arrogant, intolerant, and impatient of all superiority. These qualities will, in spite of their real claims to respect, render them unpopular, as long as the people are satisfied with their rulers. But under an ignorant and tyrannical ministry, obstinately opposed to the most moderate and judicious innovations, their principles would spread as rapidly {424}as those of the Puritans formerly spread, in spite of their offensive peculiarities. The public, disgusted with the blind adherence of its rulers to ancient abuses, would be reconciled to the most startling novelties. A strong democratic party would be formed in the educated class. In the lowest, and the most numerous order of the population, those

who have any opinions at all are democrats already. In our manufacturing towns, the feeling is even now formidably strong; and it is not strange that it should be so: For it is on persons in this station that the abuses of our system press most heavily; while its advantages, on the other hand, are comparatively little felt by them. An abundant supply of the necessaries of life is, with them, almost the only consideration. The difference between an arbitrary and a limited monarchy vanishes, when compared with the difference between one meal a-day and three meals a-day. It is poor consolation to a man who has had no breakfast, and expects no supper, that the King does not possess a dispensing power, and that troops cannot be raised in time of peace, without the consent of Parliament. With this class, our government, free as it is, is even now as unpopular as if it were despotic,--nay, much more so. In despotic states, the multitude is unaccustomed to general speculations on politics. Even when men suffer most severely, they look no further than the proximate cause. They demand the abolition of a particular duty, or tear an obnoxious individual to pieces. But they never think of attacking the whole system. If Constantinople were in the state in which Manchester and Leeds have lately been, there would be a cry against the Grand Vizier or the bakers. The head of the Vizier would be thrown to the mob, over the wall of the Seraglio--a score of bakers would be smothered in their own ovens; and every thing would go on as before. Not a single rioter would think of curtailing the prerogatives of the Sultan, or of demanding a representative divan. But people familiar with political inquiries carry their scrutiny further; and, justly or unjustly, attribute the grievances under which they labour, to defects in the original constitution of the government. Thus it is with a large portion of our spinners, our grinders, and our weavers. It is not too much to say, that in a season of distress, they are ripe for any revolution. This, indeed, is acknowledged by all the Tory writers of our time. But all {425}this, they tell us, comes of education--it is all the fault of the Liberals. We will not take up the time of our readers with answering such observations. We will only remind

our gentry and clergy, that the question at present is not about the *cause* of the evil, but about its *cure*; and that, unless due precaution be used, let the fault be whose it may, the punishment will inevitably be their own.

The history of our country, since the peace of 1815, is almost entirely made up of the struggles of the lower orders against the government, and of the efforts of the government to keep them down. In 1816, immense assemblies were convened, secret societies were formed, and gross outrages were committed. In 1817, the Habeas Corpus Act was twice suspended. In 1819, the disturbances broke out afresh. Meetings were held, so formidable, from their numbers and their spirit, that the Ministry, and the Parliament, approved of the conduct of magistrates who had dispersed one of them by the sword. Fresh laws were passed against seditious writings and practices. Yet the following year commenced with a desperate and extended conspiracy for the assassination of the cabinet, and the subversion of the government. A few months after this event, the Queen landed. On that occasion, the majority of the middling orders joined with the mob. The effect of the union was irresistible. The Ministers and the Parliament stood aghast; the bill of pains and penalties was dropped; and a convulsion, which seemed inevitable, was averted. But the events of that year ought to impress one lesson on the mind of every public man,--that an alliance between the disaffected multitude and a large portion of the middling orders, is one with which no government can venture to cope, without imminent danger to the constitution.

A government like that with which England would be cursed, if the present Ministry should fall before the present Opposition, would render such an alliance not only inevitable, but permanent. In less than ten years, it would goad every Reformer in the country into a Revolutionist. It would place at the head of the multitude, persons possessing all the education, all the judgment, and all the habits of cooperation in which the multitude itself is deficient. That great body is physically the most powerful in the state. Like the Hebrew champion, it is yet held in

captivity by its blindness. {426}But if once the eyeless Giant shall find a guide to put his hand on the props of the State--if once he shall bow himself upon the pillars, woe to all those who have made him their laughing-stock, or chained him to grind at their mill!

We do, therefore, firmly believe, that, even if no external cause were to precipitate a fatal crisis, this country could not be governed for a single generation by such men as Lord Westmoreland and Lord Eldon, without extreme risk of revolution. But there are other symptoms in the body politic, not less alarming than those which we have described. In Ireland, there are several millions of Catholics, who do not love our government; and who detest, with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, and with all their strength, the party now in Opposition. The accession of that party to power, would be a death-blow to their hopes of obtaining their demands by constitutional means: and we may fairly expect, that all the events which followed the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, will take place again, on a greater and more formidable scale. One thing, indeed, we have no right to expect, that a second Hoche will be as unfortunate as the former. A civil war in Ireland will lead almost necessarily to a war with France. Maritime hostilities with France, and the clash of neutral and belligerent pretensions, will then produce war with America. Then come expeditions to Canada and expeditions to Java. The Cape of Good Hope must be garrisoned. Lisbon must be defended. Let us suppose the best. That best must be, a long conflict, a dear-bought victory, a great addition to a debt already most burdensome, fresh taxes, and fresh discontents. All these are events which may not improbably happen under any government--events which the next month may bring forth--events, against which no minister, however able and honest, can with perfect certainty provide,--but which Ministers, whose policy should exasperate the people of Ireland, would almost unavoidably bring upon us. A Cabinet formed by the Ex-Ministers could scarcely exist for a year, without incensing the lower classes of the English to frenzy, by giving

them up to the selfish tyranny of its aristocratical supporters, without driving Ireland into rebellion, and without tempting France to war.

There is one hope, and one hope only for our country; and {427}that hope is in a liberal Administration,--in Administration which will follow with cautions, but with constantly advancing steps, the progress of the public mind; which, by promptitude to redress practical grievances, will enable itself to oppose with authority and effect, the propositions of turbulent theorists; which by kindness and fairness in all its dealings with the People, will entitle itself to their confidence and esteem.

The state of England at the present moment, bears a close resemblance to that of France at the time when Turgot was called to the head of affairs. Abuses were numerous; public burdens heavy; a spirit of innovation was abroad among the people. The philosophical Minister attempted to secure the ancient institutions, by amending them. The mild reforms which he projected, had they been carried into execution, would have conciliated the people, and saved from the most tremendous of all commotions the Church, the Aristocracy, and the Throne. But a crowd of narrow-minded nobles, ignorant of their own interest, though solicitous for nothing else, the Newcastles and the Salisburys of France, began to tremble for their oppressive franchises. Their clamours overpowered the mild good sense of a King who wanted only firmness to be the best of Sovereigns. The Minister was discarded for councillors more obsequious to the privileged orders; and the aristocracy and clergy exulted in their success.

Then came a new period of profusion and misrule. And then, swiftly, like an armed man, came poverty and dismay. The acclamation of the nobles, and the *Te Deums* of the church, grew fainter and fainter. The very courtiers muttered disapprobation. The Ministers stammered out feeble and inconsistent counsels. But all other voices were soon drowned in one, which every moment waxed louder and more terrible,--in the fierce and tumultuous roar of a great people, conscious of irresistible strength,

maddened by intolerable wrongs, and sick of deferred hopes! That cry, so long stifled, now rose from every corner of France, made itself heard in the presence-chamber of her King, in the salons of her nobles, and in the refectories of her luxurious priesthood. Then, at length, concessions were made which the subjects of Louis the Fourteenth would have thought it impious even to desire,--which the most factious opponent of {428}Louis the Fifteenth had never ventured to ask,--which, but a few years before, would have been received with ecstasies of gratitude. But it was too late!

The imprisoned Genie of the Arabian Tales, during the early period of his confinement, promised wealth, empire, and supernatural powers to the man who should extricate him. But when he had waited long in vain, mad with rage at the continuance of his captivity, he vowed to destroy his deliverer without mercy! Such is the gratitude of nations exasperated by misgovernment to rulers who are slow to concede. The first use which they make of freedom is to avenge themselves on those who have been so slow to grant it.

Never was this disposition more remarkably displayed than at the period of which we speak. Abuses were swept away with unsparing severity. The royal prerogatives, the feudal privileges, the provincial distinctions, were sacrificed to the passions of the people. Every thing was given; and every thing was given in vain. Distrust and hatred were not to be thus eradicated from the minds of men who thought that they were not receiving favours but extorting rights; and that, if they deserved blame, it was not for their insensibility to tardy benefits, but for their forgetfulness of past oppression.

What followed was the necessary consequence of such a state of feeling. The recollection of old grievances made the people suspicious and cruel. The fear of popular outrages produced emigrations, intrigues with foreign courts; and, finally, a. general war. Then came the barbarity of fear; the

triple despotism of the clubs, the committees, and the commune; the organized anarchy, the fanatical atheism, the scheming and far-sighted madness, the butcheries of the Châtelet, and the accursed marriages of the Loire. The whole property of the nation changed hands. Its best and wisest citizens were banished or murdered. Dungeons were emptied by assassins as fast as they were filled by spies. Provinces were made desolate. Towns were unpeopled. Old things passed away. All things became new.

The paroxysm terminated. A singular train of events restored the house of Bourbon to the French throne. The exiles have returned. But they have returned as the few survivors of the deluge returned to a world in which they could {429}recognise nothing; in which the valleys had been raised, and the mountains depressed, and the courses of the rivers changed,--in which sand and sea-weed had covered the cultivated fields and the walls of imperial cities. They have returned to seek in vain, amidst the mouldering relics of a former system, and the fermenting elements of a new creation, the traces of any remembered object. The old boundaries are obliterated. The old laws are forgotten. The old titles have become laughing-stocks. The gravity of the parliaments, and the pomp of the hierarchy; the Doctors whose disputes agitated the Sorbonne, and the embroidered multitude whose footsteps wore out the marble pavements of Versailles,--all have disappeared. The proud and voluptuous prelates who feasted on silver, and dozed amidst curtains of massy velvet, have been replaced by curates who undergo every drudgery and every humiliation for the wages of lackeys. To those gay and elegant nobles who studied military science as a fashionable accomplishment, and expected military rank as a part of their birthright, have succeeded men born in lofts and cellars; educated in the halfnaked ranks of the revolutionary armies, and raised by ferocious valour and self-taught skill, to dignities with which the coarseness of their manners and language forms a grotesque contrast. The government may amuse itself by playing

at despotism, by reviving the names and aping the style of the old court--as Helenus in Epirus consoled himself for the lost magnificence of Troy, by calling his brook Xanthus, and the entrance of his little capital the Seæan gate. But the law of entail is gone, and cannot be restored. The liberty of the press is established, and the feeble struggles of the Minister cannot permanently put it down. The Bastille is fallen, and can never more rise from its ruins. A few words, a few ceremonies, a few rhetorical topics, make up all that remains of that system which was founded so deeply by the policy of the house of Valois, and adorned so splendidly by the pride of Louis the Great.

Is this a romance? Or is it a faithful picture of what has lately been in a neighbouring land--of what may shortly be, within the borders of our own? Has the warning been given in vain? Have our Mannerses and Clintons so soon forgotten the fate of houses as wealthy and as noble as their own: Have they forgotten how the tender and delicate woman,--the {430}woman who would not set her foot on the earth for tenderness and delicateness, the idol of gilded drawing-rooms, the pole-star of crowded theatres, the standard of beauty, the arbitress of fashion, the patroness of genius,--was compelled to exchange her luxurious and dignified ease for labour and dependence, the sighs of Dukes and the flattery of bowing Abbés for the insults of rude pupils and exacting mothers;--perhaps, even to draw an infamous and miserable subsistence from those charms which had been the glory of royal circles--to sell for a morsel of bread her' reluctant caresses and her haggard smiles--to be turned over from a garret to a hospital, and from a hospital to a parish vault? Have they forgotten how the gallant and luxurious nobleman, sprung from illustrious ancestors, marked out from his cradle for the highest honours of the State and of the army, impatient of all control, exquisitely sensible of the slightest affront, with all his high spirit, his polished manners, his voluptuous habits, was reduced to request, with tears in his eyes, credit for half-a-crown,--to pass day after day in hearing the auxiliary verbs

mis-recited, or the first page of Télémaque misconstrued, by petulant boys, who infested him with nicknames and caricatures, who mimicked his foreign accent, and laughed at his thread-bare coat? Have they forgotten all this? God grant that they may never remember it with unavailing self-accusation, when desolation shall have visited wealthier cities and fairer gardens;--when Manchester shall be as Lyons, and Stowe as Chantilly;--when he who now, in the pride of rank and opulence, sneers at what we have written in the bitter sincerity of our hearts, shall be thankful for a porringer of broth at the door of some Spanish convent, or shall implore some Italian money-lender to advance another pistole on his George!