EDMUND BURKE

THE WORKS OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE, VOL. 05 (OF 12)

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONDUCT OF THE MINORITY PARTICULARLY IN THE LAST SESSION OF PARLIAMENT. ADDRESSED TO THE DUKE OF PORTLAND AND LORD FITZWILLIAM. 1793

LETTER TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND

My dear Lord,—The paper which I take the liberty of sending to your Grace was, for the greater part, written during the last

session. A few days after the prorogation some few observations were added. I was, however, resolved to let it lie by me for a considerable time, that, on viewing the matter at a proper distance, and when the sharpness of recent impressions had been worn off, I might be better able to form a just estimate of the value of my first opinions.

I have just now read it over very coolly and deliberately. My latest judgment owns my first sentiments and reasonings, in their full force, with regard both to persons and things.

During a period of four years, the state of the world, except for some few and short intervals, has filled me with a good deal of serious inquietude. I considered a general war against Jacobins and Jacobinism as the only possible chance of saving Europe (and England as included in Europe) from a truly frightful revolution. For this I have been censured, as receiving through weakness, or spreading through fraud and artifice, a false alarm. Whatever others may think of the matter, that alarm, in my mind, is by no means quieted. The state of affairs *abroad* is not so much mended as to make me, for one, full of confidence. At *home*, I see no abatement whatsoever in the zeal of the partisans of Jacobinism towards their cause, nor any cessation in their efforts to do mischief. What is doing by Lord Lauderdale on the first scene of Lord George Gordon's actions, and in his spirit, is not calculated to remove my apprehensions. They pursue their first object with as much eagerness as ever, but with more dexterity. Under the plausible name of peace, by which they delude or

are deluded, they would deliver us unarmed and defenceless to the confederation of Jacobins, whose centre is indeed in France, but whose rays proceed in every direction throughout the world. I understand that Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, has been lately very busy in spreading a disaffection to this war (which we carry on for our being) in the country in which his property gives him so great an influence. It is truly alarming to see so large a part of the aristocratic interest engaged in the cause of the new species of democracy, which is openly attacking or secretly undermining the system of property by which mankind has hitherto been governed. But we are not to delude ourselves. No man can be connected with a party which professes publicly to admire or may be justly suspected of secretly abetting this French Revolution, who must not be drawn into its vortex, and become the instrument of its designs.

What I have written is in the manner of apology. I have given it that form, as being the most respectful; but I do not stand in need of any apology for my principles, my sentiments, or my conduct. I wish the paper I lay before your Grace to be considered as my most deliberate, solemn, and even testamentary protest against the proceedings and doctrines which have hitherto produced so much mischief in the world, and which will infallibly produce more, and possibly greater. It is my protest against the delusion by which some have been taught to look upon this Jacobin contest at home as an ordinary party squabble about place or patronage, and to regard this Jacobin war abroad as a common war about trade

or territorial boundaries, or about a political balance of power among rival or jealous states. Above all, it is my protest against that mistake or perversion of sentiment by which they who agree with us in our principles may on collateral considerations be regarded as enemies, and those who, in this perilous crisis of all human affairs, differ from us fundamentally and practically, as our best friends. Thus persons of great importance may be made to turn the whole of their influence to the destruction of their principles.

I now make it my humble request to your Grace, that you will not give any sort of answer to the paper I send, or to this letter, except barely to let me know that you have received them. I even wish that at present you may not read the paper which I transmit: lock it up in the drawer of your library-table; and when a day of compulsory reflection comes, then be pleased to turn to it. Then remember that your Grace had a true friend, who had, comparatively with men of your description, a very small interest in opposing the modern system of morality and policy, but who, under every discouragement, was faithful to public duty and to private friendship. I shall then probably be dead. I am sure I do not wish to live to see such things. But whilst I do live, I shall pursue the same course, although my merits should be taken for unpardonable faults, and as such avenged, not only on myself, but on my posterity.

Adieu, my dear Lord; and do me the justice to believe me ever, with most sincere respect, veneration, and affectionate

attachment,

Your Grace's most faithful friend,
And most obedient humble servant,
EDMUND BURKE.
BEACONSFIELD, Sept. 29, 1793.

OBSERVATIONS

Approaching towards the close of a long period of public service, it is natural I should be desirous to stand well (I hope I do stand tolerably well) with that public which, with whatever fortune, I have endeavored faithfully and zealously to serve.

I am also not a little anxious for some place in the estimation of the two persons to whom I address this paper. I have always acted with them, and with those whom they represent. To my knowledge, I have not deviated, no, not in the minutest point, from their opinions and principles. Of late, without any alteration in their sentiments or in mine, a difference of a very unusual nature, and which, under the circumstances, it is not easy to describe, has arisen between us.

In my journey with them through life, I met Mr. Fox in my road; and I travelled with him very cheerfully, as long as he appeared to me to pursue the same direction with those in whose company I set out. In the latter stage of our progress a new scheme of liberty and equality was produced in the world, which either dazzled his imagination, or was suited to some new walks of ambition which were then opened to his view. The whole frame and fashion of his politics appear to have suffered about that time a very material alteration. It is about three years since, in consequence of that extraordinary change, that, after a pretty long preceding period of distance, coolness, and want of

confidence, if not total alienation on his part, a complete public separation has been made between that gentleman and me. Until lately the breach between us appeared reparable. I trusted that time and reflection, and a decisive experience of the mischiefs which have flowed from the proceedings and the system of France, on which our difference had arisen, as well as the known sentiments of the best and wisest of our common friends upon that subject, would have brought him to a safer way of thinking. Several of his friends saw no security for keeping things in a proper train after this excursion of his, but in the reunion of the party on its old grounds, under the Duke of Portland. Mr. Fox, if he pleased, might have been comprehended in that system, with the rank and consideration to which his great talents entitle him, and indeed must secure to him in any party arrangement that *could* be made. The Duke of Portland knows how much I wished for, and how earnestly I labored that reunion, and upon terms that might every way be honorable and advantageous to Mr. Fox. His conduct in the last session has extinguished these hopes forever.

Mr. Fox has lately published in print a defence of his conduct. On taking into consideration that defence, a society of gentlemen, called the Whig Club, thought proper to come to the following resolution:—"That their confidence in Mr. Fox is confirmed, strengthened, and increased by the calumnies against him."

To that resolution my two noble friends, the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam, have given their concurrence.

The calumnies supposed in that resolution can be nothing else than the objections taken to Mr. Fox's conduct in this session of Parliament; for to them, and to them alone, the resolution refers. I am one of those who have publicly and strongly urged those objections. I hope I shall be thought only to do what is necessary to my justification, thus publicly, solemnly, and heavily censured by those whom I most value and esteem, when I firmly contend that the objections which I, with many others of the friends to the Duke of Portland, have made to Mr. Fox's conduct, are not *calumnies*, but founded on truth,—that they are not *few*, but many,—and that they are not *light and trivial*, but, in a very high degree, serious and important.

That I may avoid the imputation of throwing out, even privately, any loose, random imputations against the public conduct of a gentleman for whom I once entertained a very warm affection, and whose abilities I regard with the greatest admiration, I will put down, distinctly and articulately, some of the matters of objection which I feel to his late doctrines and proceedings, trusting that I shall be able to demonstrate to the friends whose good opinion I would still cultivate, that not levity, nor caprice, nor less defensible motives, but that very grave reasons, influence my judgment. I think that the spirit of his late proceedings is wholly alien to our national policy, and to the peace, to the prosperity, and to the legal liberties of this nation, *according to our ancient domestic and appropriated mode of holding them*.

Viewing things in that light, my confidence in him is not increased, but totally destroyed, by those proceedings. I cannot conceive it a matter of honor or duty (but the direct contrary) in any member of Parliament to continue systematic opposition for the purpose of putting government under difficulties, until Mr. Fox (with all his present ideas) shall have the principal direction of affairs placed in his hands, and until the present body of administration (with their ideas and measures) is of course overturned and dissolved.

To come to particulars.

1. The laws and Constitution of the kingdom intrust the sole and exclusive right of treating with foreign potentates to the king. This is an undisputed part of the legal prerogative of the crown. However, notwithstanding this, Mr. Fox, without the knowledge or participation of any one person in the House of Commons, with whom he was bound by every party principle, in matters of delicacy and importance, confidentially to communicate, thought proper to send Mr. Adair, as his representative, and with his cipher, to St. Petersburg, there to frustrate the objects for which the minister from the crown was authorized to treat. He succeeded in this his design, and did actually frustrate the king's minister in some of the objects of his negotiation.

This proceeding of Mr. Fox does not (as I conceive) amount to absolute high treason,—Russia, though on bad terms, not having been then declaredly at war with this kingdom. But such a proceeding is in law not very remote from that offence, and is

undoubtedly a most unconstitutional act, and an high treasonable misdemeanor.

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

On the other hand, the advantage taken of the discontent which at that time prevailed in Parliament and in the nation, to give to an individual an influence directly against the government of his country, in a foreign court, has made a highway into England for the intrigues of foreign courts in our affairs. This is a sore evil,—an evil from which, before this time, England was more free than any other nation. Nothing can preserve us from that evil—which connects cabinet factions abroad with popular factions here—but the keeping sacred the crown as the only channel of communication with every other nation.

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

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

2. Very soon after his sending this embassy to Russia, that is, in the spring of 1792, a covenanting club or association was formed in London, calling itself by the ambitious and invidious title of "*The Friends of the People*." It was composed of many of Mr. Fox's own most intimate personal and party friends, joined to a very considerable part of the members of those mischievous associations called the Revolution Society and the Constitutional Society. Mr. Fox must have been well apprised of the progress of that society in every one of its steps, if not of the very origin of it. I certainly was informed of both, who had no connection with the design, directly or indirectly. His influence over the persons who composed the leading part in that association was, and is, unbounded. I hear that he expressed some disapprobation of this club in one case, (that of Mr. St. John,) where his consent was formally asked; yet he never attempted seriously to put a stop to the association, or to disavow it, or to control, check, or modify it in any way whatsoever. If he had pleased, without difficulty, he might have suppressed it in its beginning. However, he did

not only not suppress it in its beginning, but encouraged it in every part of its progress, at that particular time when Jacobin clubs (under the very same or similar titles) were making such dreadful havoc in a country not thirty miles from the coast of England, and when every motive of moral prudence called for the discouragement of societies formed for the increase of popular pretensions to power and direction.

3. When the proceedings of this society of the Friends of the People, as well as others acting in the same spirit, had caused a very serious alarm in the mind of the Duke of Portland, and of many good patriots, he publicly, in the House of Commons, treated their apprehensions and conduct with the greatest asperity and ridicule. He condemned and vilified, in the most insulting and outrageous terms, the proclamation issued by government on that occasion,—though he well knew that it had passed through the Duke of Portland's hands, that it had received his fullest approbation, and that it was the result of an actual interview between that noble Duke and Mr. Pitt. During the discussion of its merits in the House of Commons, Mr. Fox countenanced and justified the chief promoters of that association; and he received, in return, a public assurance from them of an inviolable adherence to him singly and personally. On account of this proceeding, a very great number (I presume to say not the least grave and wise part) of the Duke of Portland's friends in Parliament, and many out of Parliament who are of the same description, have become separated from that time to this from

Mr. Fox's particular cabal,—very few of which cabal are, or ever have, so much as pretended to be attached to the Duke of Portland, or to pay any respect to him or his opinions.

4. At the beginning of this session, when the sober part of the nation was a second time generally and justly alarmed at the progress of the French arms on the Continent, and at the spreading of their horrid principles and cabals in England, Mr. Fox did not (as had been usual in cases of far less moment) call together any meeting of the Duke of Portland's friends in the House of Commons, for the purpose of taking their opinion on the conduct to be pursued in Parliament at that critical juncture. He concerted his measures (if with any persons at all) with the friends of Lord Lansdowne, and those calling themselves Friends of the People, and others not in the smallest degree attached to the Duke of Portland; by which conduct he wilfully gave up (in my opinion) all pretensions to be considered as of that party, and much more to be considered as the leader and mouth of it in the House of Commons. This could not give much encouragement to those who had been separated from Mr. Fox, on account of his conduct on the first proclamation, to rejoin that party.

5. Not having consulted any of the Duke of Portland's party in the House of Commons,—and not having consulted them, because he had reason to know that the course he had resolved to pursue would be highly disagreeable to them,—he represented the alarm, which was a second time given and taken, in still more invidious colors than those in which he painted the alarms

of the former year. He described those alarms in this manner, although the cause of them was then grown far less equivocal and far more urgent. He even went so far as to treat the supposition of the growth of a Jacobin spirit in England as a libel on the nation. As to the danger from *abroad*, on the first day of the session he said little or nothing upon the subject. He contented himself with defending the ruling factions in France, and with accusing the public councils of this kingdom of every sort of evil design on the liberties of the people,—declaring distinctly, strongly, and precisely, that the whole danger of the nation was from the growth of the power of the crown. The policy of this declaration was obvious. It was in subservience to the general plan of disabling us from taking any steps against France. To counteract the alarm given by the progress of Jacobin arms and principles, he endeavored to excite an opposite alarm concerning the growth of the power of the crown. If that alarm should prevail, he knew that the nation never would be brought by arms to oppose the growth of the Jacobin empire: because it is obvious that war does, in its very nature, necessitate the Commons considerably to strengthen the hands of government; and if that strength should itself be the object of terror, we could have no war.

6. In the extraordinary and violent speeches of that day, he attributed all the evils which the public had suffered to the proclamation of the preceding summer; though he spoke in presence of the Duke of Portland's own son, the Marquis of

Tichfield, who had seconded the address on that proclamation, and in presence of the Duke of Portland's brother, Lord Edward Bentinck, and several others of his best friends and nearest relations.

7. On that day, that is, on the 13th of December, 1792, he proposed an amendment to the address, which stands on the journals of the House, and which is, perhaps, the most extraordinary record which ever did stand upon them. To introduce this amendment, he not only struck out the part of the proposed address which alluded to insurrections, upon the ground of the objections which he took to the legality of calling together Parliament, (objections which I must ever think litigious and sophistical,) but he likewise struck out *that part which related to the cabals and conspiracies of the French faction in England*, although their practices and correspondences were of public notoriety. Mr. Cooper and Mr. Watt had been deputed from Manchester to the Jacobins. These ambassadors were received by them as British representatives. Other deputations of English had been received at the bar of the National Assembly. They had gone the length of giving supplies to the Jacobin armies; and they, in return, had received promises of military assistance to forward their designs in England. A regular correspondence for fraternizing the two nations had also been carried on by societies in London with a great number of the Jacobin societies in France. This correspondence had also for its object the pretended improvement of the British Constitution. What is the

most remarkable, and by much the more mischievous part of his proceedings that day, Mr. Fox likewise struck out everything in the address which *related to the tokens of ambition given by France, her aggressions upon our allies, and the sudden and dangerous growth of her power upon every side*; and instead of all those weighty, and, at that time, necessary matters, by which the House of Commons was (in a crisis such as perhaps Europe never stood) to give assurances to our allies, strength to our government, and a check to the common enemy of Europe, he substituted nothing but a criminal charge on the conduct of the British government for calling Parliament together, and an engagement to inquire into that conduct.

8. If it had pleased God to suffer him to succeed in this his project for the amendment to the address, he would forever have ruined this nation, along with the rest of Europe. At home all the Jacobin societies, formed for the utter destruction of our Constitution, would have lifted up their heads, which had been beaten down by the two proclamations. Those societies would have been infinitely strengthened and multiplied in every quarter; their dangerous foreign communications would have been left broad and open; the crown would not have been authorized to take any measure whatever for our immediate defence by sea or land. The closest, the most natural, the nearest, and at the same time, from many internal as well as external circumstances, the weakest of our allies, Holland, would have been given up, bound hand and foot, to France, just on the point of invading

that republic. A general consternation would have seized upon all Europe; and all alliance with every other power, except France, would have been forever rendered impracticable to us. I think it impossible for any man, who regards the dignity and safety of his country, or indeed the common safety of mankind, ever to forget Mr. Fox's proceedings in that tremendous crisis of all human affairs.

9. Mr. Fox very soon had reason to be apprised of the general dislike of the Duke of Portland's friends to this conduct. Some of those who had even voted with him, the day after their vote, expressed their abhorrence of his amendment, their sense of its inevitable tendency, and their total alienation from the principles and maxims upon which it was made; yet the very next day, that is, on Friday, the 14th of December, he brought on what in effect was the very same business, and on the same principles, a *second* time.

10. Although the House does not usually sit on Saturday, he a *third* time brought on another proposition in the same spirit, and pursued it with so much heat and perseverance as to sit into Sunday: a thing not known in Parliament for many years.

11. In all these motions and debates he wholly departed from all the political principles relative to France (considered merely as a state, and independent of its Jacobin form of government) which had hitherto been held fundamental in this country, and which he had himself held more strongly than any man in Parliament. He at that time studiously separated himself from

those to whose sentiments he used to profess no small regard, although those sentiments were publicly declared. I had then no concern in the party, having been, for some time, with all outrage, excluded from it; but, on general principles, I must say that a person who assumes to be leader of a party composed of freemen and of gentlemen ought to pay some degree of deference to their feelings, and even to their prejudices. He ought to have some degree of management for their credit and influence in their country. He showed so very little of this delicacy, that he compared the alarm raised in the minds of the Duke of Portland's party, (which was his own,) an alarm in which they sympathized with the greater part of the nation, to the panic produced by the pretended Popish plot in the reign of Charles the Second, —describing it to be, as that was, a contrivance of knaves, and believed only by well-meaning dupes and madmen.

12. The Monday following (the 17th of December) he pursued the same conduct. The means used in England to coöperate with the Jacobin army in politics agreed with their modes of proceeding: I allude to the mischievous writings circulated with much industry and success, as well as the seditious clubs, which at that time added not a little to the alarm taken by observing and well-informed men. The writings and the clubs were two evils which marched together. Mr. Fox discovered the greatest possible disposition to favor and countenance the one as well as the other of these two grand instruments of the French system. He would hardly consider any political writing whatsoever as

a libel, or as a fit object of prosecution. At a time in which the press has been the grand instrument of the subversion of order, of morals, of religion, and, I may say, of human society itself, to carry the doctrines of its liberty higher than ever it has been known by its most extravagant assertors, even in France, gave occasion to very serious reflections. Mr. Fox treated the associations for prosecuting these libels as tending to prevent the improvement of the human mind, and as a mobbish tyranny. He thought proper to compare them with the riotous assemblies of Lord George Gordon in 1780, declaring that he had advised his friends in Westminster to sign the associations, whether they agreed to them or not, in order that they might avoid destruction to their persons or their houses, or a desertion of their shops. This insidious advice tended to confound those who wished well to the object of the association with the seditious against whom the association was directed. By this stratagem, the confederacy intended for preserving the British Constitution and the public peace would be wholly defeated. The magistrates, utterly incapable of distinguishing the friends from the enemies of order, would in vain look for support, when they stood in the greatest need of it.

13. Mr. Fox's whole conduct, on this occasion, was without example. The very morning after these violent declamations in the House of Commons against the association, (that is, on Tuesday, the 18th,) he went himself to a meeting of St. George's parish, and there signed an association of the nature and tendency

of those he had the night before so vehemently condemned; and several of his particular and most intimate friends, inhabitants of that parish, attended and signed along with him.

14. Immediately after this extraordinary step, and in order perfectly to defeat the ends of that association against Jacobin publications, (which, contrary to his opinions, he had promoted and signed,) a mischievous society was formed under his auspices, called *The Friends of the Liberty of the Press*. Their title groundlessly insinuated that the freedom of the press had lately suffered, or was now threatened with, some violation. This society was only, in reality, another modification of the society calling itself *The Friends of the People*, which in the preceding summer had caused so much uneasiness in the Duke of Portland's mind, and in the minds of several of his friends. This new society was composed of many, if not most, of the members of the club of the Friends of the People, with the addition of a vast multitude of others (such as Mr. Horne Tooke) of the worst and most seditious dispositions that could be found in the whole kingdom. In the first meeting of this club Mr. Erskine took the lead, and directly (without any disavowal ever since on Mr. Fox's part) *made use of his name and authority in favor of its formation and purposes*. In the same meeting Mr. Erskine had thanks for his defence of Paine, which amounted to a complete avowal of that Jacobin incendiary; else it is impossible to know how Mr. Erskine should have deserved such marked applauses for acting merely as a lawyer for his fee, in the ordinary course of his profession.

15. Indeed, Mr. Fox appeared the general patron of all such persons and proceedings. When Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and other persons, for practices of the most dangerous kind, in Paris and in London, were removed from the King's Guards, Mr. Fox took occasion in the House of Commons heavily to censure that act, as unjust and oppressive, and tending to make officers bad citizens. There were few, however, who did not call for some such measures on the part of government, as of absolute necessity for the king's personal safety, as well as that of the public; and nothing but the mistaken lenity, with which such practices were rather discountenanced than punished, could possibly deserve reprehension in what was done with regard to those gentlemen.

16. Mr. Fox regularly and systematically, and with a diligence long unusual to him, did everything he could to countenance the same principle of fraternity and connection with the Jacobins abroad, and the National Convention of France, for which these officers had been removed from the Guards. For when a bill (feeble and lax, indeed, and far short of the vigor required by the conjuncture) was brought in for removing out of the kingdom the emissaries of France, Mr. Fox opposed it with all his might. He pursued a vehement and detailed opposition to it through all its stages, describing it as a measure contrary to the existing treaties between Great Britain and France, as a violation of the law of nations, and as an outrage on the Great Charter itself.

17. In the same manner, and with the same heat, he opposed a bill which (though awkward and inartificial in its construction)

was right and wise in its principle, and was precedented in the best times, and absolutely necessary at that juncture: I mean the Traitorous Correspondence Bill. By these means the enemy, rendered infinitely dangerous by the links of real faction and pretended commerce, would have been (had Mr. Fox succeeded) enabled to carry on the war against us by our own resources. For this purpose that enemy would have had his agents and traitors in the midst of us.

18. When at length war was actually declared by the usurpers in France against this kingdom, and declared whilst they were pretending a negotiation through Dumouriez with Lord Auckland, Mr. Fox still continued, through the whole of the proceedings, to discredit the national honor and justice, and to throw the entire blame of the war on Parliament, and on his own country, as acting with violence, haughtiness, and want of equity. He frequently asserted, both at the time and ever since, that the war, though declared by France, was provoked by us, and that it was wholly unnecessary and fundamentally unjust.

19. He has lost no opportunity of railing, in the most virulent manner and in the most unmeasured language, at every foreign power with whom we could now, or at any time, contract any useful or effectual alliance against France,—declaring that he hoped no alliance with those powers was made, or was in a train of being made.[1] He always expressed himself with the

[1] It is an exception, that in one of his last speeches (but not before) Mr. Fox seemed to think an alliance with Spain might be proper.

utmost horror concerning such alliances. So did all his phalanx. Mr. Sheridan in particular, after one of his invectives against those powers, sitting by him, said, with manifest marks of his approbation, that, if we must go to war, he had rather go to war alone than with such allies.

20. Immediately after the French declaration of war against us, Parliament addressed the king in support of the war against them, as just and necessary, and provoked, as well as formally declared against Great Britain. He did not divide the House upon this measure; yet he immediately followed this our solemn Parliamentary engagement to the king with a motion proposing a set of resolutions, the effect of which was, that the two Houses were to load themselves with every kind of reproach for having made the address which they had just carried to the throne. He commenced this long string of criminatory resolutions against his country (if King, Lords, and Commons of Great Britain, and a decided majority without doors are his country) *with a declaration against intermeddling in the interior concerns of France*. The purport of this resolution of non-interference is a thing unexampled in the history of the world, when one nation has been actually at war with another. The best writers on the law of nations give no sort of countenance to his doctrine of non-interference, in the extent and manner in which he used it, *even when there is no war*. When the war exists, not one authority is against it in all its latitude. His doctrine is equally contrary to the enemy's uniform practice, who, whether in peace or in war,

makes it his great aim not only to change the government, but to make an entire revolution in the whole of the social order in every country.

The object of the last of this extraordinary string of resolutions moved by Mr. Fox was to advise the crown not to enter into such an engagement with any foreign power so as to hinder us from making a *separate* peace with France, or which might tend to enable any of those powers to introduce a government in that country other than such as those persons whom he calls the people of France shall choose to establish. In short, the whole of these resolutions appeared to have but one drift, namely, the sacrifice of our own domestic dignity and safety, and the independency of Europe, to the support of this strange mixture of anarchy and tyranny which prevails in France, and which Mr. Fox and his party were pleased to call a government. The immediate consequence of these measures was (by an example the ill effects of which on the whole world are not to be calculated) to secure the robbers of the innocent nobility, gentry, and ecclesiastics of France in the enjoyment of the spoil they have made of the estates, houses, and goods of their fellow-citizens.

21. Not satisfied with moving these resolutions, tending to confirm this horrible tyranny and robbery, and with actually dividing the House on the first of the long string which they composed, in a few days afterwards he encouraged and supported Mr. Grey in producing the very same string in a new form, and in moving, under the shape of an address of Parliament to the

crown, another virulent libel on all its own proceedings in this session, in which not only all the ground of the resolutions was again travelled over, but much new inflammatory matter was introduced. In particular, a charge was made, that Great Britain had not interposed to prevent the last partition of Poland. On this head the party dwelt very largely and very vehemently. Mr. Fox's intention, in the choice of this extraordinary topic, was evident enough. He well knows two things: first, that no wise or honest man can approve of that partition, or can contemplate it without prognosticating great mischief from it to all countries at some future time; secondly, he knows quite as well, that, let our opinions on that partition be what they will, England, by itself, is not in a situation to afford to Poland any assistance whatsoever. The purpose of the introduction of Polish politics into this discussion was not for the sake of Poland; it was to throw an odium upon those who are obliged to decline the cause of justice from their impossibility of supporting a cause which they approve: as if we, who think more strongly on this subject than he does, were of a party against Poland, because we are obliged to act with some of the authors of that injustice against our common enemy, France. But the great and leading purpose of this introduction of Poland into the debates on the French war was to divert the public attention from what was in our power, that is, from a steady coöperation against France, to a quarrel with the allies for the sake of a Polish war, which, for any useful purpose to Poland, he knew it was out of our

power to make. If England can touch Poland ever so remotely, it must be through the medium of alliances. But by attacking all the combined powers together for their supposed unjust aggression upon France, he bound them by a now common interest not separately to join England for the rescue of Poland. The proposition could only mean to do what all the writers of his party in the Morning Chronicle have aimed at persuading the public to, through the whole of the last autumn and winter, and to this hour: that is, to an alliance with the Jacobins of France, for the pretended purpose of succoring Poland. This curious project would leave to Great Britain no other ally in all Europe except its old enemy, France.

22. Mr. Fox, after the first day's discussion on the question for the address, was at length driven to admit (to admit rather than to urge, and that very faintly) that France had discovered ambitious views, which none of his partisans, that I recollect, (Mr. Sheridan excepted,) did, however, either urge or admit. What is remarkable enough, all the points admitted against the Jacobins were brought to bear in their favor as much as those in which they were defended. For when Mr. Fox admitted that the conduct of the Jacobins did discover ambition, he always ended his admission of their ambitious views by an apology for them, insisting that the universally hostile disposition shown to them rendered their ambition a sort of defensive policy. Thus, on whatever roads he travelled, they all terminated in recommending a recognition of their pretended republic, and in

the plan of sending an ambassador to it. This was the burden of all his song:—"Everything which we could reasonably hope from war would be obtained from treaty." It is to be observed, however, that, in all these debates, Mr. Fox never once stated to the House upon what ground it was he conceived that all the objects of the French system of united fanaticism and ambition would instantly be given up, whenever England should think fit to propose a treaty. On proposing so strange a recognition and so humiliating an embassy as he moved, he was bound to produce his authority, if any authority he had. He ought to have done this the rather, because Le Brun, in his first propositions, and in his answers to Lord Grenville, defended, *on principle, not on temporary convenience*, everything which was objected to France, and showed not the smallest disposition to give up any one of the points in discussion. Mr. Fox must also have known that the Convention had passed to the order of the day, on a proposition to give some sort of explanation or modification to the hostile decree of the 19th of November for exciting insurrections in all countries,—a decree known to be peculiarly pointed at Great Britain. The whole proceeding of the French administration was the most remote that could be imagined from furnishing any indication of a pacific disposition: for at the very time in which it was pretended that the Jacobins entertained those boasted pacific intentions, at the very time in which Mr. Fox was urging a treaty with them, not content with refusing a modification of the decree for insurrections, they published

their ever-memorable decree of the 15th of December, 1792, for disorganizing every country in Europe into which they should on any occasion set their foot; and on the 25th and the 30th of the same month, they solemnly, and, on the last of these days, practically, confirmed that decree.

23. But Mr. Fox had himself taken good care, in the negotiation he proposed, that France should not be obliged to make any very great concessions to her presumed moderation: for he had laid down one general, comprehensive rule, with him (as he said) constant and inviolable. This rule, in fact, would not only have left to the faction in France all the property and power they had usurped at home, but most, if not all, of the conquests which by their atrocious perfidy and violence they had made abroad. The principle laid down by Mr. Fox is this, —"*That every state, in the conclusion of a war, has a right to avail itself of its conquests towards an indemnification*." This principle (true or false) is totally contrary to the policy which this country has pursued with France at various periods, particularly at the Treaty of Ryswick, in the last century, and at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in this. Whatever the merits of his rule may be in the eyes of neutral judges, it is a rule which no statesman before him ever laid down in favor of the adverse power with whom he was to negotiate. The adverse party himself may safely be trusted to take care of his *own* aggrandizement. But (as if the black boxes of the several parties had been exchanged) Mr. Fox's English ambassador, by some odd mistake, would find

himself charged with the concerns of France. If we were to leave France as she stood at the time when Mr. Fox proposed to treat with her, that formidable power must have been infinitely strengthened, and almost every other power in Europe as much weakened, by the extraordinary basis which he laid for a treaty. For Avignon must go from the Pope; Savoy (at least) from the King of Sardinia, if not Nice. Liege, Mentz, Salm, Deux-Ponts, and Basle must be separated from Germany. On this side of the Rhine, Liege (at least) must be lost to the Empire, and added to France. Mr. Fox's general principle fully covered all this. How much of these territories came within his rule he never attempted to define. He kept a profound silence as to Germany. As to the Netherlands he was something more explicit. He said (if I recollect right) that France on that side might expect something towards strengthening her frontier. As to the remaining parts of the Netherlands, which he supposed France might consent to surrender, he went so far as to declare that England ought not to permit the Emperor to be repossessed of the remainder of the ten Provinces, but that *the people* should choose such a form of independent government as they liked. This proposition of Mr. Fox was just the arrangement which the usurpation in France had all along proposed to make. As the circumstances were at that time, and have been ever since, his proposition fully indicated what government the Flemings *must* have in the stated extent of what was left to them. A government so set up in the Netherlands, whether compulsory, or by the choice of the *sans-*

culottes, (who he well knew were to be the real electors, and the sole electors,) in whatever name it was to exist, must evidently depend for its existence, as it had done for its original formation, on France. In reality, it must have ended in that point to which, piece by piece, the French were then actually bringing all the Netherlands,—that is, an incorporation with France as a body of new Departments, just as Savoy and Liege and the rest of their pretended independent popular sovereignties have been united to their republic. Such an arrangement must have destroyed Austria; it must have left Holland always at the mercy of France; it must totally and forever cut off all political communication between England and the Continent. Such must have been the situation of Europe, according to Mr. Fox's system of politics, however laudable his personal motives may have been in proposing so complete a change in the whole system of Great Britain with regard to all the Continental powers.

24. After it had been generally supposed that all public business was over for the session, and that Mr. Fox had exhausted all the modes of pressing this French scheme, he thought proper to take a step beyond every expectation, and which demonstrated his wonderful eagerness and perseverance in his cause, as well as the nature and true character of the cause itself. This step was taken by Mr. Fox immediately after his giving his assent to the grant of supply voted to him by Mr. Serjeant Adair and a committee of gentlemen who assumed to themselves to act in the name of the public. In the instrument of his acceptance of

this grant, Mr. Fox took occasion to assure them that he would always persevere *in the same conduct* which had procured to him so honorable a mark of the public approbation. He was as good as his word.

25. It was not long before an opportunity was found, or made, for proving the sincerity of his professions, and demonstrating his gratitude to those who had given public and unequivocal marks of their approbation of his late conduct. One of the most virulent of the Jacobin faction, Mr. Gurney, a banker at Norwich, had all along distinguished himself by his French politics. By the means of this gentleman, and of his associates of the same description, one of the most insidious and dangerous handbills that ever was seen had been circulated at Norwich against the war, drawn up in an hypocritical tone of compassion for the poor. This address to the populace of Norwich was to play in concert with an address to Mr. Fox; it was signed by Mr. Gurney and the higher part of the French fraternity in that town. In this paper Mr. Fox is applauded for his conduct throughout the session, and requested, before the prorogation, to make a motion for an immediate peace with France.

26. Mr. Fox did not revoke to this suit: he readily and thankfully undertook the task assigned to him. Not content, however, with merely falling in with their wishes, he proposed a task on his part to the gentlemen of Norwich, which was, *that they should move the people without doors to petition against the war*. He said, that, without such assistance, little good could be

expected from anything he might attempt within the walls of the House of Commons. In the mean time, to animate his Norwich friends in their endeavors to besiege Parliament, he snatched the first opportunity to give notice of a motion which he very soon after made, namely, to address the crown to make peace with France. The address was so worded as to coöperate with the handbill in bringing forward matter calculated to inflame the manufacturers throughout the kingdom.

27. In support of his motion, he declaimed in the most virulent strain, even beyond any of his former invectives, against every power with whom we were then, and are now, acting against France. In the *moral* forum some of these powers certainly deserve all the ill he said of them; but the *political* effect aimed at, evidently, was to turn our indignation from France, with whom we were at war, upon Russia, or Prussia, or Austria, or Sardinia, or all of them together. In consequence of his knowledge that we *could* not effectually do *without* them, and his resolution that we *should* not act *with* them, he proposed, that, having, as he asserted, "obtained the only avowed object of the war (the evacuation of Holland) we ought to conclude an instant peace."

28. Mr. Fox could not be ignorant of the mistaken basis upon which his motion was grounded. He was not ignorant, that, though the attempt of Dumouriez on Holland, (so very near succeeding,) and the navigation of the Scheldt, (a part of the same piece,) were among the *immediate* causes, they were by no means the only causes, alleged for Parliament's taking that

offence at the proceedings of France, for which the Jacobins were so prompt in declaring war upon this kingdom. Other full as weighty causes had been alleged: they were,—1. The general overbearing and desperate ambition of that faction; 2. Their actual attacks on every nation in Europe; 3. Their usurpation of territories in the Empire with the governments of which they had no pretence of quarrel; 4. Their perpetual and irrevocable consolidation with their own dominions of every territory of the Netherlands, of Germany, and of Italy, of which they got a temporary possession; 5. The mischiefs attending the prevalence of their system, which would make the success of their ambitious designs a new and peculiar species of calamity in the world; 6. Their formal, public decrees, particularly those of the 19th of November and 15th and 25th of December; 7. Their notorious attempts to undermine the Constitution of this country; 8. Their public reception of deputations of traitors for that direct purpose; 9. Their murder of their sovereign, declared by most of the members of the Convention, who spoke with their vote, (without a disavowal from any,) to be perpetrated as an example to *all* kings and a precedent for *all* subjects to follow. All these, and not the Scheldt alone, or the invasion of Holland, were urged by the minister, and by Mr. Windham, by myself, and by others who spoke in those debates, as causes for bringing France to a sense of her wrong in the war which she declared against us. Mr. Fox well knew that not one man argued for the necessity of a vigorous resistance to France, who did not state the war as

being for the very existence of the social order here, and in every part of Europe,—who did not state his opinion that this war was not at all a foreign war of empire, but as much for our liberties, properties, laws, and religion, and even more so, than any we had ever been engaged in. This was the war which, according to Mr. Fox and Mr. Gurney, we were to abandon before the enemy had felt in the slightest degree the impression of our arms.

29. Had Mr. Fox's disgraceful proposal been complied with, this kingdom would have been stained with a blot of perfidy hitherto without an example in our history, and with far less excuse than any act of perfidy which we find in the history of any other nation. The moment when, by the incredible exertions of Austria, (very little through ours,) the temporary deliverance of Holland (in effect our own deliverance) had been achieved, he advised the House instantly to abandon her to that very enemy from whose arms she had freed ourselves and the closest of our allies.

30. But we are not to be imposed on by forms of language. We must act on the substance of things. To abandon Austria in this manner was to abandon Holland itself. For suppose France, encouraged and strengthened as she must have been by our treacherous desertion,—suppose France, I say, to succeed against Austria, (as she had succeeded the very year before,) England would, after its disarmament, have nothing in the world but the inviolable faith of Jacobinism and the steady politics of anarchy to depend upon, against France's renewing the very same

attempts upon Holland, and renewing them (considering what Holland was and is) with much better prospects of success. Mr. Fox must have been well aware, that, if we were to break with the greater Continental powers, and particularly to come to a rupture with them, in the violent and intemperate mode in which he would have made the breach, the defence of Holland against a foreign enemy and a strong domestic faction must hereafter rest solely upon England, without the chance of a single ally, either on that or on any other occasion. So far as to the pretended sole object of the war, which Mr. Fox supposed to be so completely obtained (but which then was not at all, and at this day is not completely obtained) as to leave us nothing else to do than to cultivate a peaceful, quiet correspondence with those quiet, peaceable, and moderate people, the Jacobins of France.

31. To induce us to this, Mr. Fox labored hard to make it appear that the powers with whom we acted were full as ambitious and as perfidious as the French. This might be true as to *other* nations. They had not, however, been so to *us* or to Holland. He produced no proof of active ambition and ill faith against Austria. But supposing the combined powers had been all thus faithless, and been all alike so, there was one circumstance which made an essential difference between them and France. I need not, therefore, be at the trouble of contesting this point,—which, however, in this latitude, and as at all affecting Great Britain and Holland, I deny utterly. Be it so. But the great monarchies have it in their power to keep their

faith, *if they please*, because they are governments of established and recognized authority at home and abroad. France had, in reality, no government. The very factions who exercised power had no stability. The French Convention had no powers of peace or war. Supposing the Convention to be free, (most assuredly it was not,) they had shown no disposition to abandon their projects. Though long driven out of Liege, it was not many days before Mr. Fox's motion that they still continued to claim it as a country which their principles of fraternity bound them to protect,—that is, to subdue and to regulate at their pleasure. That party which Mr. Fox inclined most to favor and trust, and from which he must have received his assurances, (if any he did receive,) that is, the *Brissotins*, were then either prisoners or fugitives. The party which prevailed over them (that of Danton and Marat) was itself in a tottering condition, and was disowned by a very great part of France. To say nothing of the royal party, who were powerful and growing, and who had full as good a right to claim to be the legitimate government as any of the Parisian factions with whom he proposed to treat,—or rather, (as it seemed to me,) to surrender at discretion.

32. But when Mr. Fox began to come from his general hopes of the moderation of the Jacobins to particulars, he put the case that they might not perhaps be willing to surrender Savoy. He certainly was not willing to contest that point with them, but plainly and explicitly (as I understood him) proposed to let them keep it,—though he knew (or he was much worse informed than

he would be thought) that England had at the very time agreed on the terms of a treaty with the King of Sardinia, of which the recovery of Savoy was the *casus fœderis*. In the teeth of this treaty, Mr. Fox proposed a direct and most scandalous breach of our faith, formally and recently given. But to surrender Savoy was to surrender a great deal more than so many square acres of land or so much revenue. In its consequences, the surrender of Savoy was to make a surrender to France of Switzerland and Italy, of both which countries Savoy is the key,—as it is known to ordinary speculators in politics, though it may not be known to the weavers in Norwich, who, it seems, are by Mr. Fox called to be the judges in this matter.

A sure way, indeed, to encourage France not to make a surrender of this key of Italy and Switzerland, or of Mentz, the key of Germany, or of any other object whatsoever which she holds, is to let her see *that the people of England raise a clamor against the war before terms are so much as proposed on any side*. From that moment the Jacobins would be masters of the terms. They would know that Parliament, at all hazards, would force the king to a separate peace. The crown could not, in that case, have any use of its judgment. Parliament could not possess more judgment than the crown, when besieged (as Mr. Fox proposed to Mr. Gurney) by the cries of the manufacturers. This description of men Mr. Fox endeavored in his speech by every method to irritate and inflame. In effect, his two speeches were, through the whole, nothing more than an amplification of

the Norwich handbill. He rested the greatest part of his argument on the distress of trade, which he attributed to the war; though it was obvious to any tolerably good observation, and, much more, must have been clear to such an observation as his, that the then difficulties of the trade and manufacture could have no sort of connection with our share in it. The war had hardly begun. We had suffered neither by spoil, nor by defeat, nor by disgrace of any kind. Public credit was so little impaired, that, instead of being supported by any extraordinary aids from individuals, it advanced a credit to individuals to the amount of five millions for the support of trade and manufactures under their temporary difficulties, a thing before never heard of,—a thing of which I do not commend the policy, but only state it, to show that Mr. Fox's ideas of the effects of war were without any trace of foundation.

33. It is impossible not to connect the arguments and proceedings of a party with that of its leader,—especially when not disavowed or controlled by him. Mr. Fox's partisans declaim against all the powers of Europe, except the Jacobins, just as he does; but not having the same reasons for management and caution which he has, they speak out. He satisfies himself merely with making his invectives, and leaves others to draw the conclusion. But they produce their Polish interposition for the express purpose of leading to a French alliance. They urge their French peace in order to make a junction with the Jacobins to oppose the powers, whom, in their language, they call despots, and their leagues, a combination of despots. Indeed, no man can

look on the present posture of Europe with the least degree of discernment, who will not be thoroughly convinced that England must be the fast friend or the determined enemy of France. There is no medium; and I do not think Mr. Fox to be so dull as not to observe this. His peace would have involved us instantly in the most extensive and most ruinous wars, at the same time that it would have made a broad highway (across which no human wisdom could put an effectual barrier) for a mutual intercourse with the fraternizing Jacobins on both sides, the consequences of which those will certainly not provide against who do not dread or dislike them.

34. It is not amiss in this place to enter a little more fully into the spirit of the principal arguments on which Mr. Fox thought proper to rest this his grand and concluding motion, particularly such as were drawn from the internal state of our affairs. Under a specious appearance, (not uncommonly put on by men of unscrupulous ambition,) that of tenderness and compassion to the poor, he did his best to appeal to the judgments of the meanest and most ignorant of the people on the merits of the war. He had before done something of the same dangerous kind in his printed letter. The ground of a political war is of all things that which the poor laborer and manufacturer are the least capable of conceiving. This sort of people know in general that they must suffer by war. It is a matter to which they are sufficiently competent, because it is a matter of feeling. The *causes* of a war are not matters of feeling, but of reason and

foresight, and often of remote considerations, and of a very great combination of circumstances which *they* are utterly incapable of comprehending: and, indeed, it is not every man in the highest classes who is altogether equal to it. Nothing, in a general sense, appears to me less fair and justifiable (even if no attempt were made to inflame the passions) than to submit a matter on discussion to a tribunal incapable of judging of more than *one side* of the question. It is at least as unjustifiable to inflame the passions of such judges against *that side* in favor of which they cannot so much as comprehend the arguments. Before the prevalence of the French system, (which, as far as it has gone, has extinguished the salutary prejudice called our country,) nobody was more sensible of this important truth than Mr. Fox; and nothing was more proper and pertinent, or was more felt at the time, than his reprimand to Mr. Wilberforce for an inconsiderate expression which tended to call in the judgment of the poor to estimate the policy of war upon the standard of the taxes they may be obliged to pay towards its support.

35. It is fatally known that the great object of the Jacobin system is, to excite the lowest description of the people to range themselves under ambitious men for the pillage and destruction of the more eminent orders and classes of the community. The thing, therefore, that a man not fanatically attached to that dreadful project would most studiously avoid is, to act a part with the French *Propagandists*, in attributing (as they constantly do) all wars, and all the consequences of wars, to the pride of

those orders, and to their contempt of the weak and indigent part of the society. The ruling Jacobins insist upon it, that even the wars which they carry on with so much obstinacy against all nations are made to prevent the poor from any longer being the instruments and victims of kings, nobles, and the aristocracy of burghers and rich men. They pretend that the destruction of kings, nobles, and the aristocracy of burghers and rich men is the only means of establishing an universal and perpetual peace. This is the great drift of all their writings, from the time of the meeting of the states of France, in 1789, to the publication of the last Morning Chronicle. They insist that even the war which with so much boldness they have declared against all nations is to prevent the poor from becoming the instruments and victims of these persons and descriptions. It is but too easy, if you once teach poor laborers and mechanics to defy their prejudices, and, as this has been done with an industry scarcely credible, to substitute the principles of fraternity in the room of that salutary prejudice called our country,—it is, I say, but too easy to persuade them, agreeably to what Mr. Fox hints in his public letter, that this war is, and that the other wars have been, the wars of kings; it is easy to persuade them that the terrors even of a foreign conquest are not terrors for *them*; it is easy to persuade them, that, for their part, *they* have nothing to lose,—and that their condition is not likely to be altered for the worse, whatever party may happen to prevail in the war. Under any circumstances this doctrine is highly dangerous, as it tends to make separate parties of the

higher and lower orders, and to put their interests on a different bottom. But if the enemy you have to deal with should appear, as France now appears, under the very name and title of the deliverer of the poor and the chastiser of the rich, the former class would readily become not an indifferent spectator of the war, but would be ready to enlist in the faction of the enemy, —which they would consider, though under a foreign name, to be more connected with them than an adverse description in the same land. All the props of society would be drawn from us by these doctrines, and the very foundations of the public defence would give way in an instant.

36. There is no point which the faction of fraternity in England have labored more than to excite in the poor the horror of any war with France upon any occasion. When they found that their open attacks upon our Constitution in favor of a French republic were for the present repelled, they put that matter out of sight, and have taken up the more plausible and popular ground of general peace, upon merely general principles; although these very men, in the correspondence of their clubs with those of France, had reprobated the neutrality which now they so earnestly press. But, in reality, their maxim was, and is, "Peace and alliance with France, and war with the rest of the world."

37. This last motion of Mr. Fox bound up the whole of his politics during the session. This motion had many circumstances, particularly in the Norwich correspondence, by which the mischief of all the others was aggravated beyond measure. Yet

this last motion, far the worst of Mr. Fox's proceedings, was the best supported of any of them, except his amendment to the address. The Duke of Portland had directly engaged to support the war;—here was a motion as directly made to force the crown to put an end to it before a blow had been struck. The efforts of the faction have so prevailed that some of his Grace's nearest friends have actually voted for that motion; some, after showing themselves, went away; others did not appear at all. So it must be, where a man is for any time supported from personal considerations, without reference to his public conduct. Through the whole of this business, the spirit of fraternity appears to me to have been the governing principle. It might be shameful for any man, above the vulgar, to show so blind a partiality even to his own country as Mr. Fox appears, on all occasions, this session, to have shown to France. Had Mr. Fox been a minister, and proceeded on the principles laid down by him, I believe there is little doubt he would have been considered as the most criminal statesman that ever lived in this country. I do not know why a statesman out of place is not to be judged in the same manner, unless we can excuse him by pleading in his favor a total indifference to principle, and that he would act and think in quite a different way, if he were in office. This I will not suppose. One may think better of him, and that, in case of his power, he might change his mind. But supposing, that, from better or from worse motives, he might change his mind on his acquisition of the favor of the crown, I seriously fear, that, if the

king should to-morrow put power into his hands, and that his good genius would inspire him with maxims very different from those he has promulgated, he would not be able to get the better of the ill temper and the ill doctrines he has been the means of exciting and propagating throughout the kingdom. From the very beginning of their inhuman and unprovoked rebellion and tyrannic usurpation, he has covered the predominant faction in France, and their adherents here, with the most exaggerated panegyrics; neither has he missed a single opportunity of abusing and vilifying those who, in uniform concurrence with the Duke of Portland's and Lord Fitzwilliam's opinion, have maintained the true grounds of the Revolution Settlement in 1688. He lamented all the defeats of the French; he rejoiced in all their victories,—even when these victories threatened to overwhelm the continent of Europe, and, by facilitating their means of penetrating into Holland, to bring this most dreadful of all evils with irresistible force to the very doors, if not into the very heart, of our country. To this hour he always speaks of every thought of overturning the French Jacobinism by force, on the part of any power whatsoever, as an attempt unjust and cruel, and which he reprobates with horror. If any of the French Jacobin leaders are spoken of with hatred or scorn, he falls upon those who take that liberty with all the zeal and warmth with which men of honor defend their particular and bosom friends, when attacked. He always represents their cause as a cause of liberty, and all who oppose it as partisans of despotism. He

obstinately continues to consider the great and growing vices, crimes, and disorders of that country as only evils of passage, which are to produce a permanently happy state of order and freedom. He represents these disorders exactly in the same way and with the same limitations which are used by one of the two great Jacobin factions: I mean that of Pétion and Brissot. Like them, he studiously confines his horror and reprobation only to the massacres of the 2d of September, and passes by those of the 10th of August, as well as the imprisonment and deposition of the king, which were the consequences of that day, as indeed were the massacres themselves to which he confines his censure, though they were not actually perpetrated till early in September. Like that faction, he condemns, not the deposition, or the proposed exile or perpetual imprisonment, but only the murder of the king. Mr. Sheridan, on every occasion, palliates all their massacres committed in every part of France, as the effects of a natural indignation at the exorbitances of despotism, and of the dread of the people of returning under that yoke. He has thus taken occasion to load, not the actors in this wickedness, but the government of a mild, merciful, beneficent, and patriotic prince, and his suffering, faithful subjects, with all the crimes of the new anarchical tyranny under which the one has been murdered and the others are oppressed. Those continual either praises or palliating apologies of everything done in France, and those invectives as uniformly vomited out upon all those who venture to express their disapprobation of such proceedings, coming from a

man of Mr. Fox's fame and authority, and one who is considered as the person to whom a great party of the wealthiest men of the kingdom look up, have been the cause why the principle of French fraternity formerly gained the ground which at one time it had obtained in this country. It will infallibly recover itself again, and in ten times a greater degree, if the kind of peace, in the manner which he preaches, ever shall be established with the reigning faction in France.

38. So far as to the French practices with regard to France and the other powers of Europe. As to their principles and doctrines with regard to the constitution of states, Mr. Fox studiously, on all occasions, and indeed when no occasion calls for it, (as on the debate of the petition for reform,) brings forward and asserts their fundamental and fatal principle, pregnant with every mischief and every crime, namely, that "in every country the people is the legitimate sovereign": exactly conformable to the declaration of the French clubs and legislators:—"La souveraineté est *une, indivisible, inalienable, et imprescriptible*; elle appartient à la nation; aucune *section* du peuple ni aucun *individu* ne peut s'en attribuer l'exercise." This confounds, in a manner equally mischievous and stupid, the origin of a government from the people with its continuance in their hands. I believe that no such doctrine has ever been heard of in any public act of any government whatsoever, until it was adopted (I think from the writings of Rousseau) by the French Assemblies, who have made it the basis of their Constitution at home, and of the

matter of their apostolate in every country. These and other wild declarations of abstract principle, Mr. Fox says, are in themselves perfectly right and true; though in some cases he allows the French draw absurd consequences from them. But I conceive he is mistaken. The consequences are most logically, though most mischievously, drawn from the premises and principles by that wicked and ungracious faction. The fault is in the foundation.

39. Before society, in a multitude of men, it is obvious that sovereignty and subjection are ideas which cannot exist. It is the compact on which society is formed that makes both. But to suppose the people, contrary to their compacts, both to give away and retain the same thing is altogether absurd. It is worse, for it supposes in any strong combination of men a power and right of always dissolving the social union; which power, however, if it exists, renders them again as little sovereigns as subjects, but a mere unconnected multitude. It is not easy to state for what good end, at a time like this, when the foundations of all ancient and prescriptive governments, such as ours, (to which people submit, not because they have chosen them, but because they are born to them,) are undermined by perilous theories, that Mr. Fox should be so fond of referring to those theories, upon all occasions, even though speculatively they might be true,—which God forbid they should! Particularly I do not see the reason why he should be so fond of declaring that the principles of the Revolution have made the crown of Great Britain *elective*,—why he thinks it seasonable to preach up with so much earnestness, for now

three years together, the doctrine of resistance and revolution at all,—or to assert that our last Revolution, of 1688, stands on the same or similar principles with that of France. We are not called upon to bring forward these doctrines, which are hardly ever resorted to but in cases of extremity, and where they are followed by correspondent actions. We are not called upon by any circumstance, that I know of, which can justify a revolt, or which demands a revolution, or can make an election of a successor to the crown necessary, whatever latent right may be supposed to exist for effectuating any of these purposes.

40. Not the least alarming of the proceedings of Mr. Fox and his friends in this session, especially taken in concurrence with their whole proceedings with regard to France and its principles, is their eagerness at this season, under pretence of Parliamentary reforms, (a project which had been for some time rather dormant,) to discredit and disgrace the House of Commons. For this purpose these gentlemen had found a way to insult the House by several atrocious libels in the form of petitions. In particular they brought up a libel, or rather a complete digest of libellous matter, from the club called the Friends of the People. It is, indeed, at once the most audacious and the most insidious of all the performances of that kind which have yet appeared. It is said to be the penmanship of Mr. Tierney, to bring whom into Parliament the Duke of Portland formerly had taken a good deal of pains, and expended, as I hear, a considerable sum of money.

41. Among the circumstances of danger from that piece, and from its precedent, it is observable that this is the first petition (if I remember right) *coming from a club or association, signed by individuals, denoting neither local residence nor corporate capacity*. This mode of petition, not being strictly illegal or informal, though in its spirit in the highest degree mischievous, may and will lead to other things of that nature, tending to bring these clubs and associations to the French model, and to make them in the end answer French purposes: I mean, that, without legal names, these clubs will be led to assume political capacities; that they may debate the forms of Constitution; and that from their meetings they may insolently dictate their will to the regular authorities of the kingdom, in the manner in which the Jacobin clubs issue their mandates to the National Assembly or the National Convention. The audacious remonstrance, I observe, is signed by all of that association (the Friends of the People) *who are not in Parliament*, and it was supported most strenuously by all the associators *who are members*, with Mr. Fox at their head. He and they contended for referring this libel to a committee. Upon the question of that reference they grounded all their debate for a change in the constitution of Parliament. The pretended petition is, in fact, a regular charge or impeachment of the House of Commons, digested into a number of articles. This plan of reform is not a criminal impeachment, but a matter of prudence, to be submitted to the public wisdom, which must be as well apprised of the facts as petitioners can be. But those

accusers of the House of Commons have proceeded upon the principles of a criminal process, and have had the effrontery to offer proof on each article.

42. This charge the party of Mr. Fox maintained article by article, beginning with the first,—namely, the interference of peers at elections, and their nominating in effect several of the members of the House of Commons. In the printed list of grievances which they made out on the occasion, and in support of their charge, is found the borough for which, under Lord Fitzwilliam's influence, I now sit. By this remonstrance, and its object, they hope to defeat the operation of property in elections, and in reality to dissolve the connection and communication of interests which makes the Houses of Parliament a mutual support to each other. Mr. Fox and the Friends of the People are not so ignorant as not to know that peers do not interfere in elections as peers, but as men of property; they well know that the House of Lords is by itself the feeblest part of the Constitution; they know that the House of Lords is supported only by its connections with the crown and with the House of Commons, and that without this double connection the Lords could not exist a single year. They know that all these parts of our Constitution, whilst they are balanced as opposing interests, are also connected as friends; otherwise nothing but confusion could be the result of such a complex Constitution. It is natural, therefore, that they who wish the common destruction of the whole and of all its parts should contend for their total separation. But as the House of

Commons is that link which connects both the other parts of the Constitution (the Crown and the Lords) *with the mass of the people*, it is to that link (as it is natural enough) that their incessant attacks are directed. That artificial representation of the people being once discredited and overturned, all goes to pieces, and nothing but a plain *French* democracy or arbitrary monarchy can possibly exist.

43. Some of these gentlemen who have attacked the House of Commons lean to a representation of the people by the head,—that is, to *individual representation*. None of them, that I recollect, except Mr. Fox, directly rejected it. It is remarkable, however, that he only rejected it by simply declaring an opinion. He let all the argument go against his opinion. All the proceedings and arguments of his reforming friends lead to individual representation, and to nothing else. It deserves to be attentively observed, *that this individual representation is the only plan of their reform which has been explicitly proposed*. In the mean time, the conduct of Mr. Fox appears to be far more inexplicable, on any good ground, than theirs, who propose the individual representation; for he neither proposes anything, nor even suggests that he has anything to propose, in lieu of the present mode of constituting the House of Commons; on the contrary, he declares against all the plans which have yet been suggested, either from himself or others: yet, thus unprovided with any plan whatsoever, he pressed forward this unknown reform with all possible warmth; and for that purpose, in a

speech of several hours, he urged the referring to a committee the libellous impeachment of the House of Commons by the association of the Friends of the People. But for Mr. Fox to discredit Parliament *as it stands*, to countenance leagues, covenants, and associations for its further discredit, to render it perfectly odious and contemptible, and at the same time to propose nothing at all in place of what he disgraces, is worse, if possible, than to contend for personal individual representation, and is little less than demanding, in plain terms, to bring on plain anarchy.

44. Mr. Fox and these gentlemen have for the present been defeated; but they are neither converted nor disheartened. They have solemnly declared that they will persevere until they shall have obtained their ends,—persisting to assert that the House of Commons not only is not the true representative of the people, but that it does not answer the purpose of such representation: most of them insist that all the debts, the taxes, and the burdens of all kinds on the people, with every other evil and inconvenience which we have suffered since the Revolution, have been owing solely to an House of Commons which does not speak the sense of the people.

45. It is also not to be forgotten, that Mr. Fox, and all who hold with him, on this, as on all other occasions of pretended reform, most bitterly reproach Mr. Pitt with treachery, in declining to support the scandalous charges and indefinite projects of this infamous libel from the Friends of the People. By the animosity

with which they persecute all those who grow cold in this cause of pretended reform, they hope, that, if, through levity, inexperience, or ambition, any young person (like Mr. Pitt, for instance) happens to be once embarked in their design, they shall by a false shame keep him fast in it forever. Many they have so hampered.

46. I know it is usual, when the peril and alarm of the hour appears to be a little overblown, to think no more of the matter. But, for my part, I look back with horror on what we have escaped, and am full of anxiety with regard to the dangers which in my opinion are still to be apprehended both at home and abroad. This business has cast deep roots. Whether it is necessarily connected in theory with Jacobinism is not worth a dispute. The two things are connected in fact. The partisans of the one are the partisans of the other. I know it is common with those who are favorable to the gentlemen of Mr. Fox's party and to their leader, though not at all devoted to all their reforming projects or their Gallican politics, to argue, in palliation of their conduct, that it is not in their power to do all the harm which their actions evidently tend to. It is said, that, as the people will not support them, they may safely be indulged in those eccentric fancies of reform, and those theories which lead to nothing. This apology is not very much to the honor of those politicians whose interests are to be adhered to in defiance of their conduct. I cannot flatter myself that these incessant attacks on the constitution of Parliament are safe. It is not in my power

to despise the unceasing efforts of a confederacy of about fifty persons of eminence: men, for the far greater part, of very ample fortunes either in possession or in expectancy; men of decided characters and vehement passions; men of very great talents of all kinds, of much boldness, and of the greatest possible spirit of artifice, intrigue, adventure, and enterprise, all operating with unwearied activity and perseverance. These gentlemen are much stronger, too, without doors than some calculate. They have the more active part of the Dissenters with them, and the whole clan of speculators of all denominations,—a large and growing species. They have that floating multitude which goes with events, and which suffers the loss or gain of a battle to decide its opinions of right and wrong. As long as by every art this party keeps alive a spirit of disaffection against the very Constitution of the kingdom, and attributes, as lately it has been in the habit of doing, all the public misfortunes to that Constitution, it is absolutely *impossible* but that some moment must arrive in which they will be enabled to produce a pretended reform and a real revolution. If ever the body of this *compound Constitution* of ours is subverted, either in favor of unlimited monarchy or of wild democracy, that ruin will *most certainly* be the result of this very sort of machinations against the House of Commons. It is not from a confidence in the views or intentions of any statesman that I think he is to be indulged in these perilous amusements.

47. Before it is made the great object of any man's political life to raise another to power, it is right to consider what are the real

dispositions of the person to be so elevated. We are not to form our judgment on those dispositions from the rules and principles of a court of justice, but from those of private discretion,—not looking for what would serve to criminate another, but what is sufficient to direct ourselves. By a comparison of a series of the discourses and actions of certain men for a reasonable length of time, it is impossible not to obtain sufficient indication of the general tendency of their views and principles. There is no other rational mode of proceeding. It is true, that in some one or two perhaps not well-weighed expressions, or some one or two unconnected and doubtful affairs, we may and ought to judge of the actions or words by our previous good or ill opinion of the man. But this allowance has its bounds. It does not extend to any regular course of systematic action, or of constant and repeated discourse. It is against every principle of common sense, and of justice to one's self and to the public, to judge of a series of speeches and actions from the man, and not of the man from the whole tenor of his language and conduct. I have stated the above matters, not as inferring a criminal charge of evil intention. If I had meant to do so, perhaps they are stated with tolerable exactness. But I have no such view. The intentions of these gentlemen may be very pure. I do not dispute it. But I think they are in some great error. If these things are done by Mr. Fox and his friends with good intentions, they are not done less dangerously; for it shows these good intentions are not under the direction of safe maxims and principles.

48. Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and the gentlemen who call themselves the Phalanx, have not been so very indulgent to others. They have thought proper to ascribe to those members of the House of Commons, who, in exact agreement with the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam, abhor and oppose the French system, the basest and most unworthy motives for their conduct;—as if none could oppose that atheistic, immoral, and impolitic project set up in France, so disgraceful and destructive, as I conceive, to human nature itself, but with some sinister intentions. They treat those members on all occasions with a sort of lordly insolence, though they are persons that (whatever homage they may pay to the eloquence of the gentlemen who choose to look down upon them with scorn) are not their inferiors in any particular which calls for and obtains just consideration from the public: not their inferiors in knowledge of public law, or of the Constitution of the kingdom; not their inferiors in their acquaintance with its foreign and domestic interests; not their inferiors in experience or practice of business; not their inferiors in moral character; not their inferiors in the proofs they have given of zeal and industry in the service of their country. Without denying to these gentlemen the respect and consideration which it is allowed justly belongs to them, we see no reason why they should not as well be obliged to defer something to our opinions as that we should be bound blindly and servilely to follow those of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Grey, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Taylor, and others. We are members of

Parliament and their equals. We never consider ourselves as their followers. These gentlemen (some of them hardly born when some of us came into Parliament) have thought proper to treat us as deserters,—as if we had been listed into their phalanx like soldiers, and had sworn to live and die in their French principles. This insolent claim of superiority on their part, and of a sort of vassalage to them on that of other members, is what no liberal mind will submit to bear.

49. The society of the Liberty of the Press, the Whig Club, and the Society for Constitutional Information, and (I believe) the Friends of the People, as well as some clubs in Scotland, have, indeed, declared, "that their confidence in and attachment to Mr. Fox has lately been confirmed, strengthened, and increased by the calumnies" (as they are called) "against him." It is true, Mr. Fox and his friends have those testimonies in their favor, against certain old friends of the Duke of Portland. Yet, on a full, serious, and, I think, dispassionate consideration of the whole of what Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan and their friends have acted, said, and written, in this session, instead of doing anything which might tend to procure power, or any share of it whatsoever, to them or to their phalanx, (as they call it,) or to increase their credit, influence, or popularity in the nation, I think it one of my most serious and important public duties, in whatsoever station I may be placed for the short time I have to live, effectually to employ my best endeavors, by every prudent and every lawful means, to traverse all their designs. I have only to lament that

my abilities are not greater, and that my probability of life is not better, for the more effectual pursuit of that object. But I trust that neither the principles nor exertions will die with me. I am the rather confirmed in this my resolution, and in this my wish of transmitting it, because every ray of hope concerning a possible control or mitigation of the enormous mischiefs which the principles of these gentlemen, and which their connections, full as dangerous as their principles, might receive from the influence of the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam, on becoming their colleagues in office, is now entirely banished from the mind of every one living. It is apparent, even to the world at large, that, so far from having a power to direct or to guide Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Grey, and the rest, in any important matter, they have not, through this session, been able to prevail on them to forbear, or to delay, or mitigate, or soften, any one act, or any one expression, upon subjects on which they essentially differed.

50. Even if this hope of a possible control did exist, yet the declared opinions, and the uniform line of conduct conformable to those opinions, pursued by Mr. Fox, must become a matter of serious alarm, if he should obtain a power either at court or in Parliament or in the nation at large, and for this plain reason: he must be the most active and efficient member in any administration of which he shall form a part. That a man, or set of men, are guided by such not dubious, but delivered and avowed principles and maxims of policy, as to need a watch and

check on them in the exercise of the highest power, ought, in my opinion, to make every man, who is not of the same principles and guided by the same maxims, a little cautious how he makes himself one of the traverses of a ladder to help such a man, or such a set of men, to climb up to the highest authority. A minister of this country is to be controlled by the House of Commons. He is to be trusted, not *controlled*, by his colleagues in office: if he were to be controlled, government, which ought to be the source of order, would itself become a scene of anarchy. Besides, Mr. Fox is a man of an aspiring and commanding mind, made rather to control than to be controlled, and he never will be nor can be in any administration in which he will be guided by any of those whom I have been accustomed to confide in. It is absurd to think that he would or could. If his own opinions do not control him, nothing can. When we consider of an adherence to a man which leads to his power, we must not only see what the man is, but how he stands related. It is not to be forgotten that Mr. Fox acts in close and inseparable connection with another gentleman of exactly the same description as himself, and who, perhaps, of the two, is the leader. The rest of the body are not a great deal more tractable; and over them, if Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan have authority, most assuredly the Duke of Portland has not the smallest degree of influence.

51. One must take care that a blind partiality to some persons, and as blind an hatred to others, may not enter into our minds under a color of inflexible public principle. We hear, as a reason

for clinging to Mr. Fox at present, that nine years ago Mr. Pitt got into power by mischievous intrigues with the court, with the Dissenters, and with other factious people out of Parliament, to the discredit and weakening of the power of the House of Commons. His conduct nine years ago I still hold to be very culpable. There are, however, many things very culpable that I do not know how to punish. My opinion on such matters I must submit to the good of the state, as I have done on other occasions, —and particularly with regard to the authors and managers of the American war, with whom I have acted, both in office and in opposition, with great confidence and cordiality, though I thought many of their acts criminal and impeachable. Whilst the misconduct of Mr. Pitt and his associates was yet recent, it was not possible to get Mr. Fox of himself to take a single step, or even to countenance others in taking any step, upon the ground of that misconduct and false policy; though, if the matters had been then taken up and pursued, such a step could not have appeared so evidently desperate as now it is. So far from pursuing Mr. Pitt, I know that then, and for some time after, some of Mr. Fox's friends were actually, and with no small earnestness, looking out to a coalition with that gentleman. For years I never heard this circumstance of Mr. Pitt's misconduct on that occasion mentioned by Mr. Fox, either in public or in private, as a ground for opposition to that minister. All opposition, from that period to this very session, has proceeded upon the separate measures as they separately arose, without any vindictive retrospect to Mr.

Pitt's conduct in 1784. My memory, however, may fail me. I must appeal to the printed debates, which (so far as Mr. Fox is concerned) are unusually accurate.

52. Whatever might have been in our power at an early period, at this day I see no remedy for what was done in 1784. I had no great hopes even at the time. I was therefore very eager to record a remonstrance on the journals of the House of Commons, as a caution against such a popular delusion in times to come; and this I then feared, and now am certain, is all that could be done. I know of no way of animadverting on the crown. I know of no mode of calling to account the House of Lords, who threw out the India Bill in a way not much to their credit. As little, or rather less, am I able to coerce the people at large, who behaved very unwisely and intemperately on that occasion. Mr. Pitt was then accused, by me as well as others, of attempting to be minister without enjoying the confidence of the House of Commons, though he did enjoy the confidence of the crown. That House of Commons, whose confidence he did not enjoy, unfortunately did not itself enjoy the confidence (though we well deserved it) either of the crown or of the public. For want of that confidence, the then House of Commons did not survive the contest. Since that period Mr. Pitt has enjoyed the confidence of the crown, and of the Lords, and *of the House of Commons*, through two successive Parliaments; and I suspect that he has ever since, and that he does still, enjoy as large a portion, at least, of the confidence of the people without doors as his great rival. Before whom,

then, is Mr. Pitt to be impeached, and by whom? The more I consider the matter, the more firmly I am convinced that the idea of proscribing Mr. Pitt *indirectly*, when you cannot *directly punish* him, is as chimerical a project, and as unjustifiable, as it would be to have proscribed Lord North. For supposing that by indirect ways of opposition, by opposition upon measures which do not relate to the business of 1784, but which on other grounds might prove unpopular, you were to drive him from his seat, this would be no example whatever of punishment for the matters we charge as offences in 1784. On a cool and dispassionate view of the affairs of this time and country, it appears obvious to me that one or the other of those two great men, that is, Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, must be minister. They are, I am sorry for it, irreconcilable. Mr. Fox's conduct *in this session* has rendered the idea of his power a matter of serious alarm to many people who were very little pleased with the proceedings of Mr. Pitt in the beginning of his administration. They like neither the conduct of Mr. Pitt in 1784, nor that of Mr. Fox in 1793; but they estimate which of the evils is most pressing at the time, and what is likely to be the consequence of a change. If Mr. Fox be wedded, they must be sensible that his opinions and principles on the now existing state of things at home and abroad must be taken as his portion. In his train must also be taken the whole body of gentlemen who are pledged to him and to each other, and to their common politics and principles. I believe no king of Great Britain ever will adopt, for his confidential servants, that body of gentlemen,

holding that body of principles. Even if the present king or his successor should think fit to take that step, I apprehend a general discontent of those who wish that this nation and that Europe should continue in their present state would ensue,—a discontent which, combined with the principles and progress of the new men in power, would shake this kingdom to its foundations. I do not believe any one political conjecture can be more certain than this.

53. Without at all defending or palliating Mr. Pitt's conduct in 1784, I must observe, that the crisis of 1793, with regard to everything at home and abroad, is full as important as that of 1784 ever was, and, if for no other reason, by being present, is much more important. It is not to nine years ago we are to look for the danger of Mr. Fox's and Mr. Sheridan's conduct, and that of the gentlemen who act with them. It is at *this* very time, and in *this* very session, that, if they had not been strenuously resisted, they would not only have discredited the House of Commons, (as Mr. Pitt did in 1784, when he persuaded the king to reject their advice, and to appeal from them to the people,) but, in my opinion, would have been the means of wholly subverting the House of Commons and the House of Peers, and the whole Constitution actual and virtual, together with the safety and independence of this nation, and the peace and settlement of every state in the now Christian world. It is to our opinion of the nature of Jacobinism, and of the probability, by corruption, faction, and force, of its gaining ground everywhere, that the question whom and what you are to support is to be determined.

For my part, without doubt or hesitation, I look upon Jacobinism as the most dreadful and the most shameful evil which ever afflicted mankind, a thing which goes beyond the power of all calculation in its mischief,—and that, if it is suffered to exist in France, we must in England, and speedily too, fall into that calamity.

54. I figure to myself the purpose of these gentlemen accomplished, and this ministry destroyed. I see that the persons who in that case must rule can be no other than Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Grey, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Thurlow, Lord Lauderdale, and the Duke of Norfolk, with the other chiefs of the Friends of the People, the Parliamentary reformers, and the admirers of the French Revolution. The principal of these are all formally pledged to their projects. If the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam should be admitted into that system, (as they might and probably would be,) it is quite certain they could not have the smallest weight in it,—less, indeed, than what they now possess, if less were possible: because they would be less wanted than they now are; and because all those who wished to join them, and to act under them, have been rejected by the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam themselves; and Mr. Fox, finding them thus by themselves disarmed, has built quite a new fabric, upon quite a new foundation. There is no trifling on this subject. We see very distinctly before us the ministry that would be formed and the plan that would be pursued. If we like the plan, we must wish the power of those who are

to carry it into execution; but to pursue the political exaltation of those whose political measures we disapprove and whose principles we dissent from is a species of modern politics not easily comprehensible, and which must end in the ruin of the country, if it should continue and spread. Mr. Pitt may be the worst of men, and Mr. Fox may be the best; but, at present, the former is in the interest of his country, and of the order of things long established in Europe: Mr. Fox is not. I have, for one, been born in this order of things, and would fain die in it. I am sure it is sufficient to make men as virtuous, as happy, and as knowing as anything which Mr. Fox, and his friends abroad or at, home, would substitute in its place; and I should be sorry that any set of politicians should obtain power in England whose principles or schemes should lead them to countenance persons or factions whose object is to introduce some new devised order of things into England, or to support that order where it is already introduced, in France,—a place in which if it can be fixed, in my mind, it must have a certain and decided influence in and upon this kingdom.

This is my account of my conduct to my private friends. I have already said all I wish to say, or nearly so, to the public. I write this with pain and with an heart full of grief.

PREFACE TO THE ADDRESS OF M. BRISSOT TO HIS CONSTITUENTS. TRANSLATED BY THE LATE WILLIAM BURKE, ESQ. 1794

The French Revolution has been the subject of various speculations and various histories. As might be expected, the royalists and the republicans have differed a good deal in their accounts of the principles of that Revolution, of the springs which have set it in motion, and of the true character of those who have been, or still are, the principal actors on that astonishing scene.

They who are inclined to think favorably of that event will undoubtedly object to every state of facts which comes only from the authority of a royalist. Thus much must be allowed by those who are the most firmly attached to the cause of religion, law, and order, (for of such, and not of friends to despotism, the royal party is composed,)—that their very affection to this generous and manly cause, and their abhorrence of a Revolution not less fatal to liberty than to government, may possibly lead them in some particulars to a more harsh representation of the proceedings of their adversaries than would be allowed by the

cold neutrality of an impartial judge. This sort of error arises from a source highly laudable; but the exactness of truth may suffer even from the feelings of virtue. History will do justice to the intentions of worthy men, but it will be on its guard against their infirmities; it will examine with great strictness of scrutiny whatever appears from a writer in favor of his own cause. On the other hand, whatever escapes him, and makes against that cause, comes with the greatest weight.

In this important controversy, the translator of the following work brings forward to the English tribunal of opinion the testimony of a witness beyond all exception. His competence is undoubted. He knows everything which concerns this Revolution to the bottom. He is a chief actor in all the scenes which he presents. No man can object to him as a royalist: the royal party, and the Christian religion, never had a more determined enemy. In a word, it is BRISSOT. It is Brissot, the republican, the Jacobin, and the philosopher, who is brought to give an account of Jacobinism, and of republicanism, and of philosophy.

It is worthy of observation, that this his account of the genius of Jacobinism and its effects is not confined to the period in which that faction came to be divided within itself. In several, and those very important particulars, Brissot's observations apply to the whole of the preceding period before the great schism, and whilst the Jacobins acted as one body; insomuch that the far greater part of the proceedings of the ruling powers since the commencement of the Revolution in France, so strikingly

painted, so strongly and so justly reprobated by Brissot, were the acts of Brissot himself and his associates. All the members of the Girondin subdivision were as deeply concerned as any of the Mountain could possibly be, and some of them much more deeply, in those horrid transactions which have filled all the thinking part of Europe with the greatest detestation, and with the most serious apprehensions for the common liberty and safety.

A question will very naturally be asked,—What could induce Brissot to draw such a picture? He must have been sensible it was his own. The answer is,—The inducement was the same with that which led him to partake in the perpetration of all the crimes the calamitous effects of which he describes with the pen of a master,—ambition. His faction, having obtained their stupendous and unnatural power by rooting out of the minds of his unhappy countrymen every principle of religion, morality, loyalty, fidelity, and honor, discovered, that, when authority came into their hands, it would be a matter of no small difficulty for them to carry on government on the principles by which they had destroyed it.

The rights of men and the new principles of liberty and equality were very unhandy instruments for those who wished to establish a system of tranquillity and order. They who were taught to find nothing to respect in the title and in the virtues of Louis the Sixteenth, a prince succeeding to the throne by the fundamental laws, in the line of a succession of monarchs

continued for fourteen hundred years, found nothing which could bind them to an implicit fidelity and dutiful allegiance to Messrs. Brissot, Vergniaud, Condorcet, Anacharsis Clootz, and Thomas Paine.

In this difficulty, they did as well as they could. To govern the people, they must incline the people to obey. The work was difficult, but it was necessary. They were to accomplish it by such materials and by such instruments as they had in their hands. They were to accomplish the purposes of order, morality, and submission to the laws, from the principles of atheism, profligacy, and sedition. Ill as the disguise became them, they began to assume the mask of an austere and rigid virtue; they exhausted all the stores of their eloquence (which in some of them were not inconsiderable) in declamations against tumult and confusion; they made daily harangues on the blessings of order, discipline, quiet, and obedience to authority; they even showed some sort of disposition to protect such property as had not been confiscated. They who on every occasion had discovered a sort of furious thirst of blood and a greedy appetite for slaughter, who avowed and gloried in the murders and massacres of the 14th of July, of the 5th and 6th of October, and of the 10th of August, now began to be squeamish and fastidious with regard to those of the 2nd of September.

In their pretended scruples on the sequel of the slaughter of the 10th of August, they imposed upon no living creature, and they obtained not the smallest credit for humanity. They endeavored

to establish a distinction, by the belief of which they hoped to keep the spirit of murder safely bottled up and sealed for their own purposes, without endangering themselves by the fumes of the poison which they prepared for their enemies.

Roland was the chief and the most accredited of the faction. His morals had furnished little matter of exception against him. Old, domestic, and uxorious, he led a private life sufficiently blameless. He was therefore set up as the *Cato* of the republican party, which did not abound in such characters.

This man, like most of the chiefs, was the manager of a newspaper, in which he promoted the interest of his party. He was a fatal present made by the revolutionists to the unhappy king, as one of his ministers under the new Constitution. Amongst his colleagues were Clavière and Servan. All the three have since that time either lost their heads by the axe of their associates in rebellion, or, to evade their own revolutionary justice, have fallen by their own hands.

These ministers were regarded by the king as in a conspiracy to dethrone him. Nobody who considers the circumstances which preceded the deposition of Louis the Sixteenth, nobody who attends to the subsequent conduct of those ministers, can hesitate about the reality of such a conspiracy. The king certainly had no doubt of it; he found himself obliged to remove them; and the necessity, which first obliged him to choose such regicide ministers constrained him to replace them by Dumouriez the Jacobin, and some others of little efficiency, though of a better

description.

A little before this removal, and evidently as a part of the conspiracy, Roland put into the king's hands, as a memorial, the most insolent, seditious, and atrocious libel that has probably ever been penned. This paper Roland a few days after delivered to the National Assembly,[2] who instantly published and dispersed it over all France; and in order to give it the stronger operation, they declared that he and his brother ministers had carried with them the regret of the nation. None of the writings which have inflamed the Jacobin spirit to a savage fury ever worked up a fiercer ferment through the whole mass of the republicans in every part of France.

Under the thin veil of *prediction*, he strongly *recommends* all the abominable practices which afterwards followed. In particular, he inflamed the minds of the populace against the respectable and conscientious clergy, who became the chief objects of the massacre, and who were to him the chief objects of a malignity and rancor that one could hardly think to exist in an human heart.

We have the relics of his fanatical persecution here. We are in a condition to judge of the merits of the persecutors and of the persecuted: I do not say the accusers and accused; because, in all the furious declamations of the atheistic faction against these men, not one specific charge has been made upon any one person

[2] Presented to the king June 13; delivered to him the preceding Monday.—TRANSLATOR.

of those who suffered in their massacre or by their decree of exile.

The king had declared that he would sooner perish under their axe (he too well saw what was preparing for him) than give his sanction to the iniquitous act of proscription under which those innocent people were to be transported.

On this proscription of the clergy a principal part of the ostensible quarrel between the king and those ministers had turned. From the time of the authorized publication of this libel, some of the manoeuvres long and uniformly pursued for the king's deposition became more and more evident and declared.

The 10th of August came on, and in the manner in which Roland had predicted: it was followed by the same consequences. The king was deposed, after cruel massacres in the courts and the apartments of his palace and in almost all parts of the city. In reward of his treason to his old master, Roland was by his new masters named Minister of the Home Department.

The massacres of the 2nd of September were begotten by the massacres of the 10th of August. They were universally foreseen and hourly expected. During this short interval between the two murderous scenes, the furies, male and female, cried out havoc as loudly and as fiercely as ever. The ordinary jails were all filled with prepared victims; and when they overflowed, churches were turned into jails. At this time the relentless Roland had the care of the general police;—he had for his colleague the bloody Danton, who was Minister of Justice; the insidious Pétion was Mayor of

Paris; the treacherous Manuel was Procurator of the Common Hall. The magistrates (some or all of them) were evidently the authors of this massacre. Lest the national guard should, by their very name, be reminded of their duty in preserving the lives of their fellow-citizens, the Common Council of Paris, pretending that it was in vain to think of resisting the murderers, (although in truth neither their numbers nor their arms were at all formidable,) obliged those guards to draw the charges from their muskets, and took away their bayonets. One of their journalists, and, according to their fashion, one of their leading statesmen, Gorsas, mentions this fact in his newspaper, which he formerly called the Galley Journal. The title was well suited to the paper and its author. For some felonies he had been sentenced to the galleys; but, by the benignity of the late king, this felon (to be one day advanced to the rank of a regicide) had been pardoned and released at the intercession of the ambassadors of Tippoo Sultan. His gratitude was such as might naturally have been expected; and it has lately been rewarded as it deserved. This liberated galley-slave was raised, in mockery of all criminal law, to be Minister of Justice: he became from his elevation a more conspicuous object of accusation, and he has since received the punishment of his former crimes in proscription and death.

It will be asked, how the Minister of the Home Department was employed at this crisis. The day after the massacre had commenced, Roland appeared; but not with the powerful apparatus of a protecting magistrate, to rescue those who had

survived the slaughter of the first day: nothing of this. On the 3rd of September, (that is, the day after the commencement of the massacre,[3]) he writes a long, elaborate, verbose epistle to the Assembly, in which, after magnifying, according to the *bon-ton* of the Revolution, his own integrity, humanity, courage, and patriotism, he first directly justifies all the bloody proceedings of the 10th of August. He considers the slaughter of that day as a necessary measure for defeating a conspiracy which (with a full knowledge of the falsehood of his assertion) he asserts to have been formed for a massacre of the people of Paris, and which he more than insinuates was the work of his late unhappy master, —who was universally known to carry his dread of shedding the blood of his most guilty subjects to an excess.

"Without the day of the 10th," says he, "it is evident that we should have been lost. The court, prepared for a long time, waited for the hour which was to accumulate all treasons, to display over Paris the standard of death, and to reign there by terror. The sense of the people, (*le sentiment*,) always just and ready when their opinion is not corrupted, foresaw the epoch marked for their destruction, and rendered it fatal to the conspirators." He then proceeds, in the cant which has been applied to palliate all their atrocities from the 14th of July, 1789, to the present time: —"It is in the nature of things," continues he, "and in that of the human heart, that victory should bring with it *some* excess. The

[3] Letter to the National Assembly, signed, *The Minister of the Interior*, ROLAND; dated Paris, Sept. 3rd, *4th year of Liberty*.

sea, agitated by a violent storm, roars *long* after the tempest; but *everything has bounds*, which ought *at length* to be observed."

In this memorable epistle, he considers such *excesses* as fatalities arising from the very nature of things, and consequently not to be punished. He allows a space of time for the duration of these agitations; and lest he should be thought rigid and too scanty in his measure, he thinks it may be *long*. But he would have things to cease *at length*. But when? and where?—When they may approach his own person.

"*Yesterday*," says he, "the ministers *were denounced: vaguely*, indeed, as to the *matter*, because subjects of reproach were wanting; but with that warmth and force of assertion which strike the imagination and seduce it for a moment, and which mislead and destroy confidence, without which no man should remain in place in a free government. *Yesterday, again*, in an assembly of the presidents of all the sections, convoked by the ministers, with the view of conciliating all minds, and of mutual explanation, I perceived *that distrust which suspects, interrogates, and fetters operations*."

In this manner (that is, in mutual suspicions and interrogatories) this virtuous Minister of the Home Department, and all the magistracy of Paris, spent the first day of the massacre, the atrocity of which has spread horror and alarm throughout Europe. It does not appear that the putting a stop to the massacre had any part in the object of their meeting, or in their consultations when they were met. Here was a minister

tremblingly alive to his own safety, dead to that of his fellow-citizens, eager to preserve his place, and worse than indifferent about its most important duties. Speaking of the people, he says "that their hidden enemies may make use of this *agitation*" (the tender appellation which he gives to horrid massacre) "to hurt *their best friends and their most able defenders. Already the example begins*: let it restrain and arrest a *just* rage. Indignation carried to its height commences proscriptions which fall only on the *guilty*, but in which error and particular passions may shortly involve the *honest man*."

He saw that the able artificers in the trade and mystery of murder did not choose that their skill should be unemployed after their first work, and that they were full as ready to cut off their rivals as their enemies. This gave him *one* alarm that was serious. This letter of Roland, in every part of it, lets out the secret of all the parties in this Revolution. *Plena rimarum est; hoc atque illac perfluit.* We see that none of them condemn the occasional practice of murder,—provided it is properly applied,—provided it is kept within the bounds which each of those parties think proper to prescribe. In this case Roland feared, that, if what was occasionally useful should become habitual, the practice might go further than was convenient. It might involve the best friends of the last Revolution, as it had done the heroes of the first Revolution: he feared that it would not be confined to the La Fayettes and Clermont-Tonnerres, the Duponts and Barnaves, but that it might extend to the Brissots and Vergniauds, to the

Condorcets, the Pétions, and to himself. Under this apprehension there is no doubt that his humane feelings were altogether unaffected.

His observations on the massacre of the preceding day are such as cannot be passed over. "Yesterday," said he, "was a day upon the events of which it is perhaps necessary to leave a *veil*. I know that the people with their vengeance *mingled a sort of justice*: they did not take for victims *all* who presented themselves to their fury; they directed it to *them who had for a long time been spared by the sword of the law*, and who they *believed*, from the peril of circumstances, should be sacrificed without delay. But I know that it is easy to *villains and traitors* to misrepresent this *effervescence*, and that it must be checked; I know that we owe to all France the declaration, that the *executive power* could not foresee or prevent this excess; I know that it is due to the constituted authorities to place a limit to it, or consider themselves as abolished."

In the midst of this carnage he thinks of nothing but throwing a veil over it,—which was at once to cover the guilty from punishment, and to extinguish all compassion for the sufferers. He apologizes for it; in fact, he justifies it. He who (as the reader has just seen in what is quoted from this letter) feels so much indignation at "vague denunciations," when made against himself, and from which he then feared nothing more than the subversion of his power, is not ashamed to consider the charge of a conspiracy to massacre the Parisians, brought against his

master upon denunciations as vague as possible, or rather upon no denunciations, as a perfect justification of the monstrous proceedings against him. He is not ashamed to call the murder of the unhappy priests in the Carmes, who were under no criminal denunciation whatsoever, a "*vengeance* mingled with a *sort of justice*"; he observes that they "had been a long time spared by the sword of the law," and calls by anticipation all those who should represent this "*effervescence*" in other colors *villains and traitors*: he did not than foresee how soon himself and his accomplices would be under the necessity of assuming the pretended character of this new sort of "*villany and treason*", in the hope of obliterating the memory of their former real *villanies and treasons*; he did not foresee that in the course of six months a formal manifesto on the part of himself and his faction, written by his confederate Brissot, was to represent this "*effervescence*" as another "*St. Bartholomew*" and speak of it as "*having made humanity shudder, and sullied the Revolution forever.*"[4]

It is very remarkable that he takes upon himself to know the motives of the assassins, their policy, and even what they "believed." How could this be, if he had no connection with them? He praises the murderers for not having taken as yet *all* the lives of those who had, as he calls it, "*presented themselves* as victims to their fury." He paints the miserable prisoners, who had been forcibly piled upon one another in the Church of the Carmelites by his faction, as *presenting themselves* as victims to

[4] See p. 12 and p. 13 of this translation.

their fury,—as if death was their choice, or (allowing the idiom of his language to make this equivocal) as if they were by some accident *presented* to the fury of their assassins: whereas he knew that the leaders of the murderers sought these pure and innocent victims in the places where they had deposited them and were sure to find them. The very selection, which he praises as a *sort of justice* tempering their fury, proves beyond a doubt the foresight, deliberation, and method with which this massacre was made. He knew that circumstance on the very day of the commencement of the massacres, when, in all probability, he had begun this letter, —for he presented it to the Assembly on the very next.

Whilst, however, he defends these acts, he is conscious that they will appear in another light to the world. He therefore acquits the executive power, that is, he acquits himself, (but only by his own assertion,) of those acts of "*vengeance mixed with a sort of justice*," as an "*excess* which he could neither foresee nor prevent." He could not, he says, foresee these acts, when he tells us the people of Paris had sagacity so well to foresee the designs of the court on the 10th of August,—to foresee them so well as to mark the precise epoch on which they were to be executed, and to contrive to anticipate them on the very day: he could not foresee these events, though he declares in this very letter that victory *must* bring with it some *excess*,—that "the sea roars *long* after the tempest." So far as to his foresight. As to his disposition to prevent, if he had foreseen, the massacres of that day,—this will be judged by his care in putting a stop to the massacre then

going on. This was no matter of foresight: he was in the very midst of it. He does not so much as pretend that he had used any force to put a stop to it. But if he had used any, the sanction given under his hand to a sort of justice in the murderers was enough to disarm the protecting force.

That approbation of what they had already done had its natural effect on the executive assassins, then in the paroxysm of their fury, as well as on their employers, then in the midst of the execution of their deliberate, cold-blooded system of murder. He did not at all differ from either of them in the principle of those executions, but only in the time of their duration,—and that only as it affected himself. This, though to him a great consideration, was none to his confederates, who were at the same time his rivals. They were encouraged to accomplish the work they had in hand. They did accomplish it; and whilst this grave moral epistle from a grave minister, recommending a cessation of their work of "vengeance mingled with a sort of justice," was before a grave assembly, the authors of the massacres proceeded without interruption in their business for four days together,—that is, until the seventh of that month, and until all the victims of the first proscription in Paris and at Versailles and several other places were immolated at the shrine of the grim Moloch of liberty and equality. All the priests, all the loyalists, all the first essayists and novices of revolution in 1789, that could be found, were promiscuously put to death.

Through the whole of this long letter of Roland, it is curious to

remark how the nerve and vigor of his style, which had spoken so potently to his sovereign, is relaxed when he addresses himself to the *sans-culottes,*—how that strength and dexterity of arm, with which he parries and beats down the sceptre, is enfeebled and lost when he comes to fence with the poniard. When he speaks to the populace, he can no longer be direct. The whole compass of the language is tried to find synonymes and circumlocutions for massacre and murder. Things are never called by their common names. Massacre is sometimes *agitation*, sometimes *effervescence*, sometimes *excess*, sometimes too continued an exercise of a *revolutionary power*.

However, after what had passed had been praised, or excused, or pardoned, he declares loudly against such proceedings *in future*. Crimes had pioneered and made smooth the way for the march of the virtues, and from that time order and justice and a sacred regard for personal property were to become the rules for the new democracy. Here Roland and the Brissotins leagued for their own preservation, by endeavoring to preserve peace. This short story will render many of the parts of Brissot's pamphlet, in which Roland's views and intentions are so often alluded to, the more intelligible in themselves, and the more useful in their application by the English reader.

Under the cover of these artifices, Roland, Brissot, and their party hoped to gain the bankers, merchants, substantial tradesmen, hoarders of assignats, and purchasers of the confiscated lands of the clergy and gentry to join with their party,

as holding out some sort of security to the effects which they possessed, whether these effects were the acquisitions of fair commerce, or the gains of jobbing in the misfortunes of their country and the plunder of their fellow-citizens. In this design the party of Roland and Brissot succeeded in a great degree. They obtained a majority in the National Convention. Composed, however, as that assembly is, their majority was far from steady. But whilst they appeared to gain the Convention, and many of the outlying departments, they lost the city of Paris entirely and irrecoverably: it was fallen into the hands of Marat, Robespierre, and Danton. Their instruments were the *sans-culottes*, or rabble, who domineered in that capital, and were wholly at the devotion of those incendiaries, and received their daily pay. The people of property were of no consequence, and trembled before Marat and his janizaries. As that great man had not obtained the helm of the state, it was not yet come to his turn to act the part of Brissot and his friends in the assertion of subordination and regular government. But Robespierre has survived both these rival chiefs, and is now the great patron of Jacobin order.

To balance the exorbitant power of Paris, (which threatened to leave nothing to the National Convention but a character as insignificant as that which the first Assembly had assigned to the unhappy Louis the Sixteenth,) the faction of Brissot, whose leaders were Roland, Pétion, Vergniaud, Isnard, Condorcet, &c., &c., &c., applied themselves to gain the great commercial towns, Lyons, Marseilles, Rouen, Nantes, and Bordeaux. The

republicans of the Brissotin description, to whom the concealed royalists, still very numerous, joined themselves, obtained a temporary superiority in all these places. In Bordeaux, on account of the activity and eloquence of some of its representatives, this superiority was the most distinguished. This last city is seated on the Garonne, or Gironde; and being the centre of a department named from that river, the appellation of Girondists was given to the whole party. These, and some other towns, declared strongly against the principles of anarchy, and against the despotism of Paris. Numerous addresses were sent to the Convention, promising to maintain its authority, which the addressers were pleased to consider as legal and constitutional, though chosen, not to compose an executive government, but to form a plan for a Constitution. In the Convention measures were taken to obtain an armed force from the several departments to maintain the freedom of that body, and to provide for the personal safety of the members: neither of which, from the 14th of July, 1789, to this hour, have been really enjoyed by their assemblies sitting under any denomination.

This scheme, which was well conceived, had not the desired success. Paris, from which the Convention did not dare to move, though some threats of such a departure were from time to time thrown out, was too powerful for the party of the Gironde. Some of the proposed guards, but neither with regularity nor in force, did indeed arrive: they were debauched as fast as they came, or were sent to the frontiers. The game played by the revolutionists

in 1789, with respect to the French guards of the unhappy king, was now played against the departmental guards, called together for the protection of the revolutionists. Every part of their own policy comes round, and strikes at their own power and their own lives.

The Parisians, on their part, were not slow in taking the alarm. They had just reason to apprehend, that, if they permitted the smallest delay, they should see themselves besieged by an army collected from all parts of France. Violent threats were thrown out against that city in the Assembly. Its total destruction was menaced. A very remarkable expression was used in these debates,—"that in future times it might be inquired on what part of the Seine Paris had stood." The faction which ruled in Paris, too bold to be intimidated and too vigilant to be surprised, instantly armed themselves. In their turn, they accused the Girondists of a treasonable design to break *the republic one and indivisible* (whose unity they contended could only be preserved by the supremacy of Paris) into a number of *confederate* commonwealths. The Girondin faction on this account received also the name of *Federalists*.

Things on both sides hastened fast to extremities. Paris, the mother of equality, was herself to be equalized. Matters were come to this alternative: either that city must be reduced to a mere member of the federative republic, or the Convention, chosen, as they said, by all France, was to be brought regularly and systematically under the dominion of the Common Hall, and

even of any one of the sections of Paris.

In this awful contest, thus brought to issue, the great mother club of the Jacobins was entirely in the Parisian interest. The Girondins no longer dared to show their faces in that assembly. Nine tenths at least of the Jacobin clubs, throughout France, adhered to the great patriarchal Jacobinière of Paris, to which they were (to use their own term) *affiliated*. No authority of magistracy, judicial or executive, had the least weight, whenever these clubs chose to interfere: and they chose to interfere in everything, and on every occasion. All hope of gaining them to the support of property, or to the acknowledgment of any law but their own will, was evidently vain and hopeless. Nothing but an armed insurrection against their anarchical authority could answer the purpose of the Girondins. Anarchy was to be cured by rebellion, as it had been caused by it.

As a preliminary to this attempt on the Jacobins and the commons of Paris, which it was hoped would be supported by all the remaining property of France, it became absolutely necessary to prepare a manifesto, laying before the public the whole policy, genius, character, and conduct of the partisans of club government. To make this exposition as fully and clearly as it ought to be made, it was of the same unavoidable necessity to go through a series of transactions, in which all those concerned in this Revolution were, at the several periods of their activity, deeply involved. In consequence of this design, and under these difficulties, Brissot prepared the following declaration of his

party, which he executed with no small ability; and in this manner the whole mystery of the French Revolution was laid open in all its parts.

It is almost needless to mention to the reader the fate of the design to which this pamphlet was to be subservient. The Jacobins of Paris were more prompt than their adversaries. They were the readiest to resort to what La Fayette calls the *most sacred of all duties, that of insurrection*. Another era of holy insurrection commenced the 31st of last May. As the first fruits of that insurrection grafted on insurrection, and of that rebellion improving upon rebellion, the sacred, irresponsible character of the members of the Convention was laughed to scorn. They had themselves shown in their proceedings against the late king how little the most fixed principles are to be relied upon, in their revolutionary Constitution. The members of the Girondin party in the Convention were seized upon, or obliged to save themselves by flight. The unhappy author of this piece, with twenty of his associates, suffered together on the scaffold, after a trial the iniquity of which puts all description to defiance.

The English reader will draw from this work of Brissot, and from the result of the last struggles of this party, some useful lessons. He will be enabled to judge of the information of those who have undertaken to guide and enlighten us, and who, for reasons best known to themselves, have chosen to paint the French Revolution and its consequences in brilliant and flattering colors. They will know how to appreciate the liberty of France,

which has been so much magnified in England. They will do justice to the wisdom and goodness of their sovereign and his Parliament, who have put them into a state of defence, in the war audaciously made upon us in favor of that kind of liberty. When we see (as here we must see) in their true colors the character and policy of our enemies, our gratitude will become an active principle. It will produce a strong and zealous coöperation with the efforts of our government in favor of a Constitution under which we enjoy advantages the full value of which the querulous weakness of human nature requires sometimes the opportunity of a comparison to understand and to relish.

Our confidence in those who watch for the public will not be lessened. We shall be sensible that to alarm us in the late circumstances of our affairs was not for our molestation, but for our security. We shall be sensible that this alarm was not ill-timed,—and that it ought to have been given, as it was given, before the enemy had time fully to mature and accomplish their plans for reducing us to the condition of France, as that condition is faithfully and without exaggeration described in the following work. We now have our arms in our hands; we have the means of opposing the sense, the courage, and the resources of England to the deepest, the most craftily devised, the best combined, and the most extensive design that ever was carried on, since the beginning of the world, against all property, all order, all religion, all law, and all real freedom.

The reader is requested to attend to the part of this pamphlet

which relates to the conduct of the Jacobins with regard to the Austrian Netherlands, which they call Belgia or Belgium. It is from page seventy-two to page eighty-four of this translation. Here their views and designs upon all their neighbors are fully displayed. Here the whole mystery of their ferocious politics is laid open with the utmost clearness. Here the manner in which they would treat every nation into which they could introduce their doctrines and influence is distinctly marked. We see that no nation was out of danger, and we see what the danger was with which every nation was threatened. The writer of this pamphlet throws the blame of several of the most violent of the proceedings on the other party. He and his friends, at the time alluded to, had a majority in the National Assembly. He admits that neither he nor they *ever publicly* opposed these measures; but he attributes their silence to a fear of rendering themselves suspected. It is most certain, that, whether from fear or from approbation, they never discovered any dislike of those proceedings till Dumouriez was driven from the Netherlands. But whatever their motive was, it is plain that the most violent is, and since the Revolution has always been, the predominant party.

If Europe could not be saved without our interposition, (most certainly it could not,) I am sure there is not an Englishman who would not blush to be left out of the general effort made in favor of the general safety. But we are not secondary parties in this war; *we are principals in the danger, and ought to be principals in the exertion*. If any Englishman asks whether the designs of the

French assassins are confined to the spot of Europe which they actually desolate, the citizen Brissot, the author of this book, and the author of the declaration of war against England, will give him his answer. He will find in this book, that the republicans are divided into factions full of the most furious and destructive animosity against each other; but he will find also that there is one point in which they perfectly agree: that they are all enemies alike to the government of all other nations, and only contend with each other about the means of propagating their tenets and extending their empire by conquest.

It is true that in this present work, which the author professedly designed for an appeal to foreign nations and posterity, he has dressed up the philosophy of his own faction in as decent a garb as he could to make her appearance in public; but through every disguise her hideous figure may be distinctly seen. If, however, the reader still wishes to see her in all her naked deformity, I would further refer him to a private letter of Brissot, written towards the end of the last year, and quoted in a late very able pamphlet of Mallet Du Pan. "We must" (says our philosopher) "*set fire to the four corners of Europe*"; in that alone is our safety. "*Dumouriez cannot suit us*. I always distrusted him. Miranda is the general for us: he understands the *revolutionary power*; he has *courage, lights*," &c.[5] Here everything is fairly avowed in plain language. The triumph of philosophy is the universal conflagration of Europe; the only real dissatisfaction

[5] See the translation of Mallet Du Pan's work, printed for Owen, p. 53.

with Dumouriez is a suspicion of his moderation; and the secret motive of that preference which in this very pamphlet the author gives to Miranda, though without assigning his reasons, is declared to be the superior fitness of that foreign adventurer for the purposes of subversion and destruction. On the other hand, if there can be any man in this country so hardy as to undertake the defence or the apology of the present monstrous usurpers of France, and if it should be said in their favor, that it is not just to credit the charges of their enemy Brissot against them, who have actually tried and condemned him on the very same charges among others, we are luckily supplied with the best possible evidence in support of this part of his book against them: it comes from among themselves. Camille Desmoulins published the History of the Brissotins in answer to this very address of Brissot. It was the counter-manifesto of the last holy revolution of the 31st of May; and the flagitious orthodoxy of his writings at that period has been admitted in the late scrutiny of him by the Jacobin Club, when they saved him from that guillotine "which he grazed." In the beginning of his work he displays "the task of glory," as he calls it, which presented itself at the opening of the Convention. All is summed up in two points: "To create the French Republic; *to disorganize Europe; perhaps to purge it of its tyrants by the eruption of the volcanic principles of equality*."[6] The coincidence is exact; the proof is complete and irresistible.

[6] See the translation of the History of the Brissotins by Camille Desmoulins, printed for Owen, p. 2.

In a cause like this, and in a time like the present, there is no neutrality. They who are not actively, and with decision and energy, against Jacobinism are its partisans. They who do not dread it love it. It cannot be viewed with indifference. It is a thing made to produce a powerful impression on the feelings. Such is the nature of Jacobinism, such is the nature of man, that this system must be regarded either with enthusiastic admiration, or with the highest degree of detestation, resentment, and horror.

Another great lesson may be taught by this book, and by the fortune of the author and his party: I mean a lesson drawn from the consequences of engaging in daring innovations from an hope that we may be able to limit their mischievous operation at our pleasure, and by our policy to secure ourselves against the effect of the evil examples we hold out to the world. This lesson is taught through almost all the important pages of history; but never has it been taught so clearly and so awfully as at this hour. The revolutionists who have just suffered an ignominious death, under the sentence of the revolutionary tribunal, (a tribunal composed of those with whom they had triumphed in the total destruction of the ancient government,) were by no means ordinary men, or without very considerable talents and resources. But with all their talents and resources, and the apparent momentary extent of their power, we see the fate of their projects, their power, and their persons. We see before our eyes the absurdity of thinking to establish order upon principles of confusion, or with the materials and instruments of rebellion

to build up a solid and stable government.

Such partisans of a republic amongst us as may not have the worst intentions will see that the principles, the plans, the manners, the morals, and the whole system of France is altogether as adverse to the formation and duration of any rational scheme of a republic as it is to that of a monarchy, absolute or limited. It is, indeed, a system which can only answer the purposes of robbers and murderers.

The translator has only to say for himself, that he has found some difficulty in this version. His original author, through haste, perhaps, or through the perturbation of a mind filled with a great and arduous enterprise, is often obscure. There are some passages, too, in which his language requires to be first translated into French,—at least into such French as the Academy would in former times have tolerated. He writes with great force and vivacity; but the language, like everything else in his country, has undergone a revolution. The translator thought it best to be as literal as possible, conceiving such a translation would perhaps be the most fit to convey the author's peculiar mode of thinking. In this way the translator has no credit for style, but he makes it up in fidelity. Indeed, the facts and observations are so much more important than the style, that no apology is wanted for producing them in any intelligible manner.

APPENDIX

[The Address of M. Brissot to his Constituents being now almost forgotten, it has been thought right to add, as an Appendix, that part of it to which Mr. Burke points our particular attention and upon which he so forcibly comments in his Preface.]

Three sorts of anarchy have ruined our affairs in Belgium.

The anarchy of the administration of Pache, which has completely disorganized the supply of our armies; which by that disorganization reduced the army of Dumouriez to stop in the middle of its conquests; which struck it motionless through the months of November and December; which hindered it from joining Beurnonville and Custine, and from forcing the Prussians and Austrians to repass the Rhine, and afterwards from putting themselves in a condition to invade Holland sooner than they did.

To this state of ministerial anarchy it is necessary to join that other anarchy which disorganized the troops, and occasioned their habits of pillage; and lastly, that anarchy which created the revolutionary power, and forced the union to France of the countries we had invaded, before things were ripe for such a measure.

Who could, however, doubt the frightful evils that were occasioned in our armies by that doctrine of anarchy which, under the shadow of equality of *right*, would establish equality

of fact? This is universal equality, the scourge of society, as the other is the support of society: an anarchical doctrine which would level all things, talents and ignorance, virtues and vices, places, usages, and services; a doctrine which begot that fatal project of organizing the army, presented by Dubois de Crancé, to which it will be indebted for a complete disorganization.

Mark the date of the presentation of the system of this equality of fact, entire equality. It had been projected and decreed even at the very opening of the Dutch campaign. If any project could encourage the want of discipline in the soldiers, any scheme could disgust and banish good officers, and throw all things into confusion at the moment when order alone could give victory, it is this project, in truth, so stubbornly defended by the anarchists, and transplanted into their ordinary tactic.

How could they expect that there should exist any discipline, any subordination, when even in the camp they permit motions, censures, and denunciations of officers and of generals? Does not such a disorder destroy all the respect that is due to superiors, and all the mutual confidence without which success cannot be hoped for? For the spirit of distrust makes the soldier suspicious, and intimidates the general. The first discerns treason in every danger; the second, always placed between the necessity of conquest and the image of the scaffold, dares not raise himself to bold conception, and those heights of courage which electrify an army and insure victory. Turenne, in our time, would have carried his head to the scaffold; for he was sometimes beat:

but the reason why he more frequently conquered was, that his discipline was severe; it was, that his soldiers, confiding in his talents, never muttered discontent instead of fighting. Without reciprocal confidence between the soldier and the general, there can be no army, no victory, especially in a free government.

Is it not to the same system of anarchy, of equalization, and want of subordination, which has been recommended in some clubs and defended even in the Convention, that we owe the pillages, the murders, the enormities of all kinds, which it was difficult for the officers to put a stop to, from the general spirit of insubordination,—excesses which have rendered the French name odious to the Belgians? Again, is it not to this system of anarchy, and of robbery, that we are indebted for the *revolutionary power*, which has so justly aggravated the hatred of the Belgians against France?

What did enlightened republicans think before the 10th of August, men who wished for liberty, *not only for their own country, but for all Europe? They believed that they could generally establish it by exciting the governed against the governors, in letting the people see the facility and the advantages of such insurrections.*

But how can the people be led to that point? By the example of good government established among us; by the example of order; by the care of spreading nothing but moral ideas among them: to respect their properties and their rights; to respect their prejudices, even when we combat them: by disinterestedness in

defending the people; by a zeal to extend the spirit of liberty amongst them.

This system was at first followed.[7] Excellent pamphlets from the pen of Condorcet prepared the people for liberty; the 10th of August, the republican decrees, the battle of Valmy, the retreat of the Prussians, the victory of Jemappes, all spoke in favor of France: all was rapidly destroyed by *the revolutionary power*. Without doubt, good intentions made the majority of the Assembly adopt it; they would plant the tree of liberty in a foreign soil, under the shade of a people already free. To the eyes of the people of Belgium it seemed but the mask of a new foreign tyranny. This opinion was erroneous; I will suppose it so for a moment; but still this opinion of Belgium deserved to be considered. In general, we have always considered our own opinions and our own intentions rather than the people whose cause we defend. We have given those people a will: that is to say, we have more than ever alienated them from liberty.

How could the Belgic people believe themselves free, since we exercise for them, and over them, the rights of sovereignty,—when, without consulting them, we suppress, all in a mass, their ancient usages, their abuses, their prejudices, those classes of society which without doubt are contrary to the spirit of liberty, but the utility of whose destruction was not as yet proved to them? How could they believe themselves free and sovereign,

[7] The most seditious libels upon all governments, in order to excite insurrection in Spain, Holland, and other countries,—TRANSLATOR.

when we made them take such an oath as we thought fit, as a test to give them the right of voting? How could they believe themselves free, when openly despising their religious worship, which religious worship that superstitious people valued beyond their liberty, beyond even their life; when we proscribed their priests; when we banished them from their assemblies, where they were in the practice of seeing them govern; when we seized their revenues, their domains, and riches, to the profit of the nation; when we carried to the very censer those hands which they regarded as profane? Doubtless these operations were founded on principles; but those principles ought to have had the consent of the Belgians, before they were carried into practice; otherwise they necessarily became our most cruel enemies.

Arrived ourselves at the last bounds of liberty and equality, trampling under our feet all human superstitions, (after, however, a four years' war with them,) we attempt all at once to raise to the same eminence men, strangers even to the first elementary principles of liberty, and plunged for fifteen hundred years in ignorance and superstition; we wished to force men to see, when a thick cataract covered their eyes, even before we had removed that cataract; we would force men to see, whose dulness of character had raised a mist before their eyes, and before that character was altered.[8]

[8] It may not be amiss, once for all, to remark on the style of all the philosophical politicians of France. Without any distinction in their several sects and parties, they agree in treating all nations who will not conform their government, laws, manners, and religion to the new French fashion, as *an herd of slaves*. They consider the content

Do you believe that the doctrine which now prevails in France would have found many partisans among us in 1789? No: a revolution in ideas and in prejudices is not made with that rapidity; it moves gradually; it does not escalade.

Philosophy does not inspire by violence, nor by seduction; nor is it the sword that begets love of liberty.

Joseph the Second also borrowed the language of philosophy, when he wished to suppress the monks in Belgium, and to seize upon their revenues. There was seen on him a mask only of philosophy, covering the hideous countenance of a greedy despot; and the people ran to arms. Nothing better than another kind of despotism has been seen in the *revolutionary power*.

We have seen in the commissioners of the National Convention nothing but proconsuls working the mine of Belgium

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with which men live under those governments as stupidity, and all attachment to religion as the effect of the grossest ignorance.The people of the Netherlands, by their Constitution, are as much entitled to be called free as any nation upon earth. The Austrian government (until some wild attempts the Emperor Joseph made on the French principle, but which have been since abandoned by the court of Vienna) has been remarkably mild. No people were more at their ease than the Flemish subjects, particularly the lower classes. It is curious to hear this great oculist talk of couching the *cataract* by which the Netherlands were *blinded*, and hindered from seeing in its proper colors the beautiful vision of the French republic, which he has himself painted with so masterly an hand. That people must needs be dull, blind, and brutalized by fifteen hundred years of superstition, (the time elapsed since the introduction of Christianity amongst them,) who could prefer their former state to the *present state of France*! The reader will remark, that the only difference between Brissot and his adversaries is in the *mode* of bringing other nations into the pale of the French republic. *They* would abolish the order and classes of society, and all religion, at a stroke: Brissot would have just the same thing done, but with more address and management.—TRANSLATOR.

for the profit of the French nation, seeking to conquer it for the sovereign of Paris,—either to aggrandize his empire, or to share the burdens of the debts, and furnish a rich prize to the robbers who domineered in France.

Do you believe the Belgians have ever been the dupes of those well-rounded periods which they vended in the pulpit in order to familiarize them to the idea of an union with France? Do you believe they were ever imposed upon by those votes and resolutions, made by what is called acclamation, for their union, of which corruption paid one part,[9] and fear forced the remainder? Who, at this time of day, is unacquainted with the springs and wires of their miserable puppet-show? *Who does not know the farces of primary assemblies, composed of a president, of a secretary, and of some assistants, whose day's work was paid for?* No: it is not by means which belong only to thieves and despots that the foundations of liberty can be laid in an enslaved country. It is not by those means, that a new-born republic, a people who know not yet the elements of republican governments, can be united to us. Even slaves do not suffer themselves to be seduced by such artifices; and if they have not the strength to resist, they have at least the sense to know how to appreciate the value of such an attempt.

If we would attach the Belgians to us, we must at least enlighten their minds by *good writings*; we must send to them

[9] See the correspondence of Dumouriez, especially the letter of the 12th of March.

missionaries, and not despotic commissioners.[10] We ought to give them time to see,—to perceive by themselves the advantages of liberty, the unhappy effects of superstition, the fatal spirit of priesthood. And whilst we waited for this moral revolution, we should have accepted the offers which they incessantly repeated to join to the French army an army of fifty thousand men, to entertain them at their own expense, and to advance to France the specie of which she stood in need.

But have we ever seen those fifty thousand soldiers who were to join our army as soon as the standard of liberty should be displayed in Belgium? Have we ever seen those treasures which they were to count into our hands? Can we either accuse the sterility of their country, or the penury of their treasure, or the coldness of their love for liberty? No! despotism and anarchy, these are the benefits which we have transplanted into their soil. We have acted, we have spoken, like masters; and from that time we have found the Flemings nothing but jugglers, who made the grimace of liberty for money, or slaves, who in their hearts cursed their new tyrants. Our commissioners address them in this sort: "You have nobles and priests among you: drive them out without delay, or we will neither be your brethren nor your patrons." They answered: "Give us but time; only leave to us the care of reforming these institutions." Our answer to them was: "No! it

[10] They have not as yet proceeded farther with regard to the English dominions. Here we only see as yet *the good writings* of Paine, and of his learned associates, and the labors of the *missionary clubs*, and other zealous instructors.—TRANSLATOR.

must be at the moment, it must be on the spot; or we will treat you as enemies, we will abandon you to the resentment of the Austrians."

What could the disarmed Belgians object to all this, surrounded as they were by seventy thousand men? They had only to hold their tongues, and to bow down their heads before their masters. They did hold their tongues, and their silence is received as a sincere and free assent.

Have not the strangest artifices been adopted to prevent that people from retreating, and to constrain them to an union? It was foreseen, that, as long as they were unable to effect an union, the States would preserve the supreme authority amongst themselves. Under pretence, therefore, of relieving the people, and of exercising the sovereignty in their right, at one stroke they abolished all the duties and taxes, they shut up all the treasuries. From that time no more receipts, no more public money, no more means of paying the salaries of any man in office appointed by the States. Thus was anarchy organized amongst the people, that they might be compelled to throw themselves into our arms. It became necessary for those who administered their affairs, under the penalty of being exposed to sedition, and in order to avoid their throats being cut, to have recourse to the treasury of France. What did they find in this treasury? ASSIGNATS.—These assignats were advanced at par to Belgium. By this means, on the one hand, they naturalized this currency in that country, and on the other, they expected to make a good pecuniary

transaction. Thus it is that covetousness cut its throat with its own hands. *The Belgians have seen in this forced introduction of assignats nothing but a double robbery*; and they have only the more violently hated the union with France.

Recollect the solicitude of the Belgians on that subject. With what earnestness did they conjure you to take off a retroactive effect from these assignats, and to prevent them from being applied to the payment of debts that were contracted anterior to the union!

Did not this language energetically enough signify that they looked upon the assignats as a leprosy, and the union as a deadly contagion?

And yet what regard was paid to so just a demand? It was buried in the Committee of Finance. That committee wanted to make anarchy the means of an union. They only busied themselves in making the Belgic Provinces subservient to their finances.

Cambon said loftily before the Belgians themselves: The Belgian war costs us hundreds of millions. Their ordinary revenues, and even some extraordinary taxes, will not answer to our reimbursements; and yet we have occasion for them. The mortgage of our assignats draws near its end. What must be done? Sell the Church property of Brabant. There is a mortgage of two thousand millions (eighty millions sterling). How shall we get possession of them? By an immediate union. Instantly they decreed this union. Men's minds were not disposed to it.

What does it signify? Let us make them vote by means of money. Without delay, therefore, they secretly order the Minister of Foreign Affairs to dispose of four or five hundred thousand livres (20,000*l.* sterling) *to make the vagabonds of Brussels drunk, and to buy proselytes to the union in all the States*. But even these means, it was said, will obtain but a weak minority in our favor. What does that signify? *Revolutions*, said they, *are made only by minorities. It is the minority which has made the Revolution of France; it is a minority which, has made the people triumph*.

The Belgic Provinces were not sufficient to satisfy the voracious cravings of this financial system. Cambon wanted to unite everything, that he might sell everything. Thus he forced the union of Savoy. In the war with Holland, he saw nothing but gold to seize on, and assignats to sell at par.[11] "Do not let us dissemble," said he one day to the Committee of General Defence, in presence even of the patriot deputies of Holland, "you have no ecclesiastical goods to offer us for our indemnity. IT IS A REVOLUTION IN THEIR COUNTERS AND IRON CHESTS[12] that must be made amongst the DUTCH." The word

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[11] The same thing will happen in Savoy. The persecution of the clergy has soured people's minds. The commissaries represent them to us as good Frenchmen. I put them to the proof. Where are the legions? How! thirty thousand Savoyards,—are they not armed to defend, in concert with us, their liberty?—BRISSOT.

[12] *Portefeuille* is the word in the original. It signifies all movable property which may be represented in bonds, notes, bills, stocks, or any sort of public or private securities. I do not know of a single word in English that answers it: I have therefore substituted that of *Iron Chests*, as coming nearest to the idea.—TRANSLATOR.

was said, and the bankers Abema and Van Staphorst understood it.

Do you think that that word has not been worth an army to the Stadtholder? that it has not cooled the ardor of the Dutch patriots? that it has not commanded the vigorous defence of Williamstadt?

Do you believe that the patriots of Amsterdam, when they read the preparatory decree which gave France an execution on their goods,—do you believe that those patriots would not have liked better to have remained under the government of the Stadtholder, who took from them no more than a fixed portion of their property, than to pass under that of a revolutionary power, which would make a complete revolution in their bureaus and strong-boxes, and reduce them to wretchedness and rags?[13] Robbery and anarchy, instead of encouraging, will always stifle revolutions.

"But why," they object to me, "have not you and your friends chosen to expose these measures in the rostrum of the National Convention? Why have you not opposed yourself to all these fatal projects of union?"

There are two answers to make here,—one general, one particular.

You complain of the silence of honest men! You quite forget, then, honest men are the objects of your suspicion. Suspicion, if it does not stain the soul of a courageous man, at least arrests

[13] In the original *les reduire à la sansculotterie*.

his thoughts in their passage to his lips. The suspicions of a good citizen freeze those men whom the calumny of the wicked could not stop in their progress.

You complain of their silence! You forget, then, that you have often established an insulting equality between them and men covered with crimes and made up of ignominy.

You forget, then, that you have twenty times left them covered with opprobrium by your galleries.

You forget, then, that you have not thought yourself sufficiently powerful to impose silence upon these galleries.

What ought a wise man to do in the midst of these circumstances? He is silent. He waits the moment when the passions give way; he waits till reason shall preside, and till the multitude shall listen to her voice.

What has been the tactic displayed during all these unions? Cambon, incapable of political calculation, boasting his ignorance in the diplomatic, flattering the ignorant multitude, lending his name and popularity to the anarchists, seconded by their vociferations, denounced incessantly, as counter-revolutionists, those intelligent persons who were desirous at least of having things discussed. To oppose the acts of union appeared to Cambon an overt act of treason. The wish so much as to reflect and to deliberate was in his eyes a great crime. He calumniated our intentions. The voice of every deputy, especially my voice, would infallibly have been stifled. There were spies on the very monosyllables that escaped our lips.

A LETTER TO WILLIAM ELLIOT, ESQ., OCCASIONED BY THE ACCOUNT GIVEN IN A NEWSPAPER OF THE SPEECH MADE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS BY THE **** OF ******* IN THE DEBATE CONCERNING LORD FITZWILLIAM. 1795

BEACONSFIELD, May 28,1795.

My dear sir,—I have been told of the voluntary which, for the entertainment of the House of Lords, has been lately played by his Grace the **** of *******, a great deal at my expense, and a little at his own. I confess I should have liked the composition rather better, if it had been quite new. But every man has his taste, and his Grace is an admirer of ancient music.

There may be sometimes too much even of a good thing. A toast is good, and a bumper is not bad: but the best toasts may be so often repeated as to disgust the palate, and ceaseless rounds of bumpers may nauseate and overload the stomach. The ears of the most steady-voting politicians may at last be stunned with "three

times three." I am sure I have been very grateful for the flattering remembrance made of me in the toasts of the Revolution Society, and of other clubs formed on the same laudable plan. After giving the brimming honors to Citizen Thomas Paine and to Citizen Dr. Priestley, the gentlemen of these clubs seldom failed to bring me forth in my turn, and to drink, "Mr. Burke, and thanks to him for the discussion he has provoked."

I found myself elevated with this honor; for, even by the collision of resistance, to be the means of striking out sparkles of truth, if not merit, is at least felicity.

Here I might have rested. But when I found that the great advocate, Mr. Erskine, condescended to resort to these bumper toasts, as the pure and exuberant fountains of politics and of rhetoric, (as I hear he did, in three or four speeches made in defence of certain worthy citizens,) I was rather let down a little. Though still somewhat proud of myself, I was not quite so proud of my voucher. Though he is no idolater of fame, in some way or other Mr. Erskine will always do himself honor. Methinks, however, in following the precedents of these toasts, he seemed to do more credit to his diligence as a special pleader than to his invention as an orator. To those who did not know the abundance of his resources, both of genius and erudition, there was something in it that indicated the want of a good assortment, with regard to richness and variety, in the magazine of topics and commonplaces which I suppose he keeps by him, in imitation of Cicero and other renowned declaimers of antiquity.

Mr. Erskine supplied something, I allow, from the stores of his imagination, in metamorphosing the jovial toasts of clubs into solemn special arguments at the bar. So far the thing showed talent: however, I must still prefer the bar of the tavern to the other bar. The toasts at the first hand were better than the arguments at the second. Even when the toasts began to grow old as sarcasms, they were washed down with still older pricked election Port; then the acid of the wine made some amends for the want of anything piquant in the wit. But when his Grace gave them a second transformation, and brought out the vapid stuff which had wearied the clubs and disgusted the courts, the drug made up of the bottoms of rejected bottles, all smelling so wofully of the cork and of the cask, and of everything except the honest old lamp, and when that sad draught had been farther infected with the jail pollution of the Old Bailey, and was dashed and brewed and ineffectually stummed again into a senatorial exordium in the House of Lords, I found all the high flavor and mantling of my honors tasteless, flat, and stale. Unluckily, the new tax on wine is felt even in the greatest fortunes, and his Grace submits to take up with the heel-taps of Mr. Erskine.

I have had the ill or good fortune to provoke two great men of this age to the publication of their opinions: I mean Citizen Thomas Paine, and his Grace the **** of *******. I am not so great a leveller as to put these two great men on a par, either in the state, or the republic of letters; but "the field of glory is a field for all." It is a large one, indeed; and we all may run, God knows

where, in chase of glory, over the boundless expanse of that wild heath whose horizon always flies before us. I assure his Grace, (if he will yet give me leave to call him so,) whatever may be said on the authority of the clubs or of the bar, that Citizen Paine (who, they will have it, hunts with me in couples, and who only moves as I drag him along) has a sufficient activity in his own native benevolence to dispose and enable him to take the lead for himself. He is ready to blaspheme his God, to insult his king, and to libel the Constitution of his country, without any provocation from me or any encouragement from his Grace. I assure him that I shall not be guilty of the injustice of charging Mr. Paine's next work against religion and human society upon his Grace's excellent speech in the House of Lords. I farther assure this noble Duke that I neither encouraged nor provoked that worthy citizen to seek for plenty, liberty, safety, justice, or lenity, in the famine, in the prisons, in the decrees of Convention, in the revolutionary tribunal, and in the guillotine of Paris, rather than quietly to take up with what he could find in the glutted markets, the unbarricadoed streets, the drowsy Old Bailey judges, or, at worst, the airy, wholesome pillory of Old England. The choice of country was his own taste. The writings were the effects of his own zeal. In spite of his friend Dr. Priestley, he was a free agent. I admit, indeed, that my praises of the British government, loaded with all its incumbrances, clogged with its peers and its beef, its parsons and its pudding, its commons and its beer, and its dull slavish liberty of going about just as one pleases, had

something to provoke a jockey of Norfolk,[14] who was inspired with the resolute ambition of becoming a citizen of France, to do something which might render him worthy of naturalization in that grand asylum of persecuted merit, something which should entitle him to a place in the senate of the adoptive country of all the gallant, generous, and humane. This, I say, was possible. But the truth is, (with great deference to his Grace I say it,) Citizen Paine acted without any provocation at all; he acted solely from the native impulses of his own excellent heart.

His Grace, like an able orator, as he is, begins with giving me a great deal of praise for talents which I do not possess. He does this to entitle himself, on the credit of this gratuitous kindness, to exaggerate my abuse of the parts which his bounty, and not that of Nature, has bestowed upon me. In this, too, he has condescended to copy Mr. Erskine. These priests (I hope they will excuse me, I mean priests of the Rights of Man) begin by crowning me with their flowers and their fillets, and bedewing me with their odors, as a preface to their knocking me on the head with their consecrated axes. I have injured, say they, the Constitution; and I have abandoned the Whig party and the Whig principles that I professed. I do not mean, my dear Sir, to defend myself against his Grace. I have not much interest in what the world shall think or say of me; as little has the world an interest in what I shall think or say of any one in it; and I wish that his Grace had suffered an unhappy man to enjoy, in his retreat, the

[14] Mr. Paine is a Norfolk man, from Thetford.

melancholy privileges of obscurity and sorrow. At any rate, I have spoken and I have written on the subject. If I have written or spoken so poorly as to be quite forgot, a fresh apology will not make a more lasting impression. "I must let the tree lie as it falls." Perhaps I must take some shame to myself. I confess that I have acted on my own principles of government, and not on those of his Grace, which are, I dare say, profound and wise, but which I do not pretend to understand. As to the party to which he alludes, and which has long taken its leave of me, I believe the principles of the book which he condemns are very conformable to the opinions of many of the most considerable and most grave in that description of politicians. A few, indeed, who, I admit, are equally respectable in all points, differ from me, and talk his Grace's language. I am too feeble to contend with them. They have the field to themselves. There are others, very young and very ingenious persons, who form, probably, the largest part of what his Grace, I believe, is pleased to consider as that party. Some of them were not born into the world, and all of them were children, when I entered into that connection. I give due credit to the censorial brow, to the broad phylacteries, and to the imposing gravity of those magisterial rabbins and doctors in the cabala of political science. I admit that "wisdom is as the gray hair to man, and that learning is like honorable old age." But, at a time when liberty is a good deal talked of, perhaps I might be excused, if I caught something of the general indocility. It might not be surprising, if I lengthened my chain a link or two, and,

in an age of relaxed discipline, gave a trifling indulgence to my own notions. If that could be allowed, perhaps I might sometimes (by accident, and without an unpardonable crime) trust as much to my own very careful and very laborious, though perhaps somewhat purblind disquisitions, as to their soaring, intuitive, eagle-eyed authority. But the modern liberty is a precious thing. It must not be profaned by too vulgar an use. It belongs only to the chosen few, who are born to the hereditary representation of the whole democracy, and who leave nothing at all, no, not the offal, to us poor outcasts of the plebeian race.

Amongst those gentlemen who came to authority as soon or sooner than they came of age I do not mean to include his Grace. With all those native titles to empire over our minds which distinguish the others, he has a large share of experience. He certainly ought to understand the British Constitution better than I do. He has studied it in the fundamental part. For one election I have seen, he has been concerned in twenty. Nobody is less of a visionary theorist; nobody has drawn his speculations more from practice. No peer has condescended to superintend with more vigilance the declining franchises of the poor commons. "With thrice great Hermes he has outwatched the Bear." Often have his candles been burned to the snuff, and glimmered and stunk in the sockets, whilst he grew pale at his constitutional studies; long, sleepless nights has he wasted, long, laborious, shiftless journeys has he made, and great sums has he expended, in order to secure the purity, the independence, and the sobriety of elections, and

to give a check, if possible, to the ruinous charges that go nearly to the destruction of the right of election itself.

Amidst these his labors, his Grace will be pleased to forgive me, if my zeal, less enlightened, to be sure, than his by midnight lamps and studies, has presumed to talk too favorably of this Constitution, and even to say something sounding like approbation of that body which has the honor to reckon his Grace at the head of it, Those who dislike this partiality, or, if his Grace pleases, this flattery of mine, have a comfort at hand. I may be refuted and brought to shame by the most convincing of all refutations, a practical refutation. Every individual peer for himself may show that I was ridiculously wrong; the whole body of those noble persons may refute me for the whole corps. If they please, they are more powerful advocates against themselves than a thousand scribblers like me can be in their favor. If I were even possessed of those powers which his Grace, in order to heighten my offence, is pleased to attribute to me, there would be little difference. The eloquence of Mr. Erskine might save Mr. ***** from the gallows, but no eloquence could save Mr. Jackson from the effects of his own potion.

In that unfortunate book of mine, which is put in the *Index Expurgatorius* of the modern Whigs, I might have spoken too favorably not only of those who wear coronets, but of those who wear crowns. Kings, however, have not only long arms, but strong ones too. A great Northern potentate, for instance, is able in one moment, and with one bold stroke of his diplomatic pen, to

efface all the volumes which I could write in a century, or which the most laborious publicists of Germany ever carried to the fair of Leipsic, as an apology for monarchs and monarchy. Whilst I, or any other poor, puny, private sophist, was defending the Declaration of Pilnitz, his Majesty might refute me by the Treaty of Basle. Such a monarch may destroy one republic because it had a king at its head, and he may balance this extraordinary act by founding another republic that has cut off the head of its king. I defended that great potentate for associating in a grand alliance for the preservation of the old governments of Europe; but he puts me to silence by delivering up all those governments (his own virtually included) to the new system of France. If he is accused before the Parisian tribunal (constituted for the trial of kings) for having polluted the soil of liberty by the tracks of his disciplined slaves, he clears himself by surrendering the finest parts of Germany (with a handsome cut of his own territories) to the offended majesty of the regicides of France. Can I resist this? Am I responsible for it, if, with a torch in his hand, and a rope about his neck, he makes *amende honorable* to the *sans-culotterie* of the Republic one and indivisible? In that humiliating attitude, in spite of my protests, he may supplicate pardon for his menacing proclamations, and, as an expiation to those whom he failed to terrify with his threats, he may abandon those whom he had seduced by his promises. He may sacrifice the royalists of France, whom he had called to his standard, as a salutary example to those who shall adhere to their native sovereign, or

shall confide in any other who undertakes the cause of oppressed kings and of loyal subjects.

How can I help it, if this high-minded prince will subscribe to the invectives which the regicides have made against all kings, and particularly against himself? How can I help it, if this royal propagandist will preach the doctrine of the Rights of Men? Is it my fault, if his professors of literature read lectures on that code in all his academies, and if all the pensioned managers of the newspapers in his dominions diffuse it throughout Europe in an hundred journals? Can it be attributed to me, if he will initiate all his grenadiers and all his hussars in these high mysteries? Am I responsible, if he will make *Le Droit de l'Homme*, or *La Souveraineté du Peuple* the favorite parole of his military orders? Now that his troops are to act with the brave legions of freedom, no doubt he will fit them for their fraternity. He will teach the Prussians to think, to feel, and to act like them, and to emulate the glories of the *régiment de l'échafaud*. He will employ the illustrious Citizen Santerre, the general of his new allies, to instruct the dull Germans how they shall conduct themselves towards persons who, like Louis the Sixteenth, (whose cause and person he once took into his protection,) shall dare, without the sanction of the people, or with it, to consider themselves as hereditary kings. Can I arrest this great potentate in his career of glory? Am I blamable in recommending virtue and religion as the true foundation of all monarchies, because the protector of the three religions of the Westphalian arrangement, to ingratiate

himself with the Republic of Philosophy, shall abolish all the three? It is not in my power to prevent the grand patron of the Reformed Church, if he chooses it, from annulling the Calvinistic sabbath, and establishing the *décadi* of atheism in all his states. He may even renounce and abjure his favorite mysticism in the Temple of Reason. In these things, at least, he is truly despotic. He has now shaken hands with everything which at first had inspired him with horror. It would be curious indeed to see (what I shall not, however, travel so far to see) the ingenious devices and the elegant transparencies which, on the restoration of peace and the commencement of Prussian liberty, are to decorate Potsdam and Charlottenburg *festeggianti*. What shades of his armed ancestors of the House of Brandenburg will the committee of *Illuminés* raise up in the opera-house of Berlin, to dance a grand ballet in the rejoicings for this auspicious event? Is it a grand master of the Teutonic order, or is it the great Elector? Is it the first king of Prussia, or the last? or is the whole long line (long, I mean, *a parte ante*) to appear like Banquo's royal procession in the tragedy of Macbeth?

How can I prevent all these arts of royal policy, and all these displays of royal magnificence? How can I prevent the successor of Frederick the Great from aspiring to a new, and, in this age, unexampled kind of glory? Is it in my power to say that he shall not make his confessions in the style of St. Austin or of Rousseau? that he shall not assume the character of the penitent and flagellant, and, grafting monkery on philosophy,

strip himself of his regal purple, clothe his gigantic limbs in the sackcloth and the *hair-shirt*, and exercise on his broad shoulders the disciplinary scourge of the holy order of the *Sans-Culottes*? It is not in me to hinder kings from making new orders of religious and martial knighthood. I am not Hercules enough to uphold those orbs which the Atlases of the world are so desirous of shifting from their weary shoulders. What can be done against the magnanimous resolution of the great to accomplish the degradation and the ruin of their own character and situation?

What I say of the German princes, that I say of all the other dignities and all the other institutions of the Holy Roman Empire. If they have a mind to destroy themselves, they may put their advocates to silence and their advisers to shame. I have often praised the Aulic Council. It is very true, I did so. I thought it a tribunal as well formed as human wisdom could form a tribunal for coercing the great, the rich, and the powerful,—for obliging them to submit their necks to the imperial laws, and to those of Nature and of nations: a tribunal well conceived for extirpating peculation, corruption, and oppression from all the parts of that vast, heterogeneous mass, called the Germanic body. I should not be inclined to retract these praises upon any of the ordinary lapses into which human infirmity will fall; they might still stand, though some of their *conclusums* should taste of the prejudices of country or of faction, whether political or religious. Some degree even of corruption should not make me think them guilty of suicide; but if we could suppose that the Aulic Council, not

regarding duty or even common decorum, listening neither to the secret admonitions of conscience nor to the public voice of fame, some of the members basely abandoning their post, and others continuing in it only the more infamously to betray it, should give a judgment so shameless and so prostitute, of such monstrous and even portentous corruption, that no example in the history of human depravity, or even in the fictions of poetic imagination, could possibly match it,—if it should be a judgment which, with cold, unfeeling cruelty, after long deliberations, should condemn millions of innocent people to extortion, to rapine, and to blood, and should devote some of the finest countries upon earth to ravage and desolation,—does any one think that any servile apologies of mine, or any strutting and bullying insolence of their own, can save them from the ruin that must fell on all institutions of dignity or of authority that are perverted from their purport to the oppression of human nature in others and to its disgrace in themselves? As the wisdom of men mates such institutions, the folly of men destroys them. Whatever we may pretend, there is always more in the soundness of the materials than in the fashion of the work. The order of a good building is something. But if it be wholly declined from its perpendicular, if the cement is loose and incoherent, if the stones are scaling with every change of the weather, and the whole toppling on our heads, what matter is it whether we are crushed by a Corinthian or a Doric ruin? The fine form of a vessel is a matter of use and of delight. It is pleasant to see her decorated with cost and art. But what signifies even

the mathematical truth of her form,—what signify all the art and cost with which she can be carved, and painted, and gilded, and covered with decorations from stem to stern,—what signify all her rigging and sails, her flags, her pendants, and her streamers, —what signify even her cannon, her stores, and her provisions, if all her planks and timbers be unsound and rotten?

> Quamvis Pontica pinus,
> Silvæ filia nobilis,
> Jactes et genus et nomen inutile.

I have been stimulated, I know not how, to give you this trouble by what very few except myself would think worth any trouble at all. In a speech in the House of Lords, I have been attacked for the defence of a scheme of government in which that body inheres, and in which alone it can exist. Peers of Great Britain may become as penitent as the sovereign of Prussia. They may repent of what they have done in assertion of the honor of their king, and in favor of their own safety. But never the gloom that lowers over the fortune of the cause, nor anything which the great may do towards hastening their own fall, can make me repent of what I have done by pen or voice (the only arms I possess) in favor of the order of things into which I was born and in which I fondly hoped to die.

In the long series of ages which have furnished the matter of history, never was so beautiful and so august a spectacle presented to the moral eye as Europe afforded the day before

the Revolution in France. I knew, indeed, that this prosperity contained in itself the seeds of its own danger. In one part of the society it caused laxity and debility; in the other it produced bold spirits and dark designs. A false philosophy passed from academies into courts; and the great themselves were infected with the theories which conducted to their ruin. Knowledge, which in the two last centuries either did not exist at all, or existed solidly on right principles and in chosen hands, was now diffused, weakened, and perverted. General wealth loosened morals, relaxed vigilance, and increased presumption. Men of talent began to compare, in the partition of the common stock of public prosperity, the proportions of the dividends with the merits of the claimants. As usual, they found their portion not equal to their estimate (or perhaps to the public estimate) of their own worth. When it was once discovered by the Revolution in France that a struggle between establishment and rapacity could be maintained, though but for one year and in one place, I was sure that a practicable breach was made in the whole order of things, and in every country. Religion, that held the materials of the fabric together, was first systematically loosened. All other opinions, under the name of prejudices, must fall along with it; and property, left undefended by principles, became a repository of spoils to tempt cupidity, and not a magazine to furnish arms for defence. I knew, that, attacked on all sides by the infernal energies of talents set in action by vice and disorder, authority could not stand upon authority alone. It

wanted some other support than the poise of its own gravity. Situations formerly supported persons. It now became necessary that personal qualities should support situations. Formerly, where authority was found, wisdom and virtue were presumed. But now the veil was torn, and, to keep off sacrilegious intrusion, it was necessary that in the sanctuary of government something should be disclosed not only venerable, but dreadful. Government was at once to show itself full of virtue and full of force. It was to invite partisans, by making it appear to the world that a generous cause was to be asserted, one fit for a generous people to engage in. From passive submission was it to expect resolute defence? No! It must have warm advocates and passionate defenders, which an heavy, discontented acquiescence never could produce. What a base and foolish thing is it for any consolidated body of authority to say, or to act as if it said, "I will put my trust, not in my own virtue, but in your patience; I will indulge in effeminacy, in indolence, in corruption; I will give way to all my perverse and vicious humors, because you cannot punish me without the hazard of ruining yourselves."

I wished to warn the people against the greatest of all evils,—a blind and furious spirit of innovation, under the name of reform. I was, indeed, well aware that power rarely reforms itself. So it is, undoubtedly, when all is quiet about it. But I was in hopes that provident fear might prevent fruitless penitence. I trusted that danger might produce at least circumspection. I flattered myself, in a moment like this, that nothing would be added to make

authority top-heavy,—that the very moment of an earthquake would not be the time chosen for adding a story to our houses. I hoped to see the surest of all reforms, perhaps the only sure reform,—the ceasing to do ill. In the mean time I wished to the people the wisdom of knowing how to tolerate a condition which none of their efforts can render much more than tolerable. It was a condition, however, in which everything was to be found that could enable them to live to Nature, and, if so they pleased, to live to virtue and to honor.

I do not repent that I thought better of those to whom I wished well than they will suffer me long to think that they deserved. Far from repenting, I would to God that new faculties had been called up in me, in favor not of this or that man, or this or that system, but of the general, vital principle, that, whilst it was in its vigor, produced the state of things transmitted to us from our fathers, but which, through the joint operation of the abuses of authority and liberty, may perish in our hands. I am not of opinion that the race of men, and the commonwealths they create, like the bodies of individuals, grow effete and languid and bloodless, and ossify, by the necessities of their own conformation, and the fatal operation of longevity and time. These analogies between bodies natural and politic, though they may sometimes illustrate arguments, furnish no argument of themselves. They are but too often used, under the color of a specious philosophy, to find apologies for the despair of laziness and pusillanimity, and to excuse the want of all manly efforts, when the exigencies of our

country call for them the more loudly.

How often has public calamity been arrested on the very brink of ruin by the seasonable energy of a single man! Have we no such man amongst us? I am as sure as I am of my being, that one vigorous mind, without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind, (at a time when the want of such a thing is felt, as I am sure it is,) I say, one such man, confiding in the aid of God, and full of just reliance in his own fortitude, vigor, enterprise, and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself, and then that multitudes, hardly thought to be in existence, would appear and troop about him.

If I saw this auspicious beginning, baffled and frustrated as I am, yet on the very verge of a timely grave, abandoned abroad and desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide, (you know in part what I have lost, and would to God I could clear myself of all neglect and fault in that loss,) yet thus, even thus, I would rake up the fire under all the ashes that oppress it. I am no longer patient of the public eye; nor am I of force to win my way and to justle and elbow in a crowd. But, even in solitude, something may be done for society. The meditations of the closet have infected senates with a subtle frenzy, and inflamed armies with the brands of the Furies. The cure might come from the same source with the distemper. I would add my part to those who would animate the people (whose hearts are yet right) to new exertions in the old cause.

Novelty is not the only source of zeal. Why should not a Maccabæus and his brethren arise to assert the honor of the ancient law and to defend the temple of their forefathers with as ardent a spirit as can inspire any innovator to destroy the monuments of the piety and the glory of ancient ages? It is not a hazarded assertion, it is a great truth, that, when once things are gone out of their ordinary course, it is by acts out of the ordinary course they can alone be reëstablished. Republican spirit can only be combated by a spirit of the same nature,—of the same nature, but informed with another principle, and pointing to another end. I would persuade a resistance both to the corruption and to the reformation that prevails. It will not be the weaker, but much the stronger, for combating both together. A victory over real corruptions would enable us to baffle the spurious and pretended reformations. I would not wish to excite, or even to tolerate, that kind of evil spirit which evokes the powers of hell to rectify the disorders of the earth. No! I would add my voice with better, and, I trust, more potent charms, to draw down justice and wisdom and fortitude from heaven, for the correction of human vice, and the recalling of human error from the devious ways into which it has been betrayed. I would wish to call the impulses of individuals at once to the aid and to the control of authority. By this, which I call the true republican spirit, paradoxical as it may appear, monarchies alone can be rescued from the imbecility of courts and the madness of the crowd. This republican spirit would not suffer men in high place

to bring ruin on their country and on themselves. It would reform, not by destroying, but by saving, the great, the rich, and the powerful. Such a republican spirit we perhaps fondly conceive to have animated the distinguished heroes and patriots of old, who knew no mode of policy but religion and virtue. These they would have paramount to all constitutions; they would not suffer monarchs, or senates, or popular assemblies, under pretences of dignity or authority or freedom, to shake off those moral riders which reason has appointed to govern every sort of rude power. These, in appearance loading them by their weight, do by that pressure augment their essential force. The momentum is increased by the extraneous weight. It is true in moral as it is in mechanical science. It is true, not only in the draught, but in the race. These riders of the great, in effect, hold the reins which guide them in their course, and wear the spur that stimulates them to the goals of honor and of safety. The great must submit to the dominion of prudence and of virtue, or none will long submit to the dominion of the great. *Dîs te minorem quod geris, imperas.* This is the feudal tenure which they cannot alter.

Indeed, my dear Sir, things are in a bad state. I do not deny a good share of diligence, a very great share of ability, and much public virtue to those who direct our affairs. But they are incumbered, not aided, by their very instruments, and by all the apparatus of the state. I think that our ministry (though there are things against them which neither you nor I can dissemble, and which grieve me to the heart) is by far the most honest and by far

the wisest system of administration in Europe. Their fall would be no trivial calamity.

Not meaning to depreciate the minority in Parliament, whose talents are also great, and to whom I do not deny virtues, their system seems to me to be fundamentally wrong. But whether wrong or right, they have not enough of coherence among themselves, nor of estimation with the public, nor of numbers. They cannot make up an administration. Nothing is more visible. Many other things are against them, which I do not charge as faults, but reckon among national misfortunes. Extraordinary things must be done, or one of the parties cannot stand as a ministry, nor the other even as an opposition. They cannot change their situations, nor can any useful coalition be made between them. I do not see the mode of it nor the way to it. This aspect of things I do not contemplate with pleasure.

I well know that everything of the daring kind which I speak of is critical: but the times are critical. New things in a new world! I see no hopes in the common tracks. If men are not to be found who can be got to feel within them some impulse, *quod nequeo monstrare, et sentio tantum*, and which makes them impatient of the present,—if none can be got to feel that private persons may sometimes assume that sort of magistracy which does not depend on the nomination of kings or the election of the people, but has an inherent and self-existent power which both would recognize, I see nothing in the world to hope.

If I saw such a group beginning to cluster, such as they are,

they should have (all that I can give) my prayers and my advice. People talk of war or cry for peace: have they to the bottom considered the questions either of war or peace, upon the scale of the existing world? No, I fear they have not.

Why should not you yourself be one of those to enter your name in such a list as I speak of? You are young; you have great talents; you have a clear head; you have a natural, fluent, and unforced elocution; your ideas are just, your sentiments benevolent, open, and enlarged;—but this is too big for your modesty. Oh! this modesty, in time and place, is a charming virtue, and the grace of all other virtues. But it is sometimes the worst enemy they have. Let him whose print I gave you the other day be engraved in your memory! Had it pleased Providence to have spared him for the trying situations that seem to be coming on, notwithstanding that he was sometimes a little dispirited by the disposition which we thought shown to depress him and set him aside, yet he was always buoyed up again; and on one or two occasions he discovered what might be expected from the vigor and elevation of his mind, from his unconquerable fortitude, and from the extent of his resources for every purpose of speculation and of action. Remember him, my friend, who in the highest degree honored and respected you; and remember that great parts are a great trust. Remember, too, that mistaken or misapplied virtues, if they are not as pernicious as vice, frustrate at least their own natural tendencies, and disappoint the purposes of the Great Giver.

Adieu. My dreams are finished.

THOUGHTS AND DETAILS ON SCARCITY. ORIGINALLY PRESENTED TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT, IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1795

Of all things, an indiscreet tampering with the trade of provisions is the most dangerous, and it is always worst in the time when men are most disposed to it,—that is, in the time of scarcity; because there is nothing on which the passions of men are so violent, and their judgment so weak, and on which there exists such a multitude of ill-founded popular prejudices.

The great use of government is as a restraint; and there is no restraint which it ought to put upon others, and upon itself too, rather than that which is imposed on the fury of speculating under circumstances of irritation. The number of idle tales spread about by the industry of faction and by the zeal of foolish good-intention, and greedily devoured by the malignant credulity of mankind, tends infinitely to aggravate prejudices which in themselves are more than sufficiently strong. In that state of affairs, and of the public with relation to them, the first thing that government owes to us, the people, is *information*; the next is timely coercion: the one to guide our judgment; the other to

regulate our tempers.

To provide for us in our necessities is not in the power of government. It would be a vain presumption in statesmen to think they can do it. The people maintain them, and not they the people. It is in the power of government to prevent much evil; it can do very little positive good in this, or perhaps in anything else. It is not only so of the state and statesman, but of all the classes and descriptions of the rich: they are the pensioners of the poor, and are maintained by their superfluity. They are under an absolute, hereditary, and indefeasible dependence on those who labor and are miscalled the poor.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.