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THE
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OCTOBER, 1842.

N^o. CLIII.

ART. I.—*History of Europe, from the Commencement of the French Revolution in 1789, to the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1815.*
By ARCHIBALD ALISON, Esq., F.R.S.E., Advocate. 10 vols.
8vo. Edinburgh and London: 1839-1842.

THERE is much in Mr Alison's History of the French Revolution against which we intend to record our decided protest; and there are some parts of it which we shall feel compelled to notice with strong disapprobation. We therefore hasten to preface our less favourable remarks by freely acknowledging that the present work is, upon the whole, a valuable addition to European literature, that it is evidently compiled with the utmost care, and that its narration, so far as we can judge, is not perverted by the slightest partiality.

A complete history, by an English author, of all the great events which took place in Europe from 1789 to 1815, has long been a *desideratum*; and whatever may be the imperfections of Mr Alison's work, we cannot say that it does not supply the vacancy. Its defects, or what we deem such, are matter partly of taste, and partly of political opinion. Some readers may consider them as beauties—many will overlook them; and even the most fastidious must acknowledge that they are not such as materially to interfere with the great plan of the work. Its merits

are minuteness and honesty—qualities which may well excuse a faulty style, gross political prejudices, and a fondness for exaggerated and frothy declamation.

We cannot better illustrate the fulness and authenticity of Mr Alison's history, than by quoting his own statement of the admirable plan on which he has selected and applied his authorities. His invariable rule, we are informed by his Preface, has been 'to give, on every occasion, the authorities by volume and page 'from which the statement in the text was taken. . . . Not 'only are the authorities for every paragraph invariably given, 'but in many instances also those for every sentence have been 'accumulated in the margin. . . . Care has been taken 'to quote a preponderance of authority, in every instance where 'it was possible, from writers on the opposite side to that which 'an English historian may be supposed to adopt; and the reader 'will find almost every fact in the internal history of the Revolution, supported by two Republican and one Royalist authority; and every event in the military narrative drawn from at least two writers on the part of the French, and one on that of 'their opponents.' We feel convinced that Mr Alison has acted up to the spirit of this candid and judicious system throughout his whole work. We cannot, of course, pretend to have verified his statements by constant reference to the writers from whom he has drawn his information. The events which he records are of such recent occurrence, and such deep interest, that the enormous mass of details published respecting them may well defy the curiosity of an ordinary reader. But we are bound to remark, that whenever we have been led to compare the conflicting accounts of any important event in Mr Alison's history, we have almost invariably found that his narrative steers judiciously between them, and combines the most probable and consistent particulars contained in each. We apply this remark more especially to his narration of the intestine commotions of the French Revolution, and of the military conflicts of the Empire—particularly those which occurred in Spain. No one, we think, can read the various accounts of the troubles which led to the Reign of Terror, as collected in the able work of Professor Smyth, or the histories of the Peninsular war by Napier, Foy, and others, without feeling satisfied of the care and judgment which Mr Alison has shown in constantly selecting, where authorities differ, the most probable and most authoritative statements.

We have already hinted our opinion, that Mr Alison's general style is not attractive. It is not, however, at least in the narrative part of his work, either feeble or displeasing. Its principal

defect is the cumbrous and unwieldy construction of its sentences, which frequently cause them to appear slovenly and obscure, and sometimes render their precise meaning doubtful. We quote, almost at random, a single passage by way of specimen:—

‘Mortier, following the orders which he had received to keep nearly abreast of, though a little behind the columns on the right bank, and intent only upon inflicting loss upon the Russian troops which he knew had passed the river, and conceived to be flying across his line of march from the Danube towards Moravia, was eagerly emerging from the defiles of Diernstein, beneath the Danube, and the rocky hills beneath the towers of the castle where Richard Cœur de Lion was once immured, when he came upon the Russian rearguard, under Milaradowitch, posted in front of Stein, on heights commanding the only road by which he could advance, and supported by a powerful artillery.’—(v. 444.) We have purposely selected a sentence obscure merely by its length and involution, and not disfigured by any tangible solecism; and we believe we speak within compass when we say, that it would be difficult to select half-a-dozen consecutive pages, from any part of Mr Alison’s work, in which one or more passages of at least equally faulty construction might not be found. But there are not wanting offences of a still less excusable nature. Whenever the historian warms with his subject, he is constantly hurried into the most singular verbal blunders—some puzzling, some ludicrous—but all of a kind which a careful reperusal could scarcely have failed to discover. We quote three or four instances, not for the sake of ridiculing a few slight oversights in a long and laborious work, but in order to draw Mr Alison’s attention to a defect which, comparatively trivial as it is, might give great and unjust advantage to critics less disposed than we are to treat him kindly. Thus he speaks of the ‘vast and varied inhabitants’ of the French empire—a phrase which can scarcely be actually misunderstood, but which sounds ludicrously inapplicable, considering that the average size of the French conscripts is stated, a few pages before, at only five feet English.—(ix. 105.) In 1800, the French armies appear to have unjustly seized some English vessels at Leghorn, ‘an acquisition which,’ in the singular phraseology of Mr Alison, ‘speedily recoiled upon the heads of those who acquired them.’—(iv. 381.) In the campaign of Austerlitz we find the Austrians defeated by Murat, ‘who made 1800 of their wearied columns prisoners,’ (v. 406.)—a capture which, supposing the statement to be literally true, and the columns of average size, must have embraced nearly the whole male population of the empire. And shortly after, we are informed, that the French

army celebrated the anniversary of Napoleon's coronation by the 'spontaneous combustion' of their huts.—(v. 474.) We will not go farther with examples of this sort, but we cannot forbear soliciting Mr Alison's attention to two crying defects;—his profuse and unscrupulous use of the most barbarous Scotticisms, and the confused and even ambiguous arrangement of his antecedents and relatives. With all these imperfections, Mr Alison's history has merits sufficient to atone, even to those readers who consider only their own amusement, for the want of an easy and polished style. The stirring interest of the events which he relates, his judgment in selecting striking traits of character for preservation, his earnest seriousness of manner, and his obvious honesty of purpose—all combine to make his narrative on the whole both interesting and impressive.

We cannot speak so favourably of the disquisitions on political events, and characters, which abound throughout his work. With all our respect for his merits as a historian, we are bound to declare our honest opinion, that the attempts displayed in them at impassioned and declamatory eloquence, are generally very far below mediocrity. We have already noticed some of the blunders into which he has been betrayed in the course of his ordinary narrative. Few writers soar more easily or more securely than they walk; and Mr Alison's oratorical digressions abound in examples of pointless anti-climax, of quaint and ungrammatical inversion, of the carefully balanced antithesis of synonymous ideas, of periods rounded with sonorous pomp, yet constructed with slovenly obscurity. But we are in haste to dismiss this ungracious part of our task, and we shall therefore content ourselves with pointing out a few individual blemishes, the removal of which we are particularly anxious to effect.

Figurative illustrations are as fatal to Mr Alison as they are, indeed, to most writers who are at once careless and ambitious. His opinion of the age of George III. is expressed by an astronomical metaphor, which he has contrived to distort with a perverse ingenuity rarely surpassed. 'Bright,' he says, 'as were the stars of its morning light, more brilliant still was the constellation which shone forth in its meridian splendour, or cast a glow over the twilight of its evening shades.'—(vii. 3.) The simile would have been perfect of its kind, if Mr Alison had but added that his constellation had disappeared, as constellations are wont to do, in the darkness of the ensuing night. In the same manner, he speaks of a narrative as 'tinged with undue bias,' (Pref. xxxi.)—of a historical work as 'closed with a ray of glory,' (Pref. xxxviii.)—of a truth as 'proclaimed in characters of fire to mankind,' (viii. 7.) We cannot omit the two

following sentences, which we consider to be almost unique. The first contains a simile which to us is utterly unintelligible—the other an elaborate confusion of metaphor, which nothing but the most patient ingenuity can unravel. ‘In 1787,’ says Mr Alison, ‘Goethe, profound and imaginative, was reflecting on the destiny of man on earth, *like a cloud which “turns up its silver lining to the moon.”*’—(vii. 103.) ‘In Linnæus she (Sweden) has for ever unfolded the hidden key by which the endless variety of floral beauty is to be classified, and the mysterious link is preserved between vegetable and animal life.’—(viii. 612*.)

Mr Alison does not wear his borrowed plumes with a better grace than his original ornaments. The following is an instance of a fine thought carelessly appropriated and thoroughly spoiled. The British Bard in Gray's famous ode speaks of the banners of his victorious enemy as ‘fanned by conquest's crimson wing.’ Mr Alison has adorned a passage of his history with this easy and spirited metaphor; but he has most unskilfully transferred the ventilation from the banners to the minds of the conquerors, and assures us, that ‘it is not while “fanned by conquest's crimson wing,” that the *real motives* of human conduct can be made apparent.’—(ix. 104.) A similar and still more painful example of bad taste is to be found in the very next page. ‘All the *springs*,’ says he, ‘which the world can furnish to sustain the fortunes of an empire, were in full activity, and worked with consummate ability; but *one* (query *three*?) was wanting, without which, in the hour of trial, all the others are but as *tinkling brass*—a belief in God, a sense of duty, and a faith in immortality.’ The celebrated passage from which Mr Alison has here borrowed an illustration, is familiar to all our readers. It is that in which St Paul compares the eloquence of an idle declaimer to the tinkling of a cymbal. The original phrase is one of such admirable point and force as to have become almost proverbial. But how has its merit survived Mr Alison's appropriation? He seizes on one half of the simile, severs it from the other, and tacks it to a new object with which it has no natural connexion whatever. Nothing can be more apt and lively than the comparison of unmeaning verbosity to the empty ringing of metal, as every one who studies Mr Alison's specimens of declamation will allow. But how does such a comparison express the inefficiency of a mechanical force? For aught we know, a spring may be of brass, and of tinkling brass too, and yet be sufficiently strong and elastic. A better illustration, or a worse adaptation, of the apostle's forcible image, than the passage just quoted, we do not expect again to see.

Tedious self-repetition, the most inveterate fault of careless and declamatory writers, has been carried by Mr Alison to an almost unprecedented extent. We have neither space nor time to extract some of his digressions, in which the selfsame current of ideas is run through twice or thrice in various language. But the mere recurrence of favourite phrases cannot fail to strike and displease the most careless reader. The bow of Esop, the small black cloud of Elijah, the boon of Polypheme to Ulysses, together with numberless less remarkable allusions and expressions, are applied three or four times each, precisely under the same circumstances, and almost in the same words. Winds, waves, meteors, thunderbolts, earthquakes, and similar phenomena of all sorts, are constantly ready to be let loose upon the reader; nor, however frequently he may have sustained them, is he ever, for a single page, secure against their recurrence. As a proof that we have not exaggerated the frequency of this unpleasing practice, we must, in justice to ourselves, refer our readers to the first fifteen pages of Mr Alison's *eighth* volume; within which short space they will find no less than thirteen similes and illustrations drawn from light and colour, of which nearly one-half are crowded into twenty-five consecutive lines, and no less than four are expressed in the same identical phrase.

We do not think it necessary to apologise for having dwelt so long upon a subject which we have already admitted to be of secondary importance. If we believed that Mr Alison had failed in one branch of his history from real want of ability, we should have thought it ungenerous to mortify the author of a valuable and laborious work, by cavilling at the false taste of its embellishments. But we cannot imagine that this is the case. It is impossible that a man of Mr Alison's talents and knowledge should be deliberately blind to the defects and the nonsense we have been quoting. Most of these blemishes are such as a little reflection would induce a sensible schoolboy to strike out of his theme. We are apt to think that Mr Alison has neglected these parts of his work; that he has sketched them when fatigued and excited by his labours; and that he has left the first rough draught unaltered for publication. We are unwilling to deal harshly with such errors. There is something both striking and gratifying in the spectacle of a writer who is scrupulous of historical truth and justice, but negligent of his own literary fame—who lavishes that time and trouble in ascertaining his facts which he omits to employ in polishing his style. We are confident that Mr Alison might, with a little care and patience, correct more serious faults than those we have noticed;

and should this prove to be the case, we shall not be sorry if we have made him feel a certain degree of regret for their commission.

As a military historian, Mr Alison has received general and merited applause. His narratives of warlike operations are well arranged, minute, and spirited; and display considerable scientific knowledge. He is particularly remarkable for the clear and accurate descriptions which he never fails to give of the situations in which the most important manœuvres of the war took place. His sketches are written with as much spirit as topographical knowledge; and he not only impresses on the memory the principal features of the scene of action, but generally succeeds in conveying a vivid picture of them to the imagination. He appears, indeed, to have been induced, by his strong interest in the subject, to visit most of Napoleon's fields of battle in person; and it is but just to say, that he has surveyed them with the feeling of an artist and the precision of a tactician.

The lively colouring of Mr Alison's descriptions of battles is, in general, as pleasing as the accuracy of the outline is praiseworthy. He has a strong and manly sympathy with military daring and devotion, which never blinds him to the sufferings inflicted by war, but which leads him to give warm and impartial praise to every brave action, by whichever party achieved. We might easily fill our pages with interesting extracts of this nature; but we must content ourselves with referring our readers to the work itself. There is scarcely an important victory of the war which Mr Alison has not related in the fullest detail, and with the strictest impartiality. We may also remark the successful art with which he occasionally pauses, in the most critical moment of a great battle, to remind his readers, by a word dexterously thrown in, of the mighty interests at stake. It is an artifice to which he has perhaps too freely resorted, but which he occasionally employs with marked effect.

Still, Mr Alison's finest descriptions are occasionally marred by the same faults which we have remarked in his political dissertations; by the same tendency to flights of poetical extravagance; the same wearisome repetitions; the same flow of sonorous verbosity. We forbear to recommence our reluctant strictures upon these faults of style; but there is a single error which we are unwilling to pass over, because we believe it to be peculiar to this branch of the narrative. We allude to the occasional substitution of the present for the past tense in the relation of events. It is one of the most unimpressive and unpleasing artifices which a writer can employ—rarely admis-

sible in narrative poetry, scarcely ever in prose romance, and utterly inconsistent with the sober dignity of the historical style. Much of all this is, no doubt, to be attributed to the incorrectness of taste indisputably displayed by Mr Alison in many of the more impassioned passages of his work; but much, we suspect, is owing to an injudicious and indiscriminate, though just and laudable, admiration for the genius of a rival historian.

Mr Alison frequently speaks with warm and generous applause of the ardent military eloquence which distinguishes the style of Colonel Napier. Nothing can be more handsomely expressed than this feeling; but we suspect that it has occasionally betrayed Mr Alison into unconscious, and not always happy, imitation. We appreciate as highly as any one the force and originality of the language employed by this great military historian. Among all his high qualities none is more conspicuous than the warmth and vigour of his narration. It is impossible not to feel animated by the fiery energy, and the graphic minuteness of his descriptions. But his most partial admirers will allow, that the more fanciful and brilliant peculiarities of his style, are such as must make all attempts at imitation difficult and dangerous to an unusual degree. Its fervent impetuosity occasionally overpowers even its master, and it is unlikely to prove more docile in less familiar hands. Colonel Napier's genius, if we may be pardoned the comparison, resembles those Indian *figurantes* described by Captain Mundy in his amusing sketches, whose chief difficulty is to restrain within graceful limits the superabundant suppleness and agility of their limbs. It is the luxuriant vivacity of the writer's imagination, and his unlimited command of pointed and original language, that occasion the principal blemishes in his style. And it is impossible to deny, that when he gives the rein to his fancy, it occasionally hurries him across the fatal step which separates the sublime, we will not say from the ridiculous, but assuredly from the quaint and grotesque.

We are far from accusing Mr Alison of caricaturing Colonel Napier's manner. We think his descriptions a softened, and in some respects an improved copy of those of his great original. But Colonel Napier's battle-pieces are in a style which will not bear softening—we had almost said, in a style which will not bear improvement. We know no description so appropriate to it as the quaint expression applied by Henry Grattan to Lord Chatham's oratory—that 'it was very great, and very odd.' Its eccentricity cannot be corrected without weakening its energy; it is either strikingly yet irregularly lofty, or it becomes tame, hollow, and exaggerated. With Colonel Napier himself the last is never the case. His faults are as racy and as characteristic as

his beauties; and in his boldest offences against taste, his originality and vigour are conspicuous.

Still, this lively melodramatic style, even when most successful, is not that which we prefer for historical narrative. We are no very rigid advocates for what is called the *dignity* of history. We have no doubt that thousands of interesting facts have perished, never to be recovered, by the supercilious neglect of over formal historians. We would have all circumstances preserved which can add the least effect to the narrative, however trivial they may appear. But we do not see the advantage of ornamental descriptions, however striking in themselves, which comprise merely general and common-place particulars, such as could not but accompany the main facts related. There is, surely, something unpleasing in seeing a historian, while recounting events which shook and terrified all Europe, glance aside to notice the trembling of the earth under a heavy cannonade, or the glittering of helmets in a charge of cavalry. We object to such flights, not because they are beneath the *dignity* of the narrative, but because they diminish the simplicity to which it must owe much of its awful effect; and because they can be far more imposingly supplied by the imagination of the reader. It is not by such rhetorical arts as these, that the great masters of history have produced their most successful effects. Thucydides has never once throughout his work departed from the grave and simple dignity of his habitual style. Yet what classical scholar will ever forget the condensed pathos and energy with which he has described the desolation of Athens during the pestilence, or the overthrow of the Syracusan expedition? Froissart is a still more extraordinary instance. Without for a moment suffering himself to be raised above his ordinary tone of easy and almost childish garrulity, he has yet attained that chivalrous ardour of expression, which, to borrow the emphatic words of Sidney, 'stirs the heart like the sound of a trumpet.' What soldier ever read without enthusiasm his account of the battle of Crecy? Not, we are confident, Colonel Napier, whose warm and ready sympathy with the brave is one of his noblest qualities as a historian. The brilliant array of the French chivalry—the fierce gestures and 'fell cry' of the undisciplined Genoese—the motionless silence of the English archery—the sudden and deadly flight of arrows—the mad confusion of the routed army;—all are painted with the life and vigour of Homer himself. And yet the chronicler has not employed a shade of fanciful colouring or poetical ornament—his whole narrative is full of the same simple and delightful *naïveté* with which he commends the innocence of the Black Prince's oaths; or cele-

brates the 'small hat of beaver' which became Edward III. so marvellously at the battle of Sluys. In reading such passages as these, we feel the same admiration as in seeing an athlete perform some feat of surpassing strength, without the distortion of a feature or a muscle. They are, in comparison with the florid and highly wrought style on which we have been remarking, what the Belvedere Apollo is in comparison with the beautiful statue of the Attacking Gladiator. Both figures are admirable works of art, and both are represented in the act of vehement and victorious exertion. But how striking is the contrast between the desperate energy of the mortal, and the serene indifference of the divinity!

During the twenty-five years included in Mr Alison's History, Europe was so perpetually involved in war, that in giving our opinion of his merits as a military historian, we may be said to have pronounced upon those of the whole narrative part of his work. But he has taken great pains to give his readers the most complete information of all the internal transactions of the chief European nations, during that period. He has, as he informs us, made it his rule 'to give the arguments for and against any public measures in the words of those who originally brought them forward, without any attempt at paraphrase or abridgement. This is more particularly the case in the debates of the National Assembly of France, the Parliament of England, and the Council of State under Napoleon. . . . It is', as he justly remarks, 'the only mode by which the spirit and feelings of the moment could be faithfully transmitted to posterity, or justice done to the motives, on either side, which influenced mankind.'—(Pref. xlv.) 'Providence,' says Mr Alison, 'has so interwoven human affairs, that when we wish to retrace the revolutions of a people, and to investigate the causes of their grandeur or misfortune, we are insensibly conducted step by step to their cradle.'—(ii. 536.) The historian has accordingly interwoven with his narrative several very interesting and comprehensive sketches of the previous history and political state of those nations who took the most prominent share in events. We may particularize those of France, England, Russia, Turkey, and Poland, as the most complete and elaborate. They include a general description of the population, of the nature and capabilities of the countries in question, and contain much valuable statistical information. We think Mr Alison mistaken in some of the maxims and theories which he draws from these views of European history; but it is impossible to refuse him the merit of much accurate knowledge, and much patient and ingenious reflection.

Mr Alison's principal and fatal error is one which we can only

lament; for we can neither blame him for its existence, nor wonder at its effects—he is a rigid, a sincere, and an intolerant Tory. This is the whole extent of his offence. His opinions are displayed with sufficient fairness, if not always with perfect taste and modesty;—he does not permit them to pervert his statements of facts, though he seldom loses an opportunity of asserting them in all their uncharitable austerity. To this practice every liberal-minded reader, of however opposite principles, will easily reconcile himself. He will, it is true, have to travel through an interesting tract of history, in company with an honourable opponent, instead of a sympathizing friend. He will necessarily lose much pleasure, and some instruction; but a few precautions will ensure him against injury or annoyance.

In common with nearly all political writers of the present day, we have had repeated occasion to pronounce our opinion both upon revolutions in general, and in particular upon that which forms the main subject of Mr Alison's history. We shall not, of course, repeat our arguments in detail; as we see no occasion to correct the conclusions which we drew from them. We shall merely allude to them so far as may be necessary for the purpose of comparing them with the opinions of Mr Alison respecting the causes, the character, and the consequences of the French Revolution.

We must, however, preface our observations by declaring, that we have found considerable difficulty in extracting any consistent and definite opinion, from the present work, upon the general tendency of that event. We have been wholly unable to reconcile the author's calm and just remarks upon the nature of the French government under the ancient *régime*, with his vague and incoherent bursts of invective against the spirit by which it was subverted. He speaks of violent revolutions, sometimes as the stern but beneficial punishments of tyranny and corruption—sometimes as national fits of insanity, the judgment of Providence upon moral profligacy and religious scepticism. His *logic* convinces us that what he is pleased to call the revolutionary mania is in itself a very natural feeling—the instinctive desire of the oppressed for peace and security. His *rhetoric* would persuade us that it is a mysterious epidemic, displaying itself merely by a morbid thirst for innovation, and an insane delight in crime. In his second chapter, he details nearly a dozen intolerable grievances which existed in France down to the first outbreak of popular violence; almost any one of which would appear, to a freeborn Englishman, sufficient to cause a civil war. He then proceeds to notice several circumstances which were likely to render the French nation, at that moment, peculiarly impatient of

the hardships they had to endure. So far, nothing can be more satisfactory. He has clearly shown that a sudden and violent change was inevitable; and that, without the utmost skill and firmness in the government, that change was likely to be followed by fatal excesses. But he goes on to declare, in all the emphasis of capital type, that 'the circumstances which have now been mentioned, without doubt *contributed* to the formation of that discontent which formed the predisposing cause of the Revolution. But the exciting cause, as physicians would say—the immediate source of the convulsion—was the SPIRIT OF INNOVATION, which, like a malady, overspread France at that crisis, precipitated all classes into a passion for changes, of which they were far from perceiving the ultimate effects, and in the end produced evils far greater than those they were intended to remove. . . . It would seem,' he adds, 'as if, at particular periods, from causes inscrutable to human wisdom, an universal frenzy seizes mankind; reason, experience, prudence, are alike blinded, and the very persons who are to perish in the storm are the first to raise its fury.'—(i. 149.) This is a good specimen of the superficial verbiage which formed the chorus of the English Tory press fifty years ago. We confess that we always considered it strange language to come from shrewd, sensible men of the world—from men who, when reasoning on the crimes and follies of social life, would have been the first to laugh such vague jargon to scorn. Still these men had at least an excuse which Mr Alison has not. The explanation, bad as it was, was the best they had to give. They did not possess the information which we now have, respecting the system which had brutalized and enraged the French people; and if they had, they might be excused, at such a crisis, for failing to reason justly upon it. But we are at a loss to conceive how Mr Alison can think it necessary to aid the effect of his able and conclusive details, by a solution so feeble and unmeaning as the above. We forgive the schoolmen of the middle ages for saying that the water rises in the pump because nature abhors a vacuum; for the answer was merely a pompous confession of ignorance. But what should we think of a modern philosopher who should solve the same problem by telling us—'The pressure of the external atmosphere overcomes that of the rarefied air in the cylinder; this circumstance, without doubt, contributes to the phenomenon; but its immediate cause is, that nature abhors a vacuum!' If Mr Alison means, by the 'spirit of innovation,' that natural wish for redress which is the consequence of intolerable suffering, then the sentence we have quoted, besides being a truism in itself, is incorrect in

its application ; for that spirit must have been an intermediate, not a collateral cause of the Revolution. But this he does *not* mean ; for it would be absurd to call so rational a desire an inscrutable frenzy. It is therefore clear that he speaks of ' a spirit of innovation,' wholly unconnected with existing inconveniences—a spirit against which the wisest institutions cannot guard, and which is almost as likely to break forth in a free, as in an oppressed nation. We shall permit ourselves a few observations upon this theory ; because, briefly as it is here expressed, it appears to be the text of most of his mournful and discouraging speculations both upon the future destiny of France, and the progress of Reform throughout the world.

In the first place, the remark naturally occurs, that admitting the possibility of the explanation, we do not want its assistance. Mr Alison has ably shown that the worst follies and excesses of the Revolution may be fully accounted for by the ordinary motives of human conduct. Why then have recourse to ' causes 'inscrutable to human wisdom ?' Why call down a divinity, when the knot can be disentangled by mortal skill ? Assume, if you will, that nations, like elephants, are subject to periodical accesses of frenzy ; but why apply your theory to such a case where every provocation existed to justify an outbreak of natural resentment ? Nothing can, by Mr Alison's account, be more evident, than that the political privileges of the noblesse, the oppressions of the feudal law, and the ruinous state of the finances, must have been in 1789 sources of daily and hourly annoyance to the great majority of the French nation. Most of them, even in the plebeian class, must, in the existing state of intelligence, have felt that their property had been injured, and their prospects in life disappointed, by the accident of their birth. And surely they must have been the meekest race in existence, if the severity of their sufferings, and the consciousness of their strength, and the knowledge of the impotence of their oppressors, would all have been insufficient to urge them to violence, without the assistance of this casual fit of unaccountable insanity.

In speaking thus, we fully bear in mind the wild and visionary speculations which were so common in France at the time of the Revolution. But we cannot see the necessity of referring these delusions to inscrutable causes. No one will deny that a frantic spirit of innovation *did* exist in France at that period ;—the question is, whether it originated in natural resentment or spontaneous frenzy—whether, in short, the nation was driven mad, or went mad of its own accord. The latter, as we have seen, is Mr Alison's opinion ; and this opinion induces him, as well it may,

to fear that the feelings which convulsed France half a century since, may be awakened in free and well-governed countries by the progress of constitutional reform. To us nothing can seem more natural than that men, who knew no more of political liberty than a blind man knows of light, should form an extravagant notion of its blessings. All our ideas of human nature would have been confounded, if we had found the French Jacobins recommending the constitution of 1789 in the calm and rational language in which Hampden might have spoken for the abolition of the Star-Chamber, or Lord Somers for the Bill of Rights. It is certain that nations, like individuals, are sometimes captivated by delusive theories. But we appeal to the common sense of our readers whether any reasonable being ever abandoned substantial comforts, or confronted real dangers, with no better motives. Can it be conceived that empty dreams about universal equality, and an age of innocence, would have nerved peaceable men to defy the cannon of the Bastille? Would the mob have massacred good and popular rulers for the sake of resembling Brutus and Timoleon? When an *homme-de-lettres* risked his life as a demagogue, was it to realize his fancies of republics and democracies, or to escape from hopeless poverty and obscurity? When a peasant set fire to the chateau of Monseigneur, was it because he admired the eloquence of Danton or Desmoulins, or because he found it easier to revolt at once, than to stay at home and be ruined by *corvées* and feudal services?

At the conclusion of his first chapter, Mr Alison has explained, with admirable sense and moderation, the causes of the sanguinary violence which distinguished the French Revolution. We are not sure that his remarks upon the various crimes which he has to relate, are always characterized by the same rational calmness; but he has here at least recorded his deliberate opinion, that the atrocities of the French populace were the natural and inevitable fruit of the oppression which they had suffered. We have long ago expressed our belief, that the excesses of every popular convulsion will generally be proportioned to the misgovernment which occasioned it. We are aware that this has been eagerly disputed; but, without pausing to discuss particular examples, we submit that the general rule approaches very nearly to a truism. Will not the violence of the popular party in a revolution be in proportion to their exasperation and their political ignorance? And will not their exasperation be in proportion to their sufferings, and their political ignorance to their inexperience in the use of political power?

Of course, no one will deny that the exactness of the propor-

tion may be disturbed by various causes. The influence of accidental circumstances, the authority of particular classes, even the personal character of individuals, may have the greatest effect in exciting or restraining popular revenge. We need not remind our readers of the various unhappy coincidences which combined to increase the natural resentment of the French nation;—of the foolish weakness, and more foolish insolence of the court, the unprincipled character of the popular leaders, the want of moral and religious feeling among the lower classes. Still, we do not comprehend the argument which attributes the crimes and impieties of that unhappy time to the demoralizing effects of the Revolution itself. Sudden anarchy may bring evil passions and infidel opinions to light; but we do not understand how it can bring them into existence. Men do not insult their religion and massacre their fellow-creatures, simply because it is in their power. The desire to do so must previously exist, and in France we have every proof that it did exist. We might give innumerable instances of the cruel and vindictive temper displayed from the most ancient times by the lower classes in France. In the *Jacquerie*, in the civil wars of the *Bourguignons* and *Armagnacs*, and in the seditions of the *League* and the *Fronde*, they constantly displayed the ferocity naturally excited by slavery and oppression. Their scorn for Christianity, though more recently acquired, had become, long before the Revolution of 1789, as inveterate as their desire for revenge. We shall give, in Mr Alison's own words, one very singular proof of the extent to which it prevailed. In speaking of the Egyptian expedition, he says—'They' (the French soldiers) 'not only considered the Christian faith as an entire fabrication, but were for the most part ignorant of its very elements. Lavalette has recorded that hardly one of them had ever been in a church, and that in Palestine they were ignorant even of the names of the holiest places in sacred history.'—(iii. 419.) This was in 1799, only ten years after the first symptoms of popular innovation. Here, then, were 30,000 full-grown men, collected promiscuously from all parts of France—many of them well educated, and all of sound mind and body—who appear to have felt about as much interest in the religion of their ancestors as in that of Brahma or Confucius. And yet the great majority of this army must have been born fifteen or twenty years before the first outbreak of the Revolution; and the very youngest of them must have past their childhood entirely under the ancient *régime*. There cannot, surely, be a stronger proof that, long before the royal authority was shaken, the great mass of the French nation had

become such thorough infidels as to be almost ignorant of the very existence of Christianity.

Our limits will not permit us to discuss with Mr Alison the great question, whether the French Revolution was on the whole a benefit, or a disaster to mankind. Though some passages in the earlier part of his History seem to bear a more hopeful interpretation, it is clear that upon the whole he considers it as an event most fatal to France, and most menacing to the rest of Europe. The following are, in his opinion, its most pernicious consequences, as regards France alone—‘ The national morality has been destroyed in the citizens of towns, in whose hands alone political power is vested. There is no moral strength or political energy in the country. . . . France has fallen into a subjection to Paris, to which there is nothing comparable in European history. The Prætorian guards of the capital rule the state. . . . Commercial opulence and habits of sober judgment have been destroyed, never to revive. A thirst for excitement every where prevails, and general selfishness disgraces the nation. Religion has never resumed its sway over the influential classes. . . . And the general depravity renders indispensable a powerful centralized and military government. In what respect,’ he asks, ‘ does this state of things differ from the institutions of China or the Byzantine empire ?’—(x. 548.) In what respect, we prefer to enquire, does it differ from the institutions of France *before* the Revolution ? We are no implicit admirers of the present French government ; but we appeal to Mr Alison’s own statements, whether it is not infinitely preferable to that of Louis XVI. ? Still less are we blind to the many and serious faults of the present generation of Frenchmen ; but we are at a loss to conceive how any reasonable being, who compares the second revolution with the first, can deny the superiority of the Frenchman of 1830 to the Frenchman of 1793—that is, to the Frenchman of the ancient *régime*, when seen in his true colours. But, without stopping to argue so extensive a question in detail, we must confess that we should be glad to hear from Mr Alison a distinct answer to a few such plain questions as the following :—Would Louis-Philippe, though he were the most depraved and violent man in Europe, dare to imitate the orgies of the regency, or the tyranny of Louis XV. ? Are life, property, and honour, less safe than in the time of the Bastille, and the *Parc aux Cerfs* ? Is the present condition of the peasantry worse than it was under the feudal law ? Have the middle classes less political power than in 1742 ? Is France less prosperous at home, or less respected abroad, than in 1763 or 1783 ? However common infi-

delity may unhappily be, is religion less respected than in the days of Voltaire? However low the national standard of morality, was it higher when Madame de Parabère, or Madame du Barri, was the virtual ruler of France? All the declamation in the world about Oriental tyrannies, and centralized despotisms, will not get rid of these simple tests; and we are at a loss to imagine how even Mr Alison could reply to one of them in the affirmative.

If we are right on this important point, we shall not allow the crimes of the Revolution, or the sufferings which it caused, to prevent us from considering it a beneficial change. In saying this we trust that we shall not be understood as wishing to palliate the excesses of the popular party, or to undervalue the evils inseparable from all popular convulsions. A revolution, at its best, is a painful and perilous remedy; at its worst, it is the severest trial which a nation can undergo. If we are inclined, notwithstanding, to consider such trials as benefits, it is because we believe that they seldom occur, except in cases where hopeless slavery and irreparable decay are the only alternatives. There is no doubt that the French Revolution was an instance of the worst kind;—perhaps it was the very worst that ever occurred. Not only did the popular movement result in atrocities, but the exhaustion which followed led to the usurpation of Napoleon and the wars of the empire. Three millions and a half of Frenchmen,* and a prodigious number of foreigners, perished, who but for the Revolution and its consequences might have ended their days in peace. Human ingenuity, in short, can scarcely imagine means by which a greater amount of violence and bloodshed could have been crowded into a quarter of a century. Still we are persuaded that an escape from this fiery trial would have been dearly purchased by the continuance of the ancient *régime* for another century. The evils of violence and bloodshed, dreadful as they are, cannot be compared to those of oppressive institutions. Violence and bloodshed are necessarily partial, but oppressive institutions are universal. It is impossible to guillotine a whole nation; it is impossible to enrol a whole nation as conscripts; but it is easy to make a whole nation miserable by disabilities and exactions. Even under the

* Mr Alison enumerates the victims of the Revolution, including those of the civil war in La Vendée, at 1,022,351 souls; and the soldiers who perished in the wars of the Empire, at 2,200,400.—(See vi. 410, ii. 400.) This does not include those who fell at Waterloo, in the battles of the revolutionary contest, and in the various naval actions of the war.

Reign of Terror, each individual citizen must have felt that there were many hundred chances to one in favour of his escape from denunciation; but no peasant had a hope of escaping the tyranny of the feudal customs. Violence and bloodshed are in their nature transitory; but oppressive institutions may be perpetual. Crimes which spring from passion soon exhaust themselves; but crimes which spring from habit may continue for ever. The Reign of Terror was over in fourteen months; but the ancient *régime* might have subsisted until its effects had reduced France to the decrepitude of China or Constantinople. Violence and bloodshed produce merely suffering; but oppressive institutions produce degradation also. A French peasant might retain the pride and spirit of a free man, though he knew that the next day he might be dragged before a revolutionary tribunal, or hurried off to join the army in Spain or Russia. But a French peasant who had been placed in the stocks for want of due servility to his *seigneur*, who had seen his son sent to the galleys for destroying a partridge's eggs, who knew that the honour of his family had been outraged by some licentious noble, such a man could not but feel himself a debased and unhappy slave. The sufferings of the Revolution, in short, were to the sufferings of the ancient *régime* as the plague of London to the *malaria* of a tropical climate. The one was a temporary though overwhelming blow, the other a wasting pestilence—the perpetual source of terror and misery to every successive generation existing within its influence.

Mr Alison's opinions upon the French Revolution induce him to speak with triumphant admiration of the foresight shown by Mr Pitt and Mr Burke upon that subject, and with condescending compassion of the blindness of Mr Fox. 'Posterity,' he assures us, 'will not search the speeches of Mr Fox for historic truth, nor pronounce him gifted with any extraordinary political penetration. On the contrary, it must record with regret that the light which broke upon Mr Burke at the outset of the Revolution, and on Mr Pitt before its principal atrocities began, only shone on his fervent mind when descending to the grave.'—(v. 720.) That, we presume, will depend upon the view taken by posterity of the events in question. It is impossible to deny that Mr Burke appreciated the character of the then existing generation of Frenchmen more truly than Mr Fox. But if future ages see in the French Revolution a shock which, dreadful as it was, saved France from hopeless and lingering decay, they will scarcely deny their admiration to the statesman who discerned its true character; merely because his sanguine and generous nature led him to think too favourably of the individuals

who conducted it. The physical evils inflicted by the French Revolution are already almost effaced, and their last traces will vanish with the present generation. But its moral consequences may endure for ages, and it is by their ultimate character that the comparative wisdom of the rival statesmen must be tried.

It may be true that Mr Fox was induced, late and reluctantly, to despair of French liberty. But it was not the turbulence of the Revolution which changed his opinions. It was the forcible interruption, not the natural tendency, of its progress, which caused his despondency. He had foreseen that the excesses of the French people were incapable of being a permanent evil; but no human skill could enable him to foresee the downfall of Napoleon. It would be unfair to blame a physician for ignorance in recommending sea-bathing, because his patient happened to be carried off by a shark; and it is equally unjust to assert that Mr Fox was originally wrong in his opinion of the French Revolution, because he lived to see its benefits destroyed for a time by the unexpected interference of a powerful usurper.

We are at a loss to comprehend the precise moral lesson which Mr Alison would lead his readers to draw from the French Revolution. Nor, to say truth, is it easy to conceive how he can find any instruction at all in an event which he believes to have originated in mysterious insanity, and to have terminated in hopeless slavery. It is true that we find in his work plenty of sonorous declamation about the fatal career of guilt, the short-lived triumphs of wickedness, and the inevitable laws of retribution. But we know nothing more annoying to the reader than this sort of rhetorical amplification, upon subjects which require to be discussed with the most rigid precision of which language is capable. No doubt Robespierre was a wicked man, and was as miserable as wicked men generally are. No doubt Napoleon was rash and ambitious, and owed his downfall to his own pride and recklessness. No doubt the French populace were madmen and ruffians, and made themselves as wretched by their crimes as they deserved to be. But all this is not the sort of instruction which we expect from an elaborate history of the Revolution. We have searched Mr Alison's work for a calm dispassionate discussion of the means by which the evils of the ancient government might have been removed, and yet the excesses of the Revolution prevented; and we have found ourselves again and again baffled and bewildered by a mazy tissue of words. No reasonable being who reads Mr Alison's narrative requires to be lectured about the horrors of anarchy. Every body knows that anarchy is a tremendous evil; but was it an avoidable evil? was it a greater evil than continued subjection? was there no middle course by

which the dangers of both might have been avoided? These are questions which we cannot discover any direct attempt to resolve. If Mr Alison were to see a drover trampled to death by an ox, would not his first reflection naturally be upon the danger of over-driving oxen, and the best means of keeping them in order? And would he not think that the bystanders had lost their senses if they began to dilate upon the shocking nature of the accident, as a proof that it is the duty of over-driven oxen to keep their temper?

Men are wisely forbidden to do evil that good may ensue; but they are not forbidden to admire the merciful arrangements of Providence, by which the sin and folly of individuals are so often made the source of blessings to mankind. We feel as much aversion as Mr Alison for the cruelty and injustice of the French Revolutionists; but we do not pronounce, as he does, that their crimes must bring ruin upon their innocent posterity. We see neither sense, nor justice, nor Christian principle, in his theory of a law of retribution not confined to the guilty parties. Let Mr Alison, if he will, regard the French Revolution as 'the second revolt of Lucifer, the prince of the morning.'—(x. 18.) We prefer to recognize in its vicissitudes the same severe but merciful hand which employs earthquakes and tornadoes to dispel the pestilential stagnation of the physical atmosphere.

However vague Mr Alison's digressions may occasionally appear, there is one feeling, in the expression of which he is uniformly clear and consistent. This is his dread and detestation of democratic institutions. So far as these sentiments are called forth by the facts of his narrative, we admit them to be perfectly reasonable. Whatever benefits we may hope from the consequences of the French Revolution, we acknowledge that the democracy which it established was in itself the worst of all possible governments. What we doubt is the intrinsic evil of a democracy in a community prepared for its reception. Still, as we admit that no such community now exists, or is likely to exist for many ages, it may be thought that the subject of our dissent from Mr Alison's opinion is merely theoretical, and therefore scarcely worth discussion. But this is far from being the case. If Mr Alison is right, every political innovation, in every country, is necessarily absurd and mischievous in proportion as it increases the influence of the lower classes. If we are right, such innovations are only dangerous when they give influence to a class unfit to exercise it. The question therefore is, whether the great body of a nation is necessarily and intrinsically unfit to exercise political power.

Mr Alison's first argument, if we rightly understand it, is the

utter inutility of such an experiment, whether successful or not. He draws, or attempts to draw, a distinction between social freedom and political power, and contends that the one may exist in perfect security without the protection of the other. 'There is, in the first place,' he says, 'the love of freedom; that is, immunity from personal restriction, oppression, or injury. This principle is perfectly innocent, and never exists without producing the happiest effects. Every concession which is calculated to increase this species of liberty, is comparatively safe in all ages and in all places. But there is another principle, strong at all times, but especially to be dreaded in moments of excitement. This is the principle of democratic ambition;—the desire of exercising the powers of sovereignty, and of sharing in the government of the state. This is the dangerous principle;—the desire, not of exercising industry without molestation, but of exerting power without control.'—(i. 174.) The principles may certainly be said to be distinct; but they are so closely connected that we scarcely see how one can exist without the other. They are equally natural, and in themselves equally harmless. The one is the wish for present relief—the other the desire of future security. The former, we suppose, is felt by every human being; the latter by every human being possessed of the commonest sense and foresight. What security, we would ask Mr Alison, can a man have that he will continue to exercise industry without molestation, except the possession, by the class to which he belongs, of a share in the government of the state? The present existence of just and equal laws is not such a security. Who is to guard our guardians? Who is to assure us that those laws will not be repealed, if our rulers can repeal them at any moment without our consent? Suppose that they enact a new law to-morrow, declaring us all slaves and bondmen, what resource have we against it but civil war?

This, it is true, is an extreme case. When the subjects are men of spirit, and the rulers men of sense, there is no fear of such open tyranny as this. But there is fear of insensible encroachment on the national liberties—of that encroachment which has sapped the constitution and undermined the national spirit of so many continental nations—of that encroachment whose progress in England, two centuries ago, was only arrested by seven years of desperate war. Even when the popular rights are so clearly defined as to make this impracticable, there is fear that the class which is passive in the administration of affairs will suffer much unnecessary hardship. There is scarcely any conceivable political measure, which is not certain, sooner or later, directly or

indirectly, more or less, to affect the personal happiness of the poorest citizen of the commonwealth. And it is in vain to hope that the best absolute government will consult the happiness of such a citizen as impartially as it would if he had the power to interfere; and the wisdom to interfere with effect.

No man of sense will consider political power as an end; but it is surely a means. It is not happiness; but Mr Alison will scarcely dispute that, properly used, it is a powerful instrument for securing happiness. We admit that, like other useful things, it may be desired with reckless eagerness or with pernicious designs; but we say that it is in itself a legitimate object of desire. We admit that the exclusion of the great body of the community from all share in the government, is at present, in almost all European states, a necessary evil. But we say that it *is* an evil; and that, if it ever shall become unnecessary, its continued existence will be a practical as well as a theoretical injustice.

Mr Alison's next objection is the abstract injustice of a democracy. Admitting political power to be a great benefit, he still argues that its extension to the poorer classes is necessarily an unfair and unequal measure; even though 'every man, in whatever rank, were equally capable of judging on political subjects.' His reasoning on this point is more plausible than on the preceding, but, we think, equally fallacious. 'In private life,' he says, 'men are never deceived on this subject. In the administration of any common fund, or the disposal of common property, it never was for a moment proposed to give the smallest shareholder an equal right with the greatest; to give a creditor holding a claim for 20s., for example, on a bankrupt estate, the same vote as one possessed of a bond for L.10,000. The injustice of such a proceeding is quite apparent.'—(i. 351.) This analogy is far from satisfactory. There are several circumstances which make the exclusion of a citizen from the management of the state a greater hardship, than the exclusion of a shareholder from the management of the common fund. In the first place, the shareholder may withdraw his stake if he considers it insecurely deposited. Mr Alison's twenty-shilling creditor may sell his dividend at a fair discount, if he thinks that the assignees are mismanaging the estate. In a commonwealth it is different. Every English citizen must share the fate of his country, or become a homeless emigrant. Secondly, the amount of a shareholder's *pecuniary* interest in the joint stock, is generally a tolerably fair representation of his *moral* interest in the prosperity of the speculation. It is certainly possible that a poor man, with a small venture, may be more deeply involved than a rich man with a much larger one;

but this is not likely to be a common case. There is certainly every reasonable probability that the small creditor cares comparatively little for the loss of his twenty shillings, and that the large creditor will be ruined by the loss of his L.10,000. And therefore, if we distribute authority among the shareholders in proportion to each man's pecuniary risk, we shall probably distribute it, in most cases, in proportion to each man's actual chance of enjoyment or suffering. Here again the analogy fails. The whole property of the lower classes in a commonwealth, is almost invariably staked upon that commonwealth's existence. An English peasant, who possesses nothing but a cottage and a garden, would dread the loss of his property by foreign conquest or domestic anarchy, as much as if he were Duke of Sutherland or Marquis of Westminster. Lastly, in the disposal of a joint fund, each shareholder incurs a pecuniary hazard, and nothing more. In the management of a commonwealth, the personal safety of its citizens is risked. A mechanic, living solely by his daily labour, cannot strictly be said to have any property to lose by the ruin of the state; but he may lose his life, his liberty, his means of future subsistence. A Reign of Terror, or a French invasion, could not deprive him of a fortune, but they might cause him to be murdered, or enslaved, or starved in the streets. These are our reasons for thinking that, if no other obstacles existed, it would be unjust to deprive the poorer classes of all political influence; merely on the ground that their interest in the welfare of the state is insufficient to withhold them from wanton misgovernment.

Mr Alison repeatedly enlarges, with great justice, upon the practical evils which have hitherto been found to accompany democratic institutions. But we think that he does not sufficiently distinguish between necessary and accidental disadvantages—between the dangers inseparable from popular power, and the dangers arising from its abuse. He does not sufficiently consider that in no state which has yet existed have the poorer classes been equal, or nearly equal, to the richer in civilization and intelligence; and that consequently in no state which has yet existed, could any form of government, at all approaching to what can be properly called a democracy, have any chance of a fair trial. In ancient Athens and modern France, that constitution was adopted by men utterly unfit for its exercise. The consequences were perfectly natural—in the one case, perpetual turbulence and speedy decay—in the other, rapine, bloodshed, and anarchy. In the United States of America, the experiment is now in progress on a far wiser plan, and under far more favourable circumstances. But even here we admit that Mr Alison is

justified in regarding the result as more than doubtful. Popular power, perhaps from unavoidable causes, has even here outrun popular sense and knowledge; and the consequences have been seen in frequent outbreaks of democratic tyranny, which have created serious alarm for the security of the state. Upon the whole, the British constitution, as established in 1688, may perhaps be considered the most democratic form of government ever yet exercised with continued and undisputed success. And therefore the world has yet to behold the full effect which would be produced by the insensible progress of popular influence in a nation enlightened, religious, and confirmed in sober wisdom by centuries of advancing freedom and civilization.

Mr Alison, in his concluding chapter, points out several important advantages possessed by the aristocratic over the democratic form of government. They may generally be included under two heads: superior security to private property, and superior prudence in public measures. 'It has uniformly 'been found,' says Mr Alison, 'that the holders of property 'advocate measures to protect that property, while the destitute 'masses are perpetually impelled to those likely to induce revolutionary spoliation.'—(x. 965.) 'Agrarian laws,' he elsewhere asserts, 'and the equal division of property, or measures 'tending indirectly to that effect, will in every age be the wish 'of the unthinking multitude, who have nothing apparently to 'lose, and every thing to gain, by such convulsions. Their real 'ultimate interests, indeed, will in the end inevitably suffer from 'such changes; but this is a remote consequence, which never 'will become obvious to the great body of mankind.'—(i. 352.) That is assuming the question. If the great body of mankind are really so obtuse as to be incapable, with every advantage of instruction, of comprehending that a state where the poor unite to rob the rich will inevitably be ruined, then we acknowledge their natural unfitness for political power. But Mr Alison forgets that in the passage we have quoted he is arguing on the supposition of 'every man, in whatever rank, being equally 'capable of judging on political subjects.' Surely, if this were the case, no reasonable being would be found to advocate an agrarian law. It is precisely when the multitude cease to be unthinking—when they become competent to judge of their own real and ultimate interests—that we assert, and Mr Alison denies, the necessity of allowing them a share of political power.

Mr Alison's first argument for the superior political skill of aristocratic governments appears to us singular, if not incomprehensible. 'Those classes,' he says, 'who from their affluence 'possess leisure, and from their station have received the educa-

'tion requisite for acquiring extensive information, are more likely, in the long run, to acquire and exhibit the powers necessary for beneficial legislation, than those who, from the necessities of their situation, are chained to daily toil, and from the limited extent of their funds have been disabled from acquiring a thorough education. . . . No person of a different profession would think of competing with a physician in the treatment of a person afflicted with a dangerous disease, or with a lawyer in the management of an intricate or difficult lawsuit. . . . And it would be surprising indeed if the science of government could be as successfully pursued by those classes whose time is almost wholly absorbed in other pursuits, as by those who have made it the undivided object and study of their life.'—(i.966.) All this is perfectly true; but what conclusion does Mr Alison draw from it? What is to prevent a democratic state from making proper use of the superior intelligence of any class of its citizens? Does Mr Alison suppose that, if a democracy were established in England, the whole nation would assemble on Salisbury Plain to pass laws and transact business? Or does he think that the representative assembly and the public offices would be filled with labourers and mechanics? Every state where the supreme power is placed in the hands of the numerical majority is a democracy; just as every state where it is held by an individual is a despotism. The people, like the king, may exercise their power by any machinery that may appear convenient; they may delegate it to presidents, senators, ambassadors, and secretaries of state; and they may entrust these offices to the most deserving persons to be found in the community. Why, then, is the science of government likely to be less successfully cultivated in a democratic state? Or why have the statesmen and legislators of such a state less encouragement to make that science the object and study of their lives? History does not convince us that the fact is so. Faulty as popular governments generally are, their fault has seldom been a want of able and experienced servants. Neither America, nor Athens, nor even revolutionary France, found reason to complain of the mediocrity of their statesmen. Such ministers as Pericles, Washington, and Carnot, were surely worthy of the confidence of any aristocratic government on earth.

But, however able might be the rulers of a democratic state, Mr Alison thinks that their policy would be constantly baffled by the thoughtless impatience of the supreme multitude. 'Whoever,' he says, 'has closely observed the dispositions of large bodies of men, whether in social or political life, must have become sensible that the most uniform and lasting feature by which they

'are distinguished, is that of insensibility to the future.'—(x. 969.) Undoubtedly this is the great defect of all popular governments. They are machines of prodigious power; but it is difficult to set them in motion with quickness, or to direct them with precision. In persevering policy, in cautious secrecy, in unwearied vigilance, a democracy is far inferior to an aristocracy, as an aristocracy is far inferior to a despotism. Nor do we deny that this is in some measure an intrinsic disadvantage, which no degree of national intelligence could entirely eradicate. Still Mr Alison will scarcely contend that it is a disadvantage which all democracies possess in an equal degree. He will allow that the Athenian democracy was less infatuated than the French; and that the American democracy is less thoughtless than the Athenian. He will allow, in short, that the insensibility to the future of which he speaks, varies inversely as the average intellect of the people. If this is the case, the question is, whether the great body of mankind are capable of such a degree of improvement as to diminish the want of foresight peculiar to popular governments, until it is more than balanced by their peculiar advantages.

Mr Alison replies decidedly in the negative; but we do not think that he has fairly stated the point in dispute. He says that 'the doctrine of human *perfectibility* is so agreeable to the human heart, so flattering to human vanity, and withal so nearly allied to the generous affections, that it will in all probability, to the end of the world, constitute the basis on which all the efforts of the popular party will be rested, and all the visions of social amelioration justified.'—(x. 938.) He cites as examples the visions of Rousseau and Condorcet, and proceeds of course, with perfect success, to show that such theories have always been disappointed; and that they are wholly inconsistent with the revealed doctrine of human corruption. We perfectly agree in all this. No Christian, no philosopher, no experienced man of the world, can reasonably believe in human perfectibility, in the sense in which that term is commonly understood. But will Mr Alison allow no schemes of social amelioration short of angelic purity?—no popular government except by impeccable beings? Does he confound all hopes of human improvement with the dreams of the enthusiasts who predicted that crime, war, disease, and death itself, would shortly yield to the advance of science and virtue? We entertain no such visionary ideas; the only means by which we look for improvement, are the natural progress of reason and religion; and the only result which we expect, is the communication of those qualities to the many, which our own observation has shown us in the few. Mr Alison tells us that a

good democracy is a dream, because men can never become angels. We reply that we shall be perfectly contented to try the experiment, when they all become Washingtons and Wilberforces.

Surely we shall not be told that this too is an idle vision. If experience, reason, and revelation deny that man is perfectible, do they not combine to assert that he is *improvable*—improvable to a degree which those who have only known him in his lowest state can scarcely imagine? All we venture to hope is, that a certain degree of this improvement will, in course of time, become general. We do not believe in human perfectibility, because we never saw or heard of a perfect man. But we are so fortunate as to have known many wise and good men; many men to whose integrity we would cheerfully entrust our dearest interests. What presumption is there in believing that the advance of knowledge and of Christianity may hereafter multiply their number? We can conceive that a savage, whose highest ideas of human excellence are drawn from the barbarians of his tribe, might ridicule such a hope. By why an Englishman, who perhaps is aware of the actual existence of many excellent men, should deny the possible existence of thousands, is to us incomprehensible.

There is one great difference between aristocratic and democratic constitutions, which Mr Alison does not appear to notice. He constantly speaks as if wisdom and foresight were as inseparable from aristocracy, as he pronounces rashness and indolence to be from democracy. Whether he is right or wrong in the latter opinion, in the former he is assuredly mistaken. The truth appears to be, that a bad democracy displays great faults and great powers, while a bad aristocracy, with faults nearly as great, displays no power at all. The defects of an aristocracy are intrinsic, but its merits are variable; there are certain faults which it must possess, and certain advantages which it may possess. The best aristocracy cannot call forth democratic enthusiasm; but a bad aristocracy may rival democratic recklessness. The aristocracy of Austria was no match for the French republic in its moments of awakened energy; the aristocracy of Venice was as supine as the same republic in its feeblest intervals of exhaustion. The reverse of this will apply to a democracy. Its merits are intrinsic; for the worst democracies, such as Athens or revolutionary France, have surpassed, when aroused by imminent danger, the vigour of the best aristocratic governments. Its defects, on the contrary, are variable. They depend upon the average sense and principle of its citizens. When that average is low, the anarchy which ensues is worse than the severest despotism; but when it is raised as high as the

imperfection of human nature will permit, it might enable a popular government to exert the self-denying vigilance of the wisest aristocracy.

We have been induced by Mr Alison's undistinguishing abhorrence to say so much more than we had intended in favour of democratic institutions, that we feel ourselves compelled to add a few words in explanation. We are as averse, then, as the most rigid Conservative to sudden or violent political changes. It is to avoid the necessity of any such change, whether it assume its sternest or its mildest form—whether it appear as a Revolution or a Reform Bill—that we think the institutions of every state should be gradually modified in proportion to the intellectual progress of its subjects. Whether that progress will ever attain such a height, as to make unrestrained self-government practicable in any community of human beings, we greatly doubt. Such a change may be an idle, though surely not an ignoble or unimproving hope. But the principle for which we contend is simply this, that the fitness of the people for the exercise of political power, is the sole criterion by which political power can be safely or justly granted or denied them.

Mr Alison, as might be expected, applies his whole theory upon popular government to the reforms of the last reign in this country; and most dismal are the forebodings with which it inspires him. We have said that we cannot condemn his devotion to his political creed; but we think we have a right to complain of it as sometimes betraying him into a tone of arrogant assumption. We have been frequently amused, and occasionally, for a moment, provoked, by the cool dogmatical decision with which he finally settles, by a passing remark, the great public controversies of the age, and then proceeds to reason upon his own opinion as upon an indisputable foundation. Thus, he alludes to Catholic Emancipation as 'that loosening of the constitution in Church and State under which 'the nation has so grievously laboured,' (viii. 20,)—'that momentous change in our religious institutions which first loosened 'the solid fabric of the British empire,' (viii. 43;)—and he pronounces upon the Reform Bill, and the abolition of Slavery, in the same peremptory language. If he would condescend to overthrow our political tenets by deliberate argument, we might endeavour to own his superiority with a good grace; but it is too much for human patience to find them dismissed in a parenthesis, as unworthy serious discussion. Mr Alison must surely be aware, that many of the best and wisest of his countrymen approved of the changes which we have mentioned, and still expect them to prove fully successful. Are they at once to be condemned, because an

overweening and pompous historian chooses to shake his head, with a compassionate sneer, at their 'well-meaning but injudicious' philanthropy? Or is Mr Alison so much their superior, that he has a right to assume, on his own authority, that they are mistaken, and to draw matter of argument and rebuke from that assumption? If the measures in question were the subject of his narrative—if any part of his work were devoted to their details, and to proof of their pernicious tendency—we should not object to his delivering his opinion, however we might disapprove the self-sufficiency of his language. But we must protest against his practice of interweaving with a history of past events, what lawyers call *obiter dicta* upon the politics of the day. The writer of such a work as the present ought to imitate the dignity and self-restraint of a judge on the bench, and carefully to abstain from throwing out imputations and assertions not strictly warranted by the evidence before the court.

We have no intention, as may be supposed, of discussing with Mr Alison the merits of the individual changes which have lately caused so much anxiety in the British nation. Those who hold what are called reforming opinions, may possibly have been wrong in the precise measure of the particular innovations which they proposed; but we certainly apprehend no danger to the British constitution from their general tendency. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the general arguments upon the progress of popular influence which we have already advanced; but we think there are many reasons for hoping that its late advance in this country will be as peaceful in its immediate effects, as beneficial in its final result.

Our chief ground for this hope is the high character, moral influence, and peculiar constitution, of the British aristocracy. That body, splendid and powerful as it is, has for ages been so intimately blended with the middle classes, and so frequently recruited from their ranks, that it is now almost impossible to draw the precise line which separates the gentleman from the *roturier*. The social rank of an Englishman depends upon his wealth, his political influence, and his personal character—not upon arbitrary heraldic distinctions. We do not see, as in Vienna, accomplished families excluded from society because their ancestors were enriched by commerce. We do not see, as in Hungary, ignorant menials assuming ridiculous airs of superiority because they trace their pedigree to some obscure baronial family.

Mr Alison, devoted as he is to the aristocratic form of government, speaks with strong and just detestation of those odious oligarchies, in which an impassable barrier is placed between the nobility and the people, and all political power is treated as the

hereditary privilege of a certain number of families. It is this tyrannical system which has so often converted the progress of liberty into a servile war—a struggle between anarchy on the one hand, and slavery on the other. It is this which causes so many rulers to resent every effort for political emancipation as a conspiracy to rob them of their private property; and which so often excites, with the first ray of popular intelligence, the deadly jealousy of the government, and the vindictive discontent of the subject. In France we have seen one dreadful instance of the consequences which an obstinate adherence to such institutions may produce. There are still European states in which the nobility, though mild and just in the exercise of their power, cling to their exclusive privileges with a tenacity which is beginning to be bitterly resented by the more aspiring of the middle classes. There may be persons to whom an aristocracy constituted upon this system of haughty superiority may appear a singularly chivalrous and interesting race. There may be persons who consider nobility as the ornament of the state—the Corinthian capital of the column—made to be looked at, boasted of, and paid for. We know that there are tourists who judge of the most important institutions of foreign states according to their own ideas—not always the most tasteful or refined—of the picturesque;—who detest democracy because the ladies of Cincinnati are cold and repulsive; who adore despotism because the countesses of Vienna are graceful and polite; and who forget the cowardly cruelty of a cold-blooded tyrant, in their admiration of his simple habits and familiar manners. To such judges an English gentleman may appear a far less romantic personage than the imbecile Spaniard, in whose veins stagnates the *blue blood* of Guzman or Mendoza; or than the servile and frivolous Austrian, whose worst fear is a frown from Prince Metternich; whose noblest ambition is to be *crème de la crème*, and whose proudest boast is his descent from a long succession of titled Teutonic boors. To us, and, we have no doubt, to Mr Alison, the popular constitution of the British aristocracy appears, not merely a ground of pride and pleasure, but a blessing.

It is certain that the higher classes in England are generally opposed to all political reform. But the existence of a strong minority who hold the contrary opinion, is a sufficient proof that their opposition is that of men acting on conviction, not from sordid *esprit de corps*. They would not risk the peace of the country rather than sacrifice their prejudices; and if they had the wish of doing so, they have no longer the power. The time is past when their influence was able to provoke the collision of physical force. The people, when thoroughly roused,

can now find legal and constitutional means of redress, which, slow, toilsome, and painful as they may be, are irresistible when perseveringly used. This state of things is not perfect, but it is tolerable and hopeful. We no doubt believe that it would be best for the country if all Englishmen approved of the gradual progress of reform. But as that cannot be, it is well that there should be a strong party whose error is an over cautious wish to retard it. It is well, while there is such an endless variety of opinions, that there should be every security against their result being wrong on the more dangerous side.

If the character of the British aristocracy is favourable to the temperate progress of reform, that of the popular party, generally speaking, is, in our opinion, scarcely less so. This is an assertion which we are aware will find many opponents, and none more strenuous than Mr Alison. But it must be recollected that the Englishmen of the present generation have passed through an ordeal of no common severity—an ordeal which would have driven most nations frantic with party animosity and triumphant exultation. We do not say that they have borne it without some degree of dangerous excitement. But if the great constitutional change of 1832 has encouraged the hopes of a few crazy demagogues—if it has fostered for a time the dreams of Chartists and Socialists—how frequently has it not led to the display of temptation manfully resisted, of distress patiently borne, of power soberly exercised, and of political contests forbearingly carried on!

Mr Alison thinks that a most alarming symptom in the present state of the British nation is 'the constant and uninterrupted increase of crime, through all the vicissitudes of peace and war, unchecked by penal vigilance, undiminished by intellectual cultivation.'—(vii. 11.) A most alarming symptom, indeed, and withal a most unaccountable one. But is the last clause of the sentence really supported by the fact? It is unfortunately true that crimes of the less atrocious kind have of late years considerably increased in this country. But among whom have they increased? Among the members of the aristocracy?—among substantial farmers and tradesmen?—among decent peasants and mechanics? Far from it. The morals of the educated ranks have indisputably improved. Generations have passed since the peerage was disgraced by a Ferrers or a Lovat. Our fathers were more scandalized by a breach of the peace, or a life of open indecorum, in a man of rank, than our great-grandfathers by murder or felony. The Barrymores and Queensburys of the last generation, were but spiritless successors to such men as Mohun and Charteris, the bravos and libertines of Queen Anne's golden

days. Noble lords now find it easy to acquire an unenviable notoriety by frolics which would have appeared ingloriously tame and tranquil to the Mohocks of the last century. They have the honour of a trial before the Lord Chief-Justice for breaking the head of a single constable, while their ancestors were hardly carried to Bow Street for running half a dozen through the body. Serious crime, in short, is now almost wholly confined to the lowest of the populace. Vice has spread precisely in that direction in which it was not opposed by 'intellectual cultivation.' This is a very natural effect of advancing civilization. In a barbarous community, crime is almost universal. In a well governed community, it concentrates itself in the most ignorant and most destitute classes; but the general enmity which narrows its limits increases its intensity. In such a country as Afghanistan or Caffraria, almost every man is occasionally guilty of violence and dishonesty; but the professed outcasts from society are comparatively few. In such a country as England, nineteen men in twenty are incapable, under any ordinary circumstances of temptation, of a criminal misdemeanour; but there is a large class who entirely subsist by the practice of petty depredation. But why should Mr Alison pronounce this last stronghold of vice impregnable? Why are our means of improvement unequal to finish what they have so well begun? We do not, indeed, venture to hope, that our posterity will ever regard a burglar or a pickpocket with the surprise and curiosity with which we regard a riotous peer of the realm—as a curious specimen of a singular and nearly extinct species. But it will at least be admitted, that the instruction which has produced a change scarcely less striking in the higher ranks, has yet to exert its full influence upon that class of the community which stands most in need of its benefits.

Whether the advance of civilization will necessarily draw with it an advance of political wisdom, let the experience of posterity decide. Hitherto it will scarcely be denied to have done so. We gather from various passages in Mr Alison's history, that he considers the English constitution, until modified by the Reform Bill, to have been admirably adapted to the state of the nation. Was it equally adapted to the state of the nation three centuries before? Is it not probable, that if that constitution had practically existed in the days of Tyler or Cade, it would have led to anarchy and ruin? This is at least a proof, that at the end of the seventeenth century a degree of popular influence had become useful and necessary, which would have been highly dangerous in the fourteenth or fifteenth. May not a similar improvement have taken place between 1688 and 1842? Might not the restraints swept away by the Reform Bill have become

as exasperating to our descendants as the absolute rule of the Tudors and Stuarts to our ancestors?

It is certainly possible that the present year may be the turning point of British civilization. It is even possible that the British constitution has reached, if it has not overshot, the utmost limit which popular power can safely be allowed to attain, in any community liable to human vice and folly. We only remind our readers that this assertion has been a hundred times made, and a hundred times refuted. In every stage of unbalanced imperfection, the constitution has been extolled as the masterpiece of human wisdom. One part of it after another has been pronounced the keystone of the fabric, and has yet been discovered to be a mere excrescence. In all ages of British history there have been men, deficient neither in sense nor in honesty, who thought that the growth of liberty should have stopped short precisely when they first became acquainted with it. Such were the men who would have rejected the *Habeas Corpus* act because it was omitted in 1216; and who opposed the Reform Bill because it was not thought of in 1688. And we have no doubt that there were honest Conservatives in the ninth and thirteenth centuries, who dreaded King Alfred as a radical reformer, and thought *Magna Charta* a fatal innovation. We are none of those who affect contempt for the present or former state of freedom in this country. We avow our faith in British superiority, and our love for British institutions. But we think it presumption, we might almost say impiety, to speak of any system of human origin as sacred from decay and from improvement.

Supposing, however, that in England political innovation is not likely to produce the anarchy of the French Revolution, it is still, in Mr Alison's opinion, destined to put an end to her prosperity by more lingering means. Two centuries, as nearly as we can gather, are the longest term which he assigns for her independent existence; and the principal causes from which he anticipates her ruin, are the neglect of national defence, and the existence of the national debt. His only plan of safety appears to be, to increase our present expenditure by several millions yearly; to fortify London; to enlarge our naval force; and to establish an effectual sinking fund. But he acknowledges that no government could at the present time carry through such a system as this, and therefore he avowedly despairs of the republic.

It is our intention, as we have elsewhere noticed, carefully to avoid all questions relating merely to party politics. We shall therefore permit Mr Alison to assume, that of late years the re-

sources of the British empire have really been suffered to remain dormant to an extent which the present state of our foreign relations renders in the highest degree imprudent. But we are astonished to find him calling this an 'extraordinary decline,' and averring that its 'immediate cause is to be found in the long-continued and undue preponderance, since the peace, of the popular part of the constitution.'—(vii. 777.) When, we would ask, was it otherwise? When did the English nation, or the English government, show themselves wary in providing for remote dangers? How did our ancestors display that far-sighted prudence which Mr Alison boasts as the characteristic merit of aristocratic governments? By leaving the Thames exposed to the Dutch fleet in 1667? by allowing 5000 daring Highlanders to overrun half England in 1745? by their admirable state of military preparation in 1756, in 1775, and in 1793? The truth is, that the British people have for generations been as impatient of vigilance and precaution in time of peace, as they are daring and obstinate in actual war. The present generation may have inherited the reckless imprudence of their ancestors; but we think they would find considerable difficulty in surpassing it.

Mr Alison, however, to our utter perplexity, fixes upon the sixty years preceding the peace of 1815, as an example of the mighty effects of 'combined aristocratic direction and democratic vigour.'—(x. 981.) He even maintains, that 'if to any nation were given, for a series of ages, the combined wisdom and energy of England, from the days of Chatham to those of Wellington, it would infallibly acquire the empire of the world.'—(x. 982.) This, if we glance at the history of that period, will appear strange language. A court intrigue cut short the triumphs of Chatham by an abrupt and inglorious peace. Those of Wellington were achieved by the high qualities of a single individual, in spite of the obstacles thrown in his way by an imbecile government. And against these successes are to be set off the loss of the American provinces, the wilful blunders of the revolutionary war, and the Walcheren expedition. We are not insensible to the glory acquired by the national character during the interval of which Mr Alison speaks. We are aware that neither Lord North nor Mr Pitt could incapacitate British soldiers and sailors from doing their duty. But they could, and did, employ the national energies in such a manner as to deprive them of their reward; and it is doubly mortifying to an Englishman to find his countrymen, after a useless display of strength and courage, baffled and dishonoured by the folly or corruption of an irresponsible oligarchy.

Mr Alison has given us a very clear and comprehensive history of the national debt. Its present state he is inclined to view in the most gloomy light; but this feeling of despondency by no means interferes with his admiration of the statesman to whose unparalleled profusion we owe its sudden and enormous increase. His principal arguments in defence of Mr Pitt's system of finance are two; the absolute necessity of contracting immense obligations, and the effectual provision made for their speedy discharge. On the former point, we shall at present say nothing. It is, as we shall soon see, Mr Alison's own opinion, that the loans raised during the war were both extravagantly large, and lamentably misapplied. But that war was necessary, and that ample supplies were required to support it, we are not prepared to deny. Of the sinking fund, Mr Alison speaks in terms of exaggerated, and to us incomprehensible, rapture. He considers it worthy, as a scientific conception, to rank with 'the discovery of gravitation, the press, and the steam-engine.' Surely we are not to believe that Mr Pitt was the first demonstrator of the simple theorem, that a sum of money accumulating at five per cent will quadruple itself in twenty-eight years. Nor can we imagine that the natural and obvious plan of forming a fund, on this principle, for the reduction of the national debt, had failed to occur to hundreds of arithmeticians from the very first year in which that debt existed. The *expediency* of the plan is another matter. That is a question on which the best-informed financiers have differed, and still differ. If Mr Pitt, and Mr Pitt alone, judged rightly on this point, he undoubtedly deserves high credit, not as a discoverer in political arithmetic, but as a practical statesman. Even in this respect, indeed, we are inclined to doubt both the originality and the correctness of his opinion. But we cannot think that the mere *possibility* of his scheme could long escape the notice of any man capable of working a sum in compound interest.

This marvellous invention is sufficient, in Mr Alison's opinion, to atone for all Mr Pitt's financial errors; and yet, by his own showing, these were neither few nor trifling. We pass over his just and forcible remarks on the ruinous system of borrowing in the three per cents; and on the undue extent to which the funding system was carried. These faults, serious as they were, are dust in the balance, compared with the one great blunder of Mr Pitt's financial policy. We allude to the obvious, the glaring disproportion between the sacrifices and the exertions which the nation made under his direction. He lavished the wealth of England as if he expected to finish the war by one convulsive effort; while he husbanded her other

resources so as to ensure its lasting for a whole generation. He wasted the courage of his countrymen in colonial expeditions—he kept eighty thousand of the finest troops in the world in inglorious repose—and he paid Russian and German armies, incomparably inferior in the most formidable qualities of the soldier, to face the enemy on the continent. ‘Here,’ as Mr Alison truly and pointedly remarks, ‘lay the capital error of Mr Pitt’s financial system, considered with reference to the warlike operations it was intended to promote—that while the former was calculated for a temporary effort only, and based on the principle of great results being obtained in a short time by an extravagant system of expenditure, the latter was arranged on the plan of the most niggardly exertion of the national strength, and the husbanding of its resources for future efforts, totally inconsistent with the lavish dissipation of its present funds.’—(v. 600.) Consider for a moment to what this admission amounts. Simply to this—that Mr Pitt expended 150 millions of the national treasure without the smallest reasonable chance of any decisive advantage in return! This he did at a moment when half the sum, judiciously applied, would have spared a subsequent expense of 500 millions to England, and twenty years of bloodshed and desolation to Europe. And all this is to be forgiven because he abhorred the French Revolution, and established the sinking fund! Mr Alison, zealous as he is in Mr Pitt’s defence, has most satisfactorily confirmed the bitter sentence of his enemies, that his war administration, from 1793 to 1799, was at once the most reckless, and the most feeble, that ever disgraced a British cabinet.

Mr Alison, in concluding his dissertation on the national debt, coolly states that, by the abolition of the sinking fund, ‘irretrievable ultimate ruin has been brought upon the state.’—(v. 616.) We would fain dissent from this startling conclusion, and we shall endeavour to state a few plain reasons which induce us to look upon the present state of our finances, not indeed without anxiety, but still with cheerfulness and hope.

Mr Alison gives two reasons for his prediction of ruin from the national debt, one of which at least he makes no attempt to prove. ‘Not only,’ he says, ‘is the burden now fixed upon our resources inconsistent with the permanent maintenance of the national independence, but the steady rule has been terminated under which alone its liquidation could have been expected.’—(v. 616.) The latter of these two propositions we in substance admit, but the former we greatly doubt. We admit that there is no immediate prospect of any considerable reduction in the amount of the national debt; but we trust there is every prospect that the

resources of the nation will continue to increase so as to make that amount comparatively immaterial. Let us look to the past history of our finances. During the American war, the mad misgovernment of the sovereign and his ministers increased the national debt by more than 100 millions in seven years. In 1783, its whole amount was 240 millions—more than three-fourths of the revenue was eaten up by its interest—and yet, since all parties agreed that the country was on the verge of bankruptcy, it is but fair to conclude that the national expenditure was as large as any reasonable scale of taxation could supply. The wisest statesmen spoke of our prospects as despondently, if not quite as poetically, as Mr Alison does at present. And yet we know that, if our present debt were no larger than that of 1783, we could, if it were thought advisable, pay it off in ten or twelve years, merely by applying to its reduction the surplus of our present annual income. But the vast strength of the British empire was to be proved in a far more wonderful manner. In 1793 broke out the most dreadful war in modern history. With two brief intervals it lasted twenty-three years. The wealth of England, squandered as it was with wasteful prodigality, was found sufficient to nourish the contest throughout the whole of Europe. In 1815, peace returned, and the British people found themselves nearly 900 millions in debt; and yet their annual expenditure more than tripled the interest of this enormous sum—a proof that the nation, which thirty years before had been nearly ruined by a debt of 240 millions, was now able to support with safety, though not without suffering, a burden nearly four times as large! Have we since become less able to bear it? Have our energies been paralyzed by this tremendous pressure? Let Mr Alison himself answer the question: ‘Five-and-twenty years of uninterrupted peace have increased in an extraordinary degree the wealth, population, and resources of the empire. The numbers of the people during that time have increased nearly a half; the exports and imports have more than doubled; the tonnage of the commercial navy has increased a half; and agriculture, following the wants of the increased population of the empire, has advanced in a similar proportion.’—(vii. 774.) Surely, if we go no further, there is even here ground for hope. It is easy to see that the increase of our national incumbrances, rapid as it has been, has been less rapid than that of our national resources;—that we now bear a debt of 800 millions, with less difficulty than we bore one of 80 millions a century ago.

Let us suppose that in 1783, some soothsayer had hazarded such a prediction as the following:—‘It is at present believed,

' that a long interval of undisturbed peace and rigid economy
' will barely save the country from open bankruptcy. I aver
' that in ten years England shall be struggling for existence
' with the mightiest prince in the world. For twenty years
' her resources shall be lavished with a profusion never before
' imagined; and yet, when the trial is over, it shall be found
' that all her reckless extravagance has barely enabled her
' embarrassments to keep pace with the vigorous growth of
' her prosperity.' How wild would such a prophecy have
appeared, even to the most penetrating statesmen! Yet we
know that it would have been literally fulfilled. We have
borne the debt which sixty years ago seemed so overwhelming;
we have survived a sudden addition of 650 millions to its
amount; for a quarter of a century we have thriven and flourished
under this monstrous load, and we can already look back with
thankfulness to a time when it tasked our strength far more
severely than at present. And now, it is dogmatically assumed
that it must crush us after all! Surely there is no reason why
the progress of British prosperity should, for the first time
during so many ages, be suddenly arrested. And if this does not
happen, who will pronounce it impossible that our descendants
may look upon the debt of 1816 as lightly as we look upon the
debt of 1783?

These are the considerations which incline us to hope that
the national debt has not yet outrun our ability to bear it. We
will now give our reasons for thinking that it is not likely to do
so, and that it may even fail to keep pace with the future pro-
gress of the national wealth, as it has hitherto done. The national
debt has now existed about one hundred and fifty years; and no
addition has ever been made to its amount, except in time of
war. Now, during this period, there have been no less than
seven important wars, all perilous and burdensome, and one in
particular beyond all comparison the most expensive in which this
or any other nation was ever engaged. The present is the only
peace, for more than a century past, which England has enjoy-
ed during so many as ten successive years. And, upon the
whole, more than seventy of the last hundred and fifty years, or
about one year in every two since the origin of the debt, have
been employed in active hostilities. This proportion is remark-
ably, indeed almost unprecedentedly, large. During that part of
the seventeenth century which preceded the Revolution, only one
year in four was occupied by war, and only one in seven by
foreign war. During the sixteenth century, the proportion was
about one year in five. It is therefore clear that the increase of
the national debt has been hitherto promoted by an unusual suc-

cession of difficulties; and it does not seem unreasonable to think that, according to the usual course of human events, so long a period of trouble and danger may probably be succeeded by one of comparative tranquillity.

But let us suppose the worst. Let us suppose that England is next year plunged in a fresh struggle with enemies as formidable, and a war administration as imbecile, as in 1793. We have no doubt that, backed by the obstinate courage and vast resources of the British people, the most incapable ministry would sooner or later achieve a triumphant peace. But the result of a prolonged and mismanaged war would of course be a heavy addition to our present burdens. In such a case we admit that national bankruptcy might appear close at hand. But does even this imply loss of national independence? It is now only fifty years since France underwent a national bankruptcy of the most disastrous kind. Is she now less formidable or less prosperous than before that misfortune? But we should not fear even this; for we do not believe that any amount of embarrassments would compel England to so degrading an expedient. Even in so dismal an emergency as we are supposing, we will not doubt that the national spirit would be found equal to the trial. We acknowledge that fearful sacrifices might be necessary—sacrifices which would be bitterly felt by every family in the united kingdom—sacrifices which might long impede the advance of prosperity and civilization. But that a nation containing twenty millions of the Anglo-Saxon race, crowned and strengthened by a century and a half of foreign glory and domestic freedom, could be deprived of its European rank by pecuniary embarrassments, is what we cannot bring ourselves to think possible.

We have attempted, we trust with proper courtesy and forbearance, to express our dissent from some of Mr Alison's political opinions. But there are passages in his work which we own have made us feel some difficulty in preserving this tone of moderation. We allude to the spirit of contempt and suspicion in which he occasionally permits himself to speculate on the motives and probable conduct of the reforming party in this country. When he predicts the speedy ruin of the British empire from the progress of democratic innovation, we admit that we have no right to complain. The utmost which such a prediction imputes to the most democratic politician, is an error of judgment. But when he accuses the liberal party in England of meditating the most atrocious acts of violence and treachery, and that upon mere conjecture, we certainly find it difficult to restrain our indignation. And we think that these calumnies are rendered, if possible, more offensive by the calm affecta-

tion of historical impartiality with which they are delivered. After relating with just abhorrence the atrocities committed by the British troops, in storming some of the Spanish fortresses, he concludes his remarks with the following reflection:—‘ A consideration of these mournful scenes, combined with the recollection of the mutual atrocities perpetrated by both parties on each other in England during the wars of the Roses, the horrors of the Tyrone rebellion in Ireland, the cold-blooded vengeance of the Covenanters after the battle of Philiphaugh, the systematic firing and pillage of London during Lord George Gordon’s riots in 1780, and the brutal violence in recent times of the Chartists in England, suggest the painful doubt whether all mankind are not at bottom the same, in point of tendency to crime, when exposed to the influence of the same temptations; and whether there do not lie, smouldering beneath the boasted glories of British civilization, the embers of a conflagration as fierce, and a devastation as wide-spread, as those which followed and disgraced the French Revolution.’—(ix. 821.) Taken in its literal sense, this passage is a mere truism. Not only are Englishmen capable of such atrocities as disgraced the French Revolution, but they will infallibly be guilty of them, if they are ever situated as the French were fifty years ago. Deprive the British people of their free constitution, oppress and degrade them for a century or two as Louis XV. oppressed and degraded the French, and you will make them what the great body of the French nation was in 1789—a mob of ignorant, degraded, vindictive serfs. But it is impossible to mistake the insinuation which Mr Alison really intends to convey. No one can seriously suppose that he feels real surprise and alarm at finding that his countrymen are not intrinsically exempt from the ordinary vices of human nature. He clearly wishes to impress his readers with the fear, that the *present* temper of the English nation resembles that of the French in 1793; and that the progress of reform in this country is likely to terminate in a violent revolution. It is against this conjecture that we wish to protest.

Nothing can be clearer than that the virtues of our national character do not belong to us by birthright. Two thousand years ago, the inhabitants of Britain offered human sacrifices at Stonehenge. Eight hundred years after, our Saxon ancestors, in morals and humanity, were much upon a par with a modern South Sea islander. The Danes and Normans were some centuries later still in abandoning their savage habits. All this does not, of course, prevent us from claiming a place for the modern English among the most enlightened nations of the world;

but it induces us to attribute their sympathy with the fallen, their aversion to blood, their generous spirit of fair play, purely to the humanizing effect of free institutions and protecting laws. For 150 years, the British constitution, however imperfect in some particulars, has been, upon the whole, one of the best that ever existed; and even for some centuries earlier, the English had enjoyed more political freedom, and personal security, than almost any nation in the world. These blessings have done much to improve our character; but they have not eradicated the innate passions and weakness of humanity. They have made us a generous and humane nation; but they have not made us incapable of ever becoming otherwise. The descendants of twenty generations of English gentlemen continue to be born with the same natural propensities as the nursling of an Indian wigwam. Send them to be educated in Australia or Sumatra, and they will grow up cannibals and barbarians like their comrades. Had Howard or Romilly been kidnapped in their infancy by a Pawnee war party, they would have undoubtedly acquired a taste for stealing horses, taking scalps, and massacring prisoners. In the same manner, had the English people been trodden down by tyrants when their liberties were insecure, they would have become cowardly, cruel, and revengeful. They may still become so, if those liberties should ever be abandoned. But whether this is probable—whether they are likely deliberately to resume the savage habits so long shaken off—this is the true question at issue.

The examples cited by Mr Alison can mislead no one. They occurred at remote times, or under extraordinary circumstances. He might as well argue the probability of a bloody rebellion from the crimes of Good, or Greenacre, as from the sacking of San Sebastian, or the violence of the Chartist mobs. The question to which his observations point, is this:—whether there are symptoms of an approaching civil war in the British empire. He appears inclined to answer in the affirmative; but how does he support his opinion? We naturally ask whether the British are a sanguinary nation? He tells us that they were so 400 years ago. We ask whether the great body of the people are attached to the laws? He tells us that there have occurred three or four destructive riots during the last half century. We ask whether British citizens are likely to rob and murder their peaceable neighbours? He tells us that British soldiers are sometimes guilty of violence in towns taken by storm. We admit the facts, but we deny that they afford any criterion of the ordinary temper of the nation. We do not flatter ourselves that we are differently constituted from the savage warriors of

the middle ages, or the brutal rioters of the last generation. We found our hopes of avoiding their example, simply upon the obvious difference of circumstances. When the English return to the barbarism of the 15th century, or the fanaticism of the 17th, then they will treat their political opponents as the Yorkists treated the Lancastrians, or the Covenanters the Royalists. When the mass of the English nation becomes as crazy or as depraved as the madmen and ruffians of the No Popery mob, then they will imitate the plunder and violence of 1780. When English citizens engage in political contests with the excitement of soldiers in a desperate attack, then they will accompany political success with the atrocities of a victorious storming party. All this was really the case in France. In 1789, the French populace were as barbarous as the Yorkists, as fanatical as the Covenanters, as depraved as the lowest follower of Lord George Gordon, as hardened by suffering, as mad with triumph, and as thirsty for revenge, as Picton's grenadiers when they carried Badajos. But the violence of human passion is generally proportioned to the provocation received. Men do not feel the same fury at the refusal of a political privilege, as at a tyranny which makes their lives miserable. The English are on the whole a free and happy nation. They may wish to improve their condition, and the wish may be perfectly justifiable; but their present political state is at least tolerable. The progress of reform in England has long been peaceful and constitutional. The Catholic might be indignant when he was refused a fair chance of public honours and profits; the citizen of Birmingham or Manchester might complain when he was denied a representative in the legislature; but they could not feel like the French peasantry under the feudal laws. The measures which they demanded might be anxiously desired, but they were not matter of life and death. Men might dislike Mr Perceval when he refused Catholic emancipation, or the Duke of Wellington when he opposed Parliamentary reform; but it was impossible that they should hate them as the French populace hated Foulon and Berthier. Angry partisans might be found to abuse them in the papers, or even to throw mud at their windows; but it was not in human nature that any one should wish to hang them upon a lamp-post.

Still we cannot wonder at the sombre influence which Mr Alison's anxious and prejudiced imagination exercises upon his judgment of the future, when we see how strangely it perverts his memory of the past. Singular as it may appear, he actually discovers a resemblance between the agitation of the Reform Bill, and the excesses of the French Revolution. Now we, in common

with numerous writers of the liberal persuasion, have more than once remarked, with satisfaction and triumph, the circumstances which attended the great constitutional change of 1832. A desperate struggle, a complete victory, an important transfer of political power—all took place without the loss of a life, or the confiscation of an acre. But this is not the most remarkable part of the transaction. If the moderation of the popular party had been remarked and admired at the time, we should have thought the example less striking. But it was not so. Not only did the general tranquillity pass as a thing of course, but the few and slight symptoms of insubordination which did appear, excited universal alarm and indignation. Tumultuous assemblies, seditious harangues, and menacing outcries, were deplored as amounting in themselves to unprecedented atrocities. If a rabble of thoughtless rioters cheered for a republic, or displayed a tricolor flag, words were found wanting to characterise the portentous act. A violent party journal ventured to threaten popular violence, and received from the general resentment an opprobrious *soubriquet* which is not yet forgotten. It is well known that the Duke of Wellington was, for the moment, most unjustly indeed, but naturally and excusably, one of the least popular men in England. He was known to be the strenuous opponent of a measure which the great body of the nation sincerely believed to be indispensable; and he was reported, we believe most falsely, to have accompanied the expression of his disapprobation with a haughty and contemptuous threat. An angry mob followed his carriage with hisses, and threw stones at the windows of Apsley House; and throughout all England one party was transported with rage and dismay, and the other overwhelmed with shame and sorrow. Men of all opinions, in short, were shocked and scandalized to find, that in England the surface of society was ruffled by a movement which in most countries would have broken up its very foundations. We would not be thought to palliate the partial irregularities which did occur. Riot and insult may be almost as criminal in a free citizen, as murder and plunder in an ignorant slave. But we may be permitted to exult in a national temper which leaves those irregularities so little excuse. Nobody thought of pausing among the massacres of 1792, to complain of abusive clamours or broken windows. And surely there is a strong presumption of the ordinary gentleness of an individual, when he overwhelms his friends with surprise and consternation by a slight frown, or a peevish murmur.

Such is not Mr Alison's reasoning. He remembers only the panic of the Conservative party, and forgets the insufficiency of

the causes which excited it. In his fourth chapter, he has made some strong and just remarks on the infatuation of the French nobility, in deserting their country in a body, almost on the first appearance of danger. In a note to this passage, he quotes the pointedly expressed, but very feeble apology of M. de Chateaubriand, which in effect amounts to this—that the French aristocracy ought not to be blamed, because the danger was fearful and imminent, and because no one, living in a peaceful country, can tell whether he himself would have behaved better in such an emergency. The answer to all this is perfectly obvious. M. de Chateaubriand's arguments may induce us to look upon cowardice and folly as venial faults; but cannot possibly prove that the French nobility were brave or wise men. We perfectly agree with him, that it is the height of presumption to speak with violent indignation of persons who, in trying circumstances, have failed in wisdom and courage; and that no man can decide, without trial, whether he possesses such qualities himself. This is an excellent reason for pardoning and pitying those who are guilty of imprudence or pusillanimity; but none at all for permitting them to deny their guilt. M. de Chateaubriand's defence is at best merely a plea for mercy, and can never be taken as a ground for acquittal. Our author's reply is very different. He takes M. de Chateaubriand at his word, and says—*We have been tried, and we have stood the trial; for the English aristocracy did not fly their country when the Reform Bill passed. For the benefit of the incredulous reader, we hold ourselves bound to quote this most astonishing passage entire. 'Admitting,' says Mr Alison, 'the caustic eloquence of these remarks, 'the British historian cannot allow their justice. The example 'of the nobility of his own country, in the disastrous days 'which succeeded the passing of the Reform Bill, has furnished him with a decisive refutation of them. The flames 'of Bristol and Nottingham proved that danger had reached 'their dwellings as well as those of the French noblemen; 'and if they had, in consequence, deserted their country and 'leagued with the stranger, it is hardly doubtful that similar 'excesses would have laid waste the whole fair realm of England. 'They did not do so; they remained at home, braving every 'danger, enduring every insult; and who can over-estimate the 'influence of such moral courage in mitigating the evils which 'then so evidently threatened their country?'—(i. 312.) We will fairly compare the circumstances of each case, and for that purpose we will quote from Mr Alison a few of the threatening symptoms which overcame the resolution of the French noblesse. 'Every where the peasants rose in arms, attacked and burnt the*

'chateaux of the landlords, and massacred or expelled the possessors. The horrors of the insurrection of the Jacquerie, in the time of Edward III., were revived on a greater scale, and with deeper circumstances of atrocity. In their blind fury they did not even spare those seigneurs who were known to be inclined to the popular side, or had done the most to mitigate their sufferings, or support their rights. The most cruel tortures were inflicted on the victims who fell into their hands.'—(i. 228.)

We gladly spare ourselves and our readers the revolting details which follow. Now, what parallel has Mr Alison to produce from English history ten years ago? 'The flames of Bristol and Nottingham!' Two isolated riots, *occurring at an interval of several years*—each confined to a single town, and each effectually put down and signally punished by the power of the law. The disturbances of Bristol undoubtedly originated in a political cause; but it is clear that those who were guilty of the chief excesses committed there, acted merely from thirst of plunder. No vindictive feeling was displayed by the mob; no certain plan, no submission to command, was observable in their excesses,—all was indiscriminate thirst for spoil. The fact is, that the civil authorities failed to do their duty in repressing the first symptoms of tumult, and a rabble of thieves and desperadoes seized the opportunity of license and robbery. But in every large community there are numbers of indigent and depraved men, who gladly plunder their neighbours whenever they can do so with impunity. What happened in Bristol would most certainly happen to-morrow in every large city in Europe, if there were reason to suppose that the attempt would not be properly repressed. But how were the British aristocracy peculiarly menaced by a destructive riot in a great commercial town? Had Clumber or Strathfieldsay been burnt to the ground, instead of half-a-dozen streets in Bristol, the case would have been somewhat different. It was not by disturbances at Lyons or Bordeaux that the French noblesse were driven to Coblenz.

We do not know how we can better expose the injustice of Mr Alison's comparison, than by requesting our readers to imagine what their feelings of astonishment would have been, on finding by the papers, the day after the Reform Bill passed the House of Lords, that the Conservative gentry of England had emigrated in a body! Let them imagine an English emigrant peer landing, in 1832, at Calais or New York. He is eagerly pressed to describe the horrors he has witnessed—to communicate the names of the most illustrious victims—to give the particulars of the new British republic. What is his reply? 'England is in an awful state. At Bristol, only two hundred miles from my family seat,

‘ there has been a dangerous riot and great destruction of property. I have been abused in the county newspapers. The *Times* has threatened the aristocracy with brickbats and bludgeons. The Duke of Wellington’s windows have been broken.’ And all this would have been addressed to men who could remember the Reign of Terror, or the forays of Brandt and Butler. The French emigration is a subject for serious blame; but that of the English aristocracy would have defied the gravity of all Europe. We pity and despise the selfish cowardice of a man who flies from a dangerous conflagration, instead of staying to rescue his family and protect his property. But our pity and contempt give way to a sense of the ludicrous, when we hear of his jumping headlong from a garret window, because a few idlers in the street have raised the cry of fire.

Not only, it seems, are the liberal party in England prepared to imitate the crimes of the French Revolution, but they are, or were, on the point of betraying their country to the actual perpetrators of those enormities. After noticing that Napoleon had intended to follow his descent upon Great Britain by a proclamation, promising ‘ all the objects which the revolutionary party in this country have ever had at heart,’ Mr Alison proceeds as follows:—‘ That the French emperor would have been defeated in his attempt, if England had remained true to herself, can be doubtful to no one. . . . But would she have remained true to herself under the temptation to swerve produced by such means? This is a point upon which there is no Briton who would have entertained a doubt, till within these few years; but the manner in which the public mind has reeled from the application of inferior stimulants since 1830, and the strong partiality to French alliance which has grown up with the spread of democratic principles, has now suggested the painful doubt, whether Napoleon did not know us better than we knew ourselves, and whether we could have resisted those methods of seduction which had proved fatal to the patriotism of so many other people. . . . The warmest friend to his country will probably hesitate before he pronounces upon the stability of the English mind under the influence of the prodigious excitement likely to have arisen from the promulgation of the political innovations which Napoleon had prepared for her seduction. If he is wise, he will rejoice that in the providence of God his country was saved the trial, and acknowledge with gratitude the inestimable obligations which she owes to the illustrious men whose valour averted a danger under which her courage, indeed, would never have sunk, but to which her wisdom might possibly have proved unequal.’—(v. 379.)

We have frequently found occasion to differ from Mr Alison, but this is one of the few passages of his work which we have read with serious regret and deep displeasure. Its meaning is simply this—that had Napoleon landed in England, those Englishmen who approved of the reforms he intended to promise, would have deserted their countrymen and joined his army. The calumny is most disingenuously enveloped in the language of pretended self-abasement; but this disguise is too slight to conceal its real nature for a moment. The suspicion expressed by Mr Alison is obviously applicable only to his political opponents. It is therefore of *their* honour alone that he feels all this timid distrust. The temptation of which he expresses so much anxious dread, is one which could not have attracted *him*; the merit which he is so modestly reluctant to vaunt, is one in which *he* could have had no share. This candid renunciation of other people's credit has a twofold advantage; for it combines the grace of humility, with the pleasure of slander.

We might easily show that the political opinions of what Mr Alison is pleased to call the revolutionary party, are perfectly consistent with the national virtues, and even with the wholesome prejudices, of true-born Britons. We might plead, that an honest Englishman may consider the British constitution as the best in the world, without thinking it absolutely perfect; that he may religiously believe himself able to beat three Frenchmen, without longing to be perpetually employed in doing it. We might plead that it is one thing to desire the support of France abroad, and another to invoke her interference at home; one thing to wish for reform by act of parliament, and another to attempt it by high treason. But we prefer giving Mr Alison a practical proof of the dangerous nature of such rash and odious imputations. We gather two maxims from the elaborate and insidious passage we have just quoted. Every man who wishes for any alterations in the British constitution, is willing to become a traitor to obtain them. Every man who wishes for the alliance of a foreign power, is willing to be its slave. Let us see whether these rules will not cut both ways. Mr Alison is a conscientious opponent of Parliamentary reform, and a warm admirer of Russia. Suppose a Russian army to land at Leith, and to proclaim their intention of repealing the Act of 1832. Is Mr Alison conscious of the slightest inward misgiving lest he should be tempted to assist the invaders? Does he not feel the same instinctive scorn of such treachery, as of theft, or forgery, or any other infamous crime? And what would be his sensations if such a suspicion were publicly expressed, and if some Whig friend of his own were to

answer it by moralizing upon the frailty of human resolution, and expressing thankfulness that the test is not likely to be applied? We know and feel that in such a case we could depend upon the loyalty of every respectable Conservative as upon our own; and we are heartily sorry, for Mr Alison's own sake, that he cannot bring himself to feel the same honest confidence in the opposite party.

British loyalty has not, in Mr Alison's opinion, survived British honour and patriotism. 'The more advanced of the present generation,' he says, 'still look back to the manly and disinterested loyalty with which, in their youth, the 4th of June was celebrated by all classes, with a feeling of interest increased by the mournful reflection, that amidst the selfish ambition and democratic infatuation of subsequent times, such feelings, in this country at least, must be numbered among the things that have been.'—(viii. 22.) We certainly shall not attempt to maintain that the same feverish and thoughtless loyalty now prevails in England, which was so common thirty or forty years ago. We acknowledge our belief that the men of the present generation would scarcely abandon an important political measure, because it was understood to be repugnant to the private opinion of a 'good old King,' or even of a good young Queen. But we do sincerely believe that there never was a period when Englishmen felt more solid, sober, trustworthy attachment to the throne than at present. No man having the slightest pretension to political importance, has, of late years, expressed dislike of the monarchical form of government. No man having the least regard for his character, has with impunity offered any public insult to the reigning monarch. We do not say this without warrant, for the attempt has been made. It was thought that a young and inexperienced Princess might possibly be intimidated by slander and invective. We will not remind Mr Alison with what party the design originated; but we are sure that he remembers, with as much pride and pleasure as ourselves, the signal defeat which it encountered from the generous indignation of the British people. We might go much further than this. We might speak of the general respect, we might almost say the general affection, which is felt for the present occupant of the throne. We might refer to the kindly warmth with which the name of that august lady is almost invariably mentioned in society—to the universal grief and alarm excited by the late supposed attempts upon her life—to the personal unpopularity which certain zealous Conservatives have incurred by a disrespectful mention of her name. Was the return of the fourth of June, we would ask, hailed with a more exuberant loyalty than that the expression of which made the

farthest hills and mountains of Scotland echo back its heart-stirring sounds, on the late royal visit to this quarter of the Island?

We have now given a few sketches of Mr Alison's opinions respecting his liberal countrymen. The person holding these sentiments is, we believe, a well-educated gentleman, of respectable talents, of extensive historical information, of a benevolent temper, of strong religious feelings, and of a calm and contemplative turn of mind. With all these means and capacities for forming a candid judgment, he has, as we have seen, made up his mind that in 1803 the reforming party in England were prepared to betray their country to Napoleon—that in 1831 they were bent upon imitating the worst excesses of the French Revolution—and that at the present moment they would rather see the British empire perish than contribute to its aid at the risk of personal inconvenience. And yet with what contempt and indignation would the author of these imputations listen to the ravings of some poor, angry, ignorant, thick-headed Chartist, about the depraved morals and evil designs of the British aristocracy!

Mr Alison has shown much good sense and impartiality in his remarks upon the policy of the principal European powers towards France. He speaks with just admiration of the persevering courage displayed by England and Austria; but he notices, with equally just severity, the procrastination, the timidity, the obstinate prejudices, and the unreflecting ignorance of military affairs, which deprived both nations of so many opportunities of victory, and placed such fearful advantages in the hands of their keen and wary antagonist. The errors of Prussia were of a more serious nature; and Mr Alison has too much sense of moral rectitude not to visit them with deserved indignation. We need not retrace his account of the truly degrading policy in which, for ten years, the rulers of that state persisted. The guilty parties have been punished by the scorn of every European nation, and of none more signally than their own injured countrymen. We think, however, that Mr Alison shows far too much lenity in his remarks, upon the personal share of Frederick-William, in the disgrace of this period. It is clear, from his own statements, that the treaty by which Prussia accepted Hanover from France, as the price of her treason to the cause of Germany, originated in the unprincipled cupidity of the King himself. Such an instance of political depravity deserved far stronger censure than any which Mr Alison has applied to its author.

The unhappy situation of Prussia from 1795 to 1806 is, in our opinion, a most striking example of what Mr Alison denies,—the close connexion between political impotence and social insecurity. The Prussians are generally considered admirable

specimens of the true German character ;—brave, generous, honest to a proverb, and distinguished by a simplicity of manners and a kindness of heart, which has often surprised and delighted the traveller, accustomed to the levity of the French, or the reserve of the English. The ardour which they displayed in the struggles of 1806 and 1813, proves that they had felt their disgrace as became an honourable nation. But their rulers were irresponsible, and they were without a remedy. Had Frederick-William been a limited sovereign, Napoleon would have been crushed for ever in the campaign of 1805. Even as it was, the grief and indignation of the people did, too late, what their legitimate interference would have done speedily and effectually. Frederick-William, though not a man of strong sense, was not destitute of all manly feeling. The united voice of his honest and loyal subjects, and the rash insults of the French emperor, at length roused him to a sense of his duty. An army of 120,000 men, who had lain idle in their barracks while Napoleon was struggling for life and empire in the valley of the Danube, marched to encounter him returning in triumph from Austerlitz. A decisive battle was fought—the Duke of Brunswick completed in the field what the King had begun in the cabinet—and a campaign of six weeks left Prussia the powerless slave of France for as many years. Never, with one terrible exception, did a civilized sovereign meet with a more deserved, a more signal, or a more strictly personal chastisement, than Frederick-William. The overthrow of his brave army, the capture of his capital, the misery of his faithful subjects, the shameful defection of his most trusted lieutenants—all this was but the more ordinary part of his punishment. He was compelled to attend at Tilsit, humiliated by his political ruin, and embarrassed by his intellectual incapacity—the helpless suppliant of the triumphant Napoleon, and the acute and accomplished Alexander. He was compelled to endure in person the insulting neglect, or the supercilious condescension of his ungenerous enemy, and his faithless ally. He saw his high-minded queen throw herself in tears at the feet of the French emperor, and receive an obdurate repulse. He returned home to witness her melancholy and lingering death—the result of humbled pride and hopeless sorrow. He survived these miserable events many years—he lived to see his country free and victorious, and he ended his life in peace and prosperity. His early want of faith had brought upon him such a prompt and overwhelming punishment as few princes have undergone in this life; and the honourable consistency of his subsequent conduct may induce us to hope that so dreadful a lesson was not inflicted in vain.

We are glad to find that Mr Alison's strong monarchical principles have not tempted him to imitate certain historians of that persuasion, in their perverted accounts of the Peninsular war. He relates the many indelible disgraces incurred by the Spanish nation in his usual tone of calm forbearance; but he does not disguise his opinion, that Spain owed to England alone her escape—if escape it can be called, from becoming a French province. We acknowledge, however, that while we admire the steady equanimity of Mr Alison's remarks, we have occasionally, in reading this part of his history, felt more inclination to sympathize with the scornful indignation of Colonel Napier. We cannot help thinking that the resistance of the Spanish nation, fortunate as it was for Europe, was actually more discreditable to themselves than the tamest submission. Submission would at least have enabled us to suppose that the people were not averse to the French yoke. Thus the passive conduct of the Italian states in 1796, did not destroy the military reputation of their citizens. It merely proved that their unhappy political condition had, as might be expected, extinguished public spirit among them; and, therefore, no one was surprised at the bravery afterwards displayed by the Italian corps of Napoleon's army. But the struggles of Spain were as furious as they were feeble; and their rancorous violence displayed the resentment of the nation, without disguising its weakness. They made it clear, in short, that every Spaniard hated the French, but that very few had the courage to meet them in the field. Many of our readers will remember the enthusiastic sympathy which the Peninsular contest excited in England. Orators declaimed upon the impotence of military discipline to withstand righteous enthusiasm; as if military discipline tended to extinguish enthusiasm, or as if enthusiasm were impossible except in a righteous cause. Poets wrote sonnets about the power of armies being a visible thing, while national spirit was invisible and invincible;—as if the spirit which impelled a brave German to march manfully to battle, had been less formidable, or less noble, than that which prompted a Spanish peasant to lurk in some remote *sierra*, shooting stragglers and robbing convoys. But the unsparing exposures of Colonel Napier at once and for ever fixed the opinion of the English nation upon the events of the Spanish war; the substance of his narrative is confirmed, generally speaking, by the more lenient statements of Mr Alison; and their united testimony shows, that the Spanish nation displayed in that struggle a want of common sense, of common honesty, of veracity, of humanity, and of gratitude, scarcely to be paralleled in the history of Bengal or of China.

To some of our readers—though to none, we think, who have given much attention to the subject—these observations may appear unjust and illiberal. Their justice is soon vindicated. Every British writer has allowed that the history of the regular Spanish armies, during the Peninsular war, is a mere tissue of folly, cowardice, and disaster. The shameful names of Somosierra, Rio Seco, Belchite, and Ocana, are sufficient to recall the long succession of their miserable overthrows. Their sole achievement in the field—the surrender of the French army at Baylen—has long been attributed to its true cause—the unaccountable rashness, and more unaccountable despair, of the unhappy Dupont. A few, and but a few, of the sieges sustained by their towns, have done them more honour. The heroic defence of Gerona stands unrivalled, as an example of Spanish skill and valour. That of Zaragossa, considered merely as a military exploit, was one of far inferior brilliancy. The true glory of that celebrated city consists in the invincible patience with which its defenders endured the ravages of pestilence and famine. That is a species of courage in which the Spaniards have never been deficient. Like many unwarlike nations, they are endued by their moral or physical constitution with a passive courage, under suffering, which is rarely displayed by the bold and hardy soldiers of northern Europe. But, putting this out of the question, it was surely no unparalleled achievement for 30,000 regular troops, aided by 15,000 well-armed peasants, to defend an imperfectly fortified town for six weeks against 43,000 Frenchmen.

There are persons who think the desultory exploits of the *Partidas* sufficient to redeem the honour of Spain; and who judge of Castilian skill and prowess, not from the disgraces of Blake and Cuesta, but from the adventurous feats of Mina and the Empecinado. We own that we attach little importance to the isolated and imperfect successes of such leaders as these. We see little glory in firing from a thicket, or rolling rocks down a ravine, especially at a moment when a regular force was vainly summoning recruits for the open defence of Spanish independence. It was not so that the gallant Tyrolese defended their country. They did not desert their Emperor to ensconce themselves in the fastnesses of their mountains. While a hope remained of resisting the enemy in the open field, they were constantly foremost in the ranks of the Austrian army. The partisan warfare of the Spanish peasantry may captivate romantic imaginations; but such are not the means by which a great nation should assert its independence. The details of modern warfare may wear an aspect of formal routine; but it is in the ranks of disciplined armies, with all their unpoetical accompaniments, that the true post of honour and danger

is to be found. A regiment of grenadiers, trudging along the high-road, may be a less picturesque spectacle than a party of brigands wandering among forests and precipices; but if they do their duty, they incur more risk, and perform more service, and therefore deserve more credit. Even were it otherwise, it is not the bravery of a few straggling guerillas that can efface the dishonour incurred by the regular Spanish armies. It would be a poor consolation to a Spaniard, that his country, with a population of twelve millions, and a military force of 70,000 regular soldiers under arms, found her most effectual defenders in a few thousand undisciplined sharpshooters.

The accusation of illiberality we are less careful to answer. We confess that we have no idea of complimenting away the hardly-won glory of our gallant countrymen—of displaying modesty and generosity at the expense of the heroic army which really delivered the Peninsula. Still less are we restrained by any scruple of delicacy from exposing the infamy of that unworthy ally, whose jealousy constantly thwarted our generals; whose cowardice repeatedly betrayed our soldiers; whose imbecility caused our dreadful loss at Albuera; who shamefully deserted our wounded at Talavera; and who actually assassinated our stragglers during the retreat from Burgos. The inflexible justice of Angelo is all that we can grant the Spaniards:—if in the strict letter of history they can find credit or excuse, it is well; if not, let them not seek it from us.

We now come to what we certainly consider the most incomprehensible peculiarity of Mr Alison's work—the strong and apparently causeless interest which he seems to feel in favour of the Russian nation. If this predilection had displayed itself by misrepresentations of the real history of Russia—by the suppression, or the sophistical palliation, of her numerous political crimes—it would have called for a tone of remonstrance very different from any which Mr Alison's work has given us occasion to employ. But we have been able to detect no such attempt. Judging solely from the account before us, we should unhesitatingly conclude that the national character of the Russians is very unamiable; that their domestic government is very corrupt; and that their foreign policy is very unprincipled. How far a hostile historian might have aggravated the picture, we shall not venture to pronounce; but certain we are that the ordinary prejudices against Russia require no stronger confirmation than the statements of Mr Alison. If, after fairly laying the case before his readers, the historian chooses to retain his own prejudices in defiance of his own facts and arguments, we cannot see that we are called upon to interfere. The truth, we suppose, is, that the formidable power and deep policy of

Russia have excited in Mr Alison's mind that species of capricious *quasi*-admiration, which good and clever men sometimes feel for certain worthless characters, so long as they are not seriously called upon to form any practical judgment respecting them. The pleasure with which the characters alluded to are contemplated, proceeds entirely from the taste and imagination; and rather resembles our admiration of a striking work of art than our love or esteem for a human being. If this is all that Mr Alison feels toward Russia, we have little more to say. The prepossession, however, is not such as we should have expected to remark in a British historian of the nineteenth century, nor is its display always regulated by the best taste. Still it may amount to no more than this—that while Mr Alison acknowledges the numerous faults of the Russian character, he is involuntarily dazzled and attracted by some of its peculiarities. We do not, by any means, sympathize with this feeling; but so long as it does not betray its entertainer into any serious defence of Russian policy, we are content to look upon it as a harmless though somewhat unpleasing caprice.

The most interesting subject of Mr Alison's history, next to the great Revolution which forms the groundwork of the whole, is undoubtedly the character of the extraordinary man who made that Revolution the instrument of his power. We scarcely know any stronger illustration of the genius and influence of Napoleon Bonaparte, than the simple fact, that for twenty years his life and the history of Europe are convertible terms. During the whole of that time, the annals of the smallest European state would be absolutely unintelligible without a clear view of the policy and character of the French emperor; and, on the other hand, every change of rulers in the pettiest principality—every intrigue at Petersburg or Naples—every motion in the British Parliament—was of immediate and vital concern to Napoleon. This is more than can be said of any other conqueror or statesman in modern times. The direct influence of Louis, Frederick, and Catharine, was comparatively limited. A Russian or a Turk cared little for the invasion of Holland or the Spanish succession; and an Italian was comparatively indifferent to the conquest of Silesia or the division of Poland. But no such supineness prevailed during the wars of the French empire. Wherever the great conqueror was engaged, the breathless attention of all Europe was fixed. Every citizen of every state felt his hopes or his fortunes raised or depressed by the event. The death of an English minister was hastened by the battle of Marengo; the treaty of Tilsit was felt as an object of interest in the deserts of Central Asia; the battle of Leipzig roused or paralysed every European from Cadiz to the North Cape. The

French empire, in a word, resembled the talismanic globe of the sorcerers in *Thalaba*, the slightest touch upon which caused the whole universe to tremble.

There are few subjects upon which public opinion has differed more widely than upon the moral character of Napoleon. Thirty years ago, most Englishmen believed him to be one of those wretched monomaniacs who have seemed to feel a pleasurable excitement in tormenting their fellow-creatures. Even now, he is generally considered as a man naturally cold and unfeeling, and hardened by habit into a total indifference to human suffering. But we do not think that either opinion will satisfy any person who impartially examines the present account of his actions and policy.

Mr Alison has supplied us with a new and very plausible palliation of Napoleon's ambition. He repeatedly and very reasonably insists on the precarious foundation of the French empire, and on the irresistible necessity which compelled its chief at once to dazzle and unite his subjects, by engaging them in successful war. If, indeed, this excuse stood alone, we should think comparatively little of its force. Necessity is the tyrant's plea. No spectacle can be more painfully interesting than that of a character naturally great and noble, whose moral sense has been blunted by the influence of early habit, and the encouragement of vulgar applause. But we feel no such sympathy for the man who knowingly and wilfully prefers his interest to his duty. Many a mind, which would have defied both intimidation and seduction, has been warped and weakened by the imperceptible force of custom; but when the strong temptation is combined with the enervating influence, we may well cease to wonder at its victory. Napoleon, bred, and almost born, a soldier and a revolutionist, preferred unjust war to political extinction. How many legitimate sovereigns have preferred it to undisturbed security!

We have been much gratified by the calm and impartial spirit in which Mr Alison discusses the general character of this extraordinary man. Indeed, we feel bound to remark, that throughout the whole of the present work, we do not recollect a single case in which the political prejudices of the author, uncharitable as they sometimes appear, have been able to hurry his calm and patient mind into a harsh or hasty condemnation of individuals. His censure of Napoleon's ambition is, as we have seen, lenient almost to excess. Of his other misdeeds, real and imputed, he speaks with equal, though we trust better merited, forbearance. He is willing to acquit the First Consul of the mysterious deaths of Wright and Pichegru, which he ascribes to the apprehensive cruelty of the French police—men too well known to have been familiar with every form of violence and treachery. His narra-

tive of the lamented fate of the Duc d'Enghien does the highest credit both to his humanity and his self-command. Nothing can be more feelingly expressed than his commiseration of the brave and innocent sufferer; but he has not permitted it to hurry him into rash or unthinking denunciations against the guilty party. He represents the crime of Napoleon in its true light—not as an act of wanton murder, but as the blind vengeance of a violent man, justly alarmed and enraged by the atrocious attempts of the French Royalists against his life. But there is one scene in Napoleon's career which no sophistry can palliate—which no imagination can elevate—which his most devoted partizans can but endeavour to forget. We allude to the treacherous detention of the English families travelling in France in 1801. We do not say that none of Napoleon's acts were more criminal; but we think that none were so inconsistent with the character of a great man. His other crimes, heavy as they may be, were at least the crimes of a conqueror and a statesman. They were crimes such as Attila or Machiavel might have committed or approved—crimes of passion, or of deep and subtle policy. The massacre of Jaffa, and the invasion of Spain might have been forgotten by a generation which had witnessed the atrocities of Ismail and Warsaw—which had pardoned Frederick-William for his sordid occupation of Hanover—and Alexander for the vile treachery which wrested Finland from his own brave and faithful ally. The ambition which provokes unjust war—the passions which prompt a violent and bloody revenge—even the craft which suggests deep-laid schemes of political treachery—have but too often been found consistent with many brilliant and useful virtues. But the measure of which we speak displayed the spirit of a Francis or a Ferdinand—the spirit which has peopled Siberia with Polish nobles, and crowded the dungeons of Austria with Italian patriots. It displayed the cold unrelenting spite of a legitimate despot, inured from childhood to the heartless policy of what is called a *paternal* government. We are not partial to a practice in which Mr Alison frequently indulges—that of attempting to trace the immediate interference of Providence in every remarkable coincidence of human affairs; but we cannot avoid being struck by a melancholy resemblance between the captivity in which Napoleon ended his life, and the lingering torments which he had wantonly inflicted on ten thousand of his harmless fellow-creatures.

We are pleased to find in Mr Alison a zealous, though discriminating admirer of the military genius of Napoleon. The contrary judgment has lately been proclaimed by a few military critics, and supported with a vehement and disdainful asperity, which strikes us, to say the least, as singularly ungraceful. This is

perhaps most unsparingly and offensively exemplified in a series of essays which appeared some years since in a professional Journal, and which, if we are rightly informed, excited considerable notice among military men. They are understood to be the production of an officer in the British army, well known for his speculations in the theory of war, and possessing, we believe, much experience in actual service. They are full of ingenious reasoning, of contemptuous invective, and of ironical derision. Now we have not the slightest wish to set up authority against argument. We shall not turn upon this critic and say, 'The oldest and bravest generals in Europe still tremble at the memory of the man whom you undertake to prove a mere fortunate fool:—is it likely that your judgment should be more correct than theirs?' But we think that the opposition of authority is a good reason, not for suppressing a theory, but for delivering it in modest and tolerant language. We know that argument is a weapon which the weakest may successfully wield, and which the strongest cannot resist. As the Chevalier Bayard complained of the arquebuse, in the hands of a child it may strike down the most valiant knight on earth. We therefore think it no presumption in the youngest ensign in the army to plead against Napoleon's claims to military glory. Let him fairly state his opinion, and fairly endeavour to establish it. The greater the impostor, the more dazzling the illusion—the higher will be our obligation to the bold and keen-sighted advocate who brings him to justice. We do not, therefore, complain of the military critics in question for attempting to place Napoleon's military reputation a step below that of Cope or Mack. But we protest against the advocate's usurping the functions of the judge. We protest against his assuming that he has triumphed—against his referring to the question as one irrevocably settled in his favour—against his pouring upon the accused the contempt and ridicule to which posterity alone can fitly sentence him. This is worse than mere disrespect to the memory of a celebrated man; it is arrogant and ridiculous self-flattery. A century and a half ago Louis XIV. acquired a high reputation as a general. Posterity has weighed and found him wanting. But suppose that a young officer of that day had written of Louis as the critics of whom we speak write of Napoleon. We should have said that he might be a clever, clear-headed man; but that, if he chose to deliver a paradox in the tone of an oracle, it was his own fault that nobody listened to him. But this is the most favourable point of view. What do we say of the detractors whom posterity has pronounced in the wrong? What do we say of the slanderers of Marlborough and of Moore? The destruction of a brilliant but unmerited reputa-

tion is the most useful, the most difficult, the most invidious, and therefore, perhaps, the noblest task of an honest investigator of historic truth. But it requires candour and delicacy no less than boldness and acumen. When it is attempted from an obvious sense of duty, we admire the unflinching sincerity of the assailant, even though we condemn his severity. But when he undertakes it in the exultation of superior discernment—when he performs it with the insolence of personal antipathy—his victory will be unhonoured and unsympathized with, and his defeat will be embittered by universal scorn and indignation.

We do not possess the technical knowledge necessary to dissect the criticisms to which we have alluded. We can only judge as unlearned mortals, let scientific tacticians say what they will, always must judge—by general results. We can only consider what Napoleon did, and whether, according to the ordinary doctrine of chances, it is conceivable that he could have done so much had he been a man of no extraordinary powers. Napoleon, then, commanded in person at fourteen of the greatest pitched battles which history has recorded. Five times—at Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Wagram—he crushed the opposing army at a blow; finished the war, in his own emphatic phrase, by a *coup-de-foudre*; and laid the vanquished power humbled and hopeless at his feet. Five times—at Borodino, Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, and Ligny—he was also decidedly victorious, though with less overwhelming effect. At Eylau the victory was left undecided. At Leipsic, the French were defeated, as is well known, by a force which outnumbered their own as five to three. At Waterloo, it is generally acknowledged that the overthrow of Napoleon was owing, not to any deficiency in skill on his part, but to the invincible obstinacy of the British infantry, who are admitted, even by the French accounts, to have displayed a passive courage, of which the most experienced warrior might be excused for thinking human nature incapable. At Aspern alone, to judge from the able account of Mr Alison, does the partial defeat of the French emperor appear to have been owing to any faulty arrangement of his own. Five of his ten actions were gained over equal or superior forces; and among the generals defeated by him, we find the distinguished names of Wurmser, Melas, Benningsen, Blucher, and above all, the Archduke Charles. We might produce still stronger testimonies. We might relate the glorious successes of his first Italian campaign, in which four powerful armies were successively overthrown by a force comprising, from first to last, but 60,000 men. We might notice his romantic achievements in Egypt and Syria, against a new and harassing system of hostility. We might enlarge on the most wonderful of all his exploits—the pro-

tracted struggle which he maintained in the heart of France, with a remnant of only 50,000 men, against the quadruply superior numbers of the Allies. But all this is unnecessary. If the successes to which we have alluded are insufficient to prove that Napoleon was a general of the first order, the reputation of no soldier who ever existed can be considered as established. If such numerous and extraordinary examples are insufficient to establish a rule, then there is no such thing as reasoning by induction. It is in vain to endeavour to explain away such a succession of proofs. Technical cavils can no more prove that Napoleon was a conqueror by chance, than the two sage Sergeants mentioned by Pope could persuade the public that Lord Mansfield was a mere wit. The common sense of mankind cannot be permanently silenced by scientific jargon. Plain men, though neither lawyers nor mathematicians, see no presumption in pronouncing Alfred a great legislator, or Newton a great astronomer. It is equally in vain to attempt to neutralize the proofs of Napoleon's superiority, by balancing them with occasional examples of rash presumption; or, even did such exist, of unaccountable infatuation. No number of failures can destroy the conclusion arising from such repeated and complete victories. The instances in which fools have blundered into brilliant success are rare; but the instances in which men of genius have been betrayed into gross errors are innumerable. And, therefore, where the same man has brilliantly succeeded and lamentably failed, it is but fair to conclude, that the success is the rule, and the failure the exception. Every man constantly forms his opinions respecting the affairs of real life upon this theory. In literature, in science, in the fine arts, no man's miscarriages are allowed to diminish the credit of his successes. Nobody denies that Dryden was a true poet because he wrote *Maximin*; for it was more likely that a true poet should write *Maximin* than that a dunce should write *Ab-salom and Achitophel*. Nobody denies that Bacon was a true philosopher because he believed in alchemy; for it was more likely that a true philosopher should believe in alchemy, than that an empiric should compose the *Novum Organum*. No classical scholar denies the merit of Bentley's edition of Horace, because he failed in his edition of Milton. No man of taste refuses to enjoy the wit and humour of Falstaff, because the same author imagined the pedantic quibbles of Biron.

We shall not attempt to sketch the personal character of Napoleon. Yet it is a subject upon which, could we hope to do it justice, the ample materials supplied by the present history might well tempt us to linger. No laboured eulogium could impress us with so much admiration for his surpassing genius, as the

simple details collected by Mr Alison. We never before so clearly appreciated the mighty powers of Napoleon—his boundless fertility of resource—his calm serenity in the most desperate emergencies—his utter ignorance of personal fear—his piercing political foresight—the vast fund of miscellaneous knowledge collected by the almost involuntary operation of his perspicacious and tenacious intellect—the rapid and vigorous reasoning faculties, which applied themselves, with the ease and precision of some exquisite machine, to every subject alike which for an instant attracted his attention.

In his seventy-second chapter, Mr Alison has collected a variety of highly interesting details, respecting the private manners and habits of Napoleon. It is scarcely possible to describe the impression which its perusal leaves on the mind. The strange contrast of warm affection and vindictive hatred, of fiery impetuosity and methodical precision, of royal luxury and indefatigable self-denial, of fascinating courtesy and despotic harshness—the indomitable pride, the vehement eloquence, the magnanimous power of self-command, the fearful bursts of passion—all combine to produce an effect by which the dullest imagination must be enchanted, but which the most versatile genius might fail in depicting. The interest of the portrait is augmented by those minute personal peculiarities on which the romantic devotion of Napoleon's followers has so often dwelt—by the classical features, the piercing glance, the manners, now stern, abrupt, and imperious, now full of princely grace—even by the small plain hat, and the *redingote grise*, which have supplanted the white plume of Henri Quatre in French song and romance. We almost sympathize with the attachment of his soldiers, wild and idolatrous as it was, when we remember Mr Alison's simple but imposing narrative of the events of the empire—of the congress of Tilsit, the farewell of Fontainebleau, and the unparalleled—the marvellous march to Paris. It is impossible, in reading the striking details which record the personal demeanour of Napoleon during such scenes as these, not to recall the noble lines in which Southey has described Kehama:—

“Pride could not quit his eye,
Nor that remorseless nature from his front
Depart; yet whoso had beheld him then
Had felt some admiration mix'd with dread,
And might have said
That sure he seem'd to be the king of men;
Less than the greatest, that he could not be,
Who carried in his port such might and majesty.”

ART. II.—*The Life of Augustus Keppel, Admiral of the White, and First Lord of the Admiralty in 1782-3.* By the Hon. and Rev. THOMAS KEPPEL. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1842.

IT is not often that naval subjects are brought under our consideration;—not that we are not fully impressed with the paramount importance of all that relates to this mighty arm of our power, essential, indeed, for the safety and protection of every part of the United Kingdom at home, and of its numerous dependencies abroad, and equally so for that of our valuable and extensive commerce and mercantile shipping. In fact, it so happens that, ‘during the piping times of peace,’ naval events are seldom of that stirring character as to cause much excitement in the public mind; but the biography of such of our brave naval defenders, who may have had the enviable good fortune of signalizing themselves in fight with the enemy, and of being placed in situations of great trust and responsibility, must always command a prominent place in the annals of the British empire.

Already, the lives of Anson, Howe, St Vincent, Nelson, Rodney, and Saumarez are before the public; and the wonder is, that a Memoir of Keppel, the friend and associate of the first three of these, and we may also add, of Hawke, Saunders, and Duncan, should have been so long delayed. The task, however, though late, is now accomplished, and by one who has proved himself well qualified to do justice to the exploits, the character, and the memory of a meritorious and gallant naval officer;—by one who, owing to his first professional choice, is not altogether unacquainted with the naval service; who is descended from the same noble family; and who had access to private as well as official documents, of which he has made a copious and judicious use. In them we find the mental qualities and disposition of Admiral Lord Keppel amply developed—replete with every amiable feature—kind, benevolent, and sincere. He was a man liberal in his political opinions, which were those of his family and most intimate friends—Rockingham, Shelburne, Richmond, Burke, Fox, and many others of the Whig party. And if he was not so fortunate, in his long and successful service of more than forty years, almost wholly spent at sea, as to obtain, as commander-in-chief, any great and decisive success against the enemy, such as is usually designated by the name of ‘victory,’ yet he had his full share in the victories of Hawke, Anson, and Pococke; and achieved signal success in numerous enterprizes entrusted to his charge. Equally successful was he in conciliating the good opinion

and obtaining the applause of the public, and of his highly distinguished friends;—gaining a moral triumph over those few of his enemies who might be envious of his well-acquired reputation.

The Honourable Augustus Keppel was the second son of the second Lord Albemarle, by Lady Anne Lennox, daughter of Charles first Duke of Richmond, and was born the 25th April 1725. He entered the navy at the early age of ten years, having quitted Westminster school for the cockpit of the Oxford frigate, passed his first two years on the coast of Guinea, and three in the Mediterranean, in the Gloucester. On his return in July 1740, he was appointed to the Centurion, under the command of Commodore Anson, destined for a voyage round the world. 'He thus,' says his biographer, 'shared in the hardships and dangers of that celebrated voyage, which for its inauspicious commencement, its strange and protracted disasters, and its final success, is, perhaps, without a parallel in the naval annals of any country.' In the course of this voyage he contracted a steady friendship with that distinguished band of brothers—Anson, Saunders, Brett, Saumarez, Denis, Byron, Parker, and Campbell—which terminated only with their several lives.

The incidents of this voyage are so well known that we pass over our author's summary, (of about sixty pages,) interspersed with a few sentences from Keppel's own journal—noticing only one incident which, with becoming modesty, is omitted in that journal, but mentioned in 'Anson's Voyage,' and which occurred at the attack of Payta: it is, that 'one side of the peak of Keppel's jockey cap was shaved off, close to his temple, by a ball.' After the action with the Spanish galleon, Anson was so pleased with the conduct of Keppel, that he immediately gave him a lieutenant's commission. On the arrival of the Centurion at Portsmouth, in June 1744, and as soon as paid off, Keppel immediately applied for employment, and was ordered to join the Dreadnought, commanded by the Hon. Edward Boscawen,—'Old Dreadnought,' as the sailors used to call him—'the most obstinate,' as Walpole says, 'of an obstinate family.' But Pitt, who is higher authority than Walpole, said of him, 'When I apply to other officers respecting any expedition I may chance to project, they always raise difficulties—Boscawen always finds expedients.' From this ship, in November of the same year, he was promoted to the rank of commander, and appointed to the Wolf sloop; and, in the following December, was advanced to that of captain, and transferred to the Greyhound frigate. Thus, in ten years from his entering the service, that is, at the age of twenty, he obtained what was then called *post*

rank. Soon after he was appointed to the *Sapphire*, a forty gun frigate.

From this time he was actively employed in cruising and making prizes, till the *Sapphire* required refitting; when, on application by letter to the Duke of Bedford, then First Lord of the Admiralty, 'that he might not lie idle while the *Sapphire* is laid up; and stating that his Grace must be sensible how ill it appears for young officers to remain on shore upon their pleasure, when they might be doing, perhaps, a service to their country,' he was appointed to the *Maidstone*, a ship of fifty guns, in the squadron under Admiral Warren, who, in writing to Anson, says, 'I think Keppel a charming little man.' In his eagerness and anxiety to cut off a large vessel running for Belleisle, and being told by an old pilot that it could be done very easily, his own ship struck upon the rocks of the *Pelliers*, two minutes after the man in the chains called out five fathoms;—so intent was he upon the chase, and 'so uneasy,' he says, 'lest people should have thought it was the castle (which had fired upon him) he stood in fear of.' The French behaved remarkably well; they sent him and his crew to Nantz, and at the expiration of five weeks he returned to England on his parole. In a letter to his friend Saumarez, he says, 'I had my fortune before my eyes, but eagerness and a bad pilot put an end to it.' A few days after his acquittal by court-martial, he was appointed to a new seventy-four gun ship, the *Anson*, destined to form one of the squadron under Sir Peter Warren. In writing to Lord Anson, from Lisbon, he says, 'I find we have lost the Duke of Bedford, who now is Secretary of State. I wish our new head may be as zealous, and support us as his Grace has done. I have not the honour of knowing my Lord Sandwich so well as the Duke of Bedford, but whilst I have the happiness to behave myself deserving your Lordship's protection, I want no other.'

From the *Anson*, Keppel and all his officers were turned over to his old ship, the *Centurion*, which, after a thorough repair, was reduced from a sixty to a fifty gun ship. Keppel was highly gratified by this appointment, made by the duke's successor, Lord Sandwich. The *Centurion* had not only become celebrated from her voyage round the world, but was also considered a 'crack man-of-war.' 'Among the midshipmen who now joined the *Centurion*, was Adam Duncan, so distinguished in after times as the gallant Lord and Admiral of that name. Duncan may be truly said to have received his professional education in Keppel's school, having served under him in the several ranks of midshipman; third, second, and first lieutenant; flag and post captain;—indeed, with the exception of a

‘short time with Captain Barrington, he had no other commander ‘during the Seven Years’ War.’

It may be noticed that Duncan was destined, in after life, to sit as one of the judges at the trial of his early friend. The Centurion having put into Plymouth, the commodore, on a visit to his friend Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, first became acquainted with Mr (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, and was so much pleased with the young artist, that he offered him a passage in the Centurion on the interesting voyage she was then on her way to perform. The beautiful portrait of Keppel which he afterwards painted, and from which an engraving stands as frontispiece to this work, is supposed to have been among the first to enhance the reputation of Reynolds.

During the fourteen years that had now expired since Keppel left Westminster school, his life had almost wholly been spent in active employment at sea, capturing many of the enemy’s armed ships and merchantmen. Now, however, he received a notification that he was to be entrusted with a diplomatic mission to the States of Barbary, and to be appointed to the chief command in the Mediterranean, with the rank of commodore. In writing to his friend Anson, then one of the Lords of the Admiralty, he says, ‘I have wrote to my Lord Sandwich by this ‘opportunity, whom, with your Lordship, I am greatly obliged ‘to, for your entrusting me with this command.’

One main object of it was to obtain from the Dey of Algiers satisfaction for the capture of a government packet, the treasure and effects on board which, being of very considerable value, were confiscated by the Dey. His instructions were to obtain restitution, and, if this barbarian should be refractory, to use menaces to intimidate him. On the arrival of the Centurion in the bay with other six ships of war, a salute of twenty guns was fired from the batteries, in returning which one of the Centurion’s guns, by the carelessness of the gunner, was shotted, which the Dey persisted was done purposely; and this made him not only ‘refractory,’ but very saucy. Mr Keppel gives the following anecdote from Northcote’s ‘Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds,’ which is also mentioned in other publications of the day; but as the commodore does not notice it in his journal, his biographer considers it as dubious. ‘The Dey, surprised at the boldness ‘of Keppel’s remonstrances, and despising his apparent youth, ‘he being then only four-and-twenty, exclaimed, that he wondered ‘at the insolence of the King of Great Britain in sending him ‘an insignificant, beardless boy!’ On this the spirited commodore replied, ‘Had my master supposed that wisdom was measured by the length of the beard, he would have sent your

‘Deyship a he-goat.’ From the character of Keppel we think the anecdote probable enough, and that Northcote may have received it from Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The negotiation for restitution of property ended by a declaration from the Dey, that the distribution of it having been made, he had not the power of restoring it; and that ‘it was as-much ‘as his head was worth to restore the effects of the Prince Frederick.’ It would seem he was not unaware of the position he stood in, with regard to his subjects; for two years after this he was murdered in his own palace. Before this event, the commodore had succeeded in concluding a treaty, in which the Dey agrees to treat packets as ships of war; that merchant ships shall not be subject to ill treatment by the Algerine cruisers, on pain of the severest punishment, &c. After this, Keppel succeeded in effecting treaties with Tripoli and Tunis, and obtaining the release of captives; and, on his return to England, the Admiralty expressed satisfaction with his proceedings in these as well as on every other occasion, during his command in the Mediterranean. We here add a curious anecdote which is contained in the commodore’s own journal:—

‘Was informed by Mr Owen that yesterday, John Dyer (who entered at Mahon) deserted from the long boat, and fled for sanctuary to a Marabut, and turned Moor. By further information, found that he had five years ago turned Moor, and had a wife and family here. On which I sent to the Dey to demand he might be sent on board the Centurion, to receive the punishment he had incurred as a deserter, which was death. In answer to which, the Dey said, “It was contrary to his laws to give up people who turned Moors; but as he had turned backwards and forwards so often, he was neither fish nor flesh, and fit for neither of us; therefore, as the punishment on our side was death, and that of a renegado flying from his country was death likewise, he, to split the difference, would take off his head, if I had no objection;” to which I assented.

In 1754, hostilities having broken out between the English and French authorities in North America, Keppel was ordered to hoist a broad pendant in the Centurion, and to proceed with the Norwich to take the command of all the ships on the North American station, and to co-operate with General Braddock. He left England on the 23d December; and Mr Keppel notices the circumstance of the unexpected death of his father, the Earl of Albemarle, at Paris, on the day of his sailing, having been suddenly seized with palsy and apoplexy, which carried him off in the course of a few hours. Our author here introduces Walpole’s story of Lady Albemarle’s dream, who being in London, and utterly unconscious of what had happened, said to Lord Bury, ‘Your father is dead. I dreamed last night that

‘ he was dead, and came to take leave of me,’—and she immediately swooned.

The elevation of Lord Bury to the peerage left the borough of Chichester vacant, to which the commander was shortly afterwards returned without opposition. We need not here dwell on the calamitous history of the European warfare among the conflicting colonies of North America, in which the only concern that Keppel had, was the very useful and active assistance he afforded to General Braddock, in supplying both men and stores, during the short time he remained on that station—little more than six months; for in July 1755 he received a letter from the Admiralty, apprizing him, that in consequence of the French having fitted out a powerful fleet at Brest, Admiral Boscawen had been dispatched with eleven sail of the line to take the chief command on the American coast; that in consequence his wearing a broad pendant, with a captain under him, could no longer be continued, since several ships of the new squadron were commanded by captains senior to himself.

As soon, therefore, as Keppel had given the necessary orders for his little squadron to join Admiral Boscawen, he shifted his broad pendant on board the *Seahorse*, commanded by Captain Palliser. ‘ It was on board this ship,’ observes his biographer, ‘ that that friendship commenced between Keppel and the captain of the *Seahorse*, which was destined to be marred in so extraordinary a manner in after years.’ The commodore arrived in England on the 22d of August, and four days afterwards was directed to proceed to Chatham to commission the *Swiftsure*, of seventy guns. In January following he was removed to the *Torbay*, of seventy-four guns. ‘ In this ship,’ says our author, ‘ of which he had the command for upwards of five years, he was destined to have an extraordinary degree of good fortune.’

This share of ‘ good fortune’ did not, however, immediately follow. The French publicly announced their intention not only to invade the Electorate of Hanover, but also Great Britain itself: the very act of making such a declaration was intended, obviously enough, to divert our government from their real design, which was *Minorca*, and it succeeded; for so great was the alarm of invasion at home, that, by proclamation, all horses and other beasts of burden were ordered to be driven at least twenty miles from the place where such attempt should be made. In the mean time, the ministers had received intelligence that a large armament was fitting out at *Toulon*, and that its destination was *Minorca*. After a lapse of several weeks, a fleet was ordered to be fitted out at *Portsmouth*, the command of which was given to the ill-fated Admiral *Byng*. Ten ships only were

assigned to him, and these required upwards of seven hundred men to be complete. He was directed on no account to meddle with the Torbay, Essex, or Nassau, which he was told were required for most pressing service. A few days after, he was ordered to dispatch Captain Keppel to sea with the Torbay, Essex, Iris, Antelope, and Gibraltar, and to complete them out of the Nassau. This 'most pressing service,' which occupied eight days in the execution, and might have been equally well performed by four frigates, was nothing more than to watch the motions of four French frigates, which had been chased into Cherbourg on the 9th April: Keppel returned to Spithead three days after Byng had sailed.

He was again dispatched on the 16th with a small squadron, under Admiral Holborne, to cruize off Brest, which was afterwards increased to eighteen sail of the line, and the command given to Sir Edward Hawke. Keppel, however, had not the good fortune of being permanently attached to it; the Torbay, having sustained some damage, was obliged to return to port for repairs. When ready for sea he rejoined the fleet; but an epidemic breaking out in his ship, obliged him again to return to Portsmouth. On the 18th September he was ordered to take the Rochester and Harwich under his command, and to cruize in the latitude of Cape Finisterre. After a month's unsuccessful cruize, he ordered one of his ships to Lisbon, the other to Cadiz. Two days after this he captured the Diligent, a French snow; and shortly after, fell in with and captured a large French store-ship from Quebec with English prisoners. Scarcely had he taken possession of this prize when he recaptured an English snow that had fallen into the hands of a French privateer. Just then he discovered a French frigate, to which he gave chase, and kept up a brisk cannonade during the night. At daylight he came up with her, and, pouring in a whole broadside, compelled her to strike. She proved to be the *Chariot Royale*, of thirty-six guns. Several of her men were killed and wounded. On the 9th December the commodore returned with his prizes to England. 'A duty,' says his biographer, 'now devolved upon Keppel, the painful nature of which was fully shown by his subsequent conduct. Admiral Byng had failed in his attempt to relieve Minorca, and had been superseded in his command. He was now brought a prisoner to Portsmouth to take his trial; Keppel was the junior member of that tribunal by whose unanimous verdict he was doomed to die.'—(Vol. i. pp. 200-30.)

The trial of Byng has been so much canvassed, not only at the time, but in subsequent publications, that nothing new is likely at this day to be elicited; but Mr Keppel could not with

propriety have omitted its introduction into his pages; seeing the very prominent and painful part, and we may add, the laudable and generous part, which his namesake, the young captain, took to save the life of the unfortunate admiral. Mr Keppel, however, says—

‘ After a lapse of eighty-five years, public opinion has hardly yet decided upon the case of Byng. Sir John Barrow, a writer who, from his office, is necessarily conversant with such subjects, speaks somewhat slightly of the conduct of that Admiral; and Mr Croker, another high authority in naval matters, goes so far as to say that Byng deserved his fate. The writer of this memoir has arrived at a different conclusion. He thinks that, in Clerk’s “Naval Tactics,” the failure of the action with *Galissonière* is satisfactorily shown to be attributable to the “Fighting Instructions” then in force, and in no degree to the commander in that disastrous engagement.’

In adverting to the ‘Life of Anson,’ it appears to us that there is a mistake in this passage. We find nothing in Sir John Barrow’s work that can be construed as speaking *slightly* of Byng. On the contrary, he says, ‘It showed no want of nerve in Byng ‘by detaching one of his ships from the line, because he had one ‘more in number than the enemy; for though the old *Fighting Instructions* very cavalierly enjoin this, yet it was always on the ‘understanding that the combatants should be pretty nearly ship ‘for ship, or on an equality of strength, which was not the case ‘here;’ and he continues, ‘it is clear that Byng, amidst that ‘disaster which paralyzed his own ship and the efforts of three ‘others for a time, had no other means of making his communications than by calling in and dispatching a frigate with verbal orders, which, with the impediment of the flag-ship continuing to go down, caused the delay, and thereby prevented ‘him from doing his utmost.’* If Mr Croker has said, that Byng ‘deserved his fate,’ Sir John gives a very different opinion. ‘Thus,’ he says, ‘died a martyr to public clamour, excited by a timid ministry, and to one false step taken by the ‘party who professed to be, and actually meant to be, friendly to ‘him;—whose death can be considered in no other light than as a ‘judicial murder.’ It certainly was not, as some have called it, a political murder. His death was in no wise owing to party feeling in either House of Parliament, or in the Judges, or in the King. It rested solely on the Board of Admiralty, who, unfortunately, instead of carrying up the recommendation of the court-martial for mercy to the King, as is the usual course, and always

* Barrow’s *Life of Anson.*

succeeds, they requested his Majesty would take the opinion of the twelve Judges as to the *legality* of the sentence, which was never called in question. Their answer was in the affirmative; and this prevented any further appeal to the Throne from the Admiralty, and poor Byng's fate was from that moment sealed.

But we must briefly advert to the generous and humane part which Keppel took in the course of this unfortunate business. Ever since the signing of the sentence he felt uneasy in his conscience, and with two or three others expressed themselves exceedingly desirous to be absolved from their oaths. This was mentioned in the House of Commons, and long debates ensued as to the necessity of a dispensing bill. Some were of opinion that the members could speak out without a bill. Keppel professed his doubts whether he could do so without a dispensing act. Pitt said he honoured Mr Keppel for his doubt. A council was held on Mr Keppel's demand, and the sentence was respited for a fortnight by his Majesty, who had been informed that a member had declared in his place he had something of weight to say. Fox, though friendly to Keppel, affected surprise that the King should have been informed of what had passed in parliament, and asked for precedents. Pitt replied with great indignation, 'that the time had been too pressing to consult precedents; he had not thought that the life of a man was to be trifled with while clerks were searching records.'

Fox then asked Keppel, which of his associates had empowered him to make the demand? He named Holmes, Norris, Geary, and Moore. The first and third disavowed having sanctioned the use of their names; Norris and Moore avowed their feelings to be in unison with those of Keppel, and that he was authorized to make use of their names; and it seemed to be the general opinion that the other two had done the same. Walpole says Sir R. Lyttelton told him, that he had represented to Geary the injustice and dishonourableness of retracting what he had authorized Keppel to say, when his reply was—'*It will hurt my pre-ferment to tell.*' Keppel said, he understood, and did believe, all four had commissioned him to move the House in their joint names. Fox assured Keppel that his character was not affected by what Holmes and Geary had said. An angry debate followed, in which many absurd and indecent reflections were made on the authors of the proposed dispensing bill; in the course of it Pitt said emphatically—'May I fall when I refuse pity to such a suit as Mr Keppel's, justifying a man who lies in captivity and the shadow of death. I thank God I feel something more than popularity—I feel justice!' The bill passed the Commons by 153 to 22. It went to the Lords, who rejected it;

with expressions of contempt and indignation. Thus these proceedings, well-intentioned as they were, together with the opinions of the Judges of the legality of the sentence, (which had never been doubted except by the Admiralty,) released the prisoner from further suspense, and his execution speedily followed.

A few weeks after the trial, Keppel resumed the command of the *Torbay*; and on the 24th June sailed in company with the Channel fleet, under the command of Admiral Boscawen; was detached on a cruize, captured a rich prize laden with stores and provisions for Louisbourg; and, on rejoining the fleet, was sent home with despatches. Having received a complete refit, the *Torbay* was ordered to join the expedition under Sir Edward Hawke, consisting of eighteen sail of the line, besides frigates and fire-ships, forty-four transports, with ten complete regiments, under the command of Sir John Mordaunt. The object was to attempt, as far as practicable, a descent on the French coast at or near Rochefort. Keppel was in the division under Rear-Admiral Knowles,—‘a vain man,’ says Walpole, ‘of more parade than bravery.’ The following anecdote, which is authenticated by the Admiral himself, (having published it in defence of his conduct,) affords a corroboration of Walpole’s character of him. On clearing for action, Keppel discovered a French seventy-four gun ship standing towards the fleet, and instantly hailed Admiral Knowles to give him the information, but of which he took no notice. His defence was, ‘that he looked on a ship cleared for action, and ready for battle, as a sight so entertaining, that he had desired Major-General Conway to go down to see his ship between decks; and that while they were viewing her, one of his lieutenants came down, sent by the captain, to acquaint him Captain Keppel hailed the ship, and told them there was a French man-of-war standing in for the fleet; that for some short space of time he (the admiral) took no notice of it, thinking it impossible Sir Edward Hawke’s division should not see her.’ After a second message, he came up, and ordered Keppel to pursue her, who got within a mile and a half of the chase; but, to prevent capture, the Frenchman ran his ship among the rocks and shoals, with which he was acquainted, and finally escaped into the Garonne.

On the 23d September, an attack was ordered on the Isle of Aix. The fort opened fire upon the ships as they advanced. Howe was first, and anchoring his ship within forty yards of the fort, opened a tremendous fire, and in thirty-five minutes the garrison struck their colours and surrendered. The *Barfleur* was next to the *Magnanime*, and no other ships are named in the short *Gazette*; but Walpole says ‘Keppel pressed forward

‘to get between them.’ Nothing more was done; the disgraceful conduct of the commander of the troops disgusted both navy and army, which ended in a court-martial on the return of the expedition, on General Mordaunt, who was acquitted.

When Sir Edward Hawke quitted Basque Roads, Keppel was detached with a squadron of seven ships, took a few prizes, heard of two French ships of war, but searched for them in vain; and, after a few weeks’ cruize, returned to Spithead with his squadron and a convoy of East Indiamen. He was again sent with a squadron of three vessels, under Admiralty orders, for the annoyance of the enemy’s privateers, and the security of the trade of his Majesty’s subjects. He captured on this cruize a large privateer; and, on his return, he was again put under the orders of Sir Edward Hawke.

Information having been received of an expedition fitting out at Rochefort, Sir Edward Hawke was again dispatched with six sail of the line, of which the *Torbay* was one. On arriving in Basque Roads they discovered five French ships of the line, six or seven frigates, and about forty transports at anchor off the Isle of Aix. On perceiving Hawke’s squadron, they cut or slipped their cables, endeavoured to escape into the Charente, and, in doing this, several of them grounded in the mud; at daylight, they were seen still aground, some lying on their broadsides, the crews busily employed in heaving every thing overboard, and the troops were disembarking in boats; in short, the same scene was now exhibited as that which took place on the same spot fifty years afterwards, when Admiral Gambier and Lord Cochrane were employed on a similar service. Both expeditions were so far successful as to destroy for a time the projected plans of the enemy.

On the return of Hawke to England, he left Keppel with a small squadron to cruize in the Bay of Biscay; on which service he intercepted and captured part of a convoy proceeding for Quebec, engaged a large privateer, the *Godichon*, against which, after a constant and galling fire, chiefly directed against the *Torbay*’s rigging, Keppel for a time refrained from firing a shot, well knowing that he could, by a broadside, send her to the bottom; at length, however, he lost his forbearance, and ordered his upper-deck guns and a battery of small arms to be fired into her, when she struck her colours and called for quarter.

‘An anecdote is recorded of Keppel on this occasion:—During the chase he received a wound in the leg, which for the moment was thought to be dangerous, as it brought him on the deck. The sailors instantly came to carry him down to the cockpit; but he very calmly took his handkerchief from his pocket, and bound it round the wound,

saying, "Stop, my lads, reach a chair; as I can't stand, I must sit." "This," added he, clapping his hand to the place, "may spoil my dancing, but not my stomach for fighting."

After this the *Torbay* was added to the fleet under Lord Anson, and ordered to cruize off Ushant; and soon after, with the *Medway* and *Coventry*, they chased a convoy of fifty sail under the protection of two frigates, keeping up a running cannonade, until the enemy gained shelter among the rocks and in the numerous creeks of the coast, in the darkness of the night. After rejoining the fleet, it was decided that an attack should be made on the island of Goree, which, while in the hands of the French, was a constant annoyance to our settlements on the Senegal. For this purpose a squadron of three sail of the line, three frigates, and other smaller vessels, were placed under the command of Keppel, and he was ordered to hoist a broad pendant in the *Torbay*. It was late in December when he arrived off the island; on the 29th of which month he attacked the forts and batteries, which were soon obliged to capitulate; but the demands of the governor being rejected, the attack was renewed, when the island, the forts, and garrison, consisting of 300 Frenchmen and a great number of blacks, surrendered at discretion. This is the whole substance of the commodore's despatch, as published in the *Gazette*. Taking with him the three ships of the line, he returned to England, struck his broad pendant, and proceeded to London, while the *Torbay* underwent the necessary repairs.

Keppel was not permitted long to remain idle; and nothing can more strongly mark the estimation in which his character and talents stood in the public opinion, as well as in that of the profession, than the constant demands made on his services in the course of the last twelve years, and which continued with little intermission for four years more, till the cessation of hostilities in 1763 gave him a respite for a short time.

But we cannot pass over without briefly enumerating these four years' services, the most important in their consequences, personally, to Keppel. Having resumed the command of the *Torbay*, he was again placed under the orders of Sir Edward Hawke, who had just received intelligence of four ships of the line in Port-Louis being about to join the French fleet off Ushant. With a view of intercepting them, the admiral dispatched Keppel with the following ships: the *Torbay*, bearing his broad pendant; the *Magnanime*, Captain Lord Howe; the *Fame*, Captain the Hon. John Byron; the *Monmouth*, Captain the Hon. Augustus Harvey, and the *Southampton* frigate. For such a purpose never could there have been selected a more promising little squadron; and never was disap-

pointment more strongly felt than when it was announced, by the frigate, that the enemy had escaped. The commander-in-chief had to experience equal mortification. The weather was so tempestuous during the whole summer, that his fleet was three times blown back to the English coast; and it was not till the middle of November that he received intelligence of *M. Conflans* being at sea. On the morning of the 20th, one of the frigates made the signal for a fleet being in sight, and another from Lord Howe, who had been sent a-head, that the fleet was an enemy.

As *M. Conflans* was making off for the land, Sir Edward ordered seven or eight ships of the van to make all sail after him. 'At half-past two P.M.,' he says, 'the fire beginning a-head, I made the signal for engaging. About four o'clock the *Formidable* struck, and a little after the *Thésée* and *Superbe* were sunk. About five, *l'Héros* struck, but it blowing hard, no boat could be sent on board her.' These are the only fighting occurrences, or rather their results, on this day, as given by the Admiral, and published in the *Gazette*. He names not a single officer, nor once alludes to the share which his own ship had in the action; but Mr Keppel in some degree supplies this defect, though without any stated authority.

'From the beginning of the action, Sir Edward Hawke had ordered his ship, the *Royal George*, to reserve her fire until she came alongside of the French admiral, the *Soleil Royale*. The pilot informed him that this could not be done without the most imminent danger of running upon a shoal. It was on this occasion he gave the well-known answer: "You have done your duty in pointing out the danger; you are now to obey my commands, and lay me alongside of the French admiral." As he advanced, he received the broadsides of six of the enemy's ships. The French admiral was one of the last to give him his fire, and, as in the case of the *Torbay*, he showed a great disinclination for nearer contact. As the *Royal George* neared the *Soleil*, she endeavoured to make off, in which effort she was aided by the *Superbe*, who, perceiving our Admiral's design, generously interposed, received the fire intended for the *Soleil Royale*, and soon after went to the bottom.

All the accounts we have seen of this skirmishing action disagree; but one thing is pretty clear, that the *Royal George*, the *Magnanime*, and the *Torbay*, were the ships principally engaged. The log-book of the *Royal George*, which we have seen, is almost as laconic as the Admiral's letter:—

'At fifty-five minutes after three, the French rear-admiral struck to the *Resolution*,' (the *Royal George*, the *Magnanime*, and the *Torbay*, having already silenced her.)

'At four, the ship the *Torbay* was engaged with, sunk.'

(This must have been the *Thesée*, which Howe had previously engaged.)

‘Thirty-five minutes after four, we got up with fourteen sail of the enemy, which all wore and gave us their broadsides. Began to engage at forty-one minutes after four. The French ship abreast us sunk.’ (This must have been the *Superbe*.)

The result was the loss to the enemy of five of their best ships, and the total break-up of their intended expedition—two burnt, two sunk, and one captured. In the attempt, however, of the *Resolution* and the *Essex* to destroy the *Soleil Royale* and *l’Héros*, that had run among the rocks, our two ships were lost, but not before they had set fire to one of the enemy, and the French had done the same to the other. Those which had run up the *Villaine* were shattered, run aground, and dismantled, and the rest dispersed to different parts of the coast. All this was done by the eight ships which had the good fortune to come up with the enemy. ‘When I consider,’ says the Admiral, ‘the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the shortness of the day, and the coast we are on, I can boldly affirm, that all that could possibly be done has been done.’

On the weather moderating, Sir Edward Hawke placed a squadron of eight sail of the line and three frigates, under the orders of Keppel, to proceed to the enemy’s posts to the southward as far as Aix Road, ‘to take, sink, or burn them, wherever he should think it practicable to attack them.’ On the day before his arrival at Aix, the French vice-admiral, in anticipation of such a visit, had got all his guns out of the ships, and retired with his division up the *Charente*. In January 1760, Sir Edward Hawke removed his flag into Keppel’s ship, and returned to Plymouth.*

Mr Keppel mentions the curious fact, that ‘on the very day that Hawke was engaged in destroying the French fleet,

* Sir Edward Hawke sent his captain, Campbell, with the intelligence of his success over *Confans*. Of this honest Scotchman, who had been Keppel’s messmate with Anson, Sir John Barrow gives a curious anecdote, which Mr Keppel repeats:—‘Lord Anson, when taking him in his carriage to the king, said, “Campbell, the king will certainly knight you, if you think proper.” “Troth, my lord,” said the captain, who retained his Scotch dialect as long as he lived, “I ken nae use that it will be to me.” “But your lady might like it,” replied his lordship. “Weel, then,” rejoined Campbell, “his Majesty may knight her, if he pleases.”’—(*Life of Lord Anson*.)

‘ the mob were burning him in effigy in the streets of London, ‘ for his supposed share in the failure at Rochefort.’ But now, to make amends for this ungracious proceeding, ‘ bonfires and ‘ illuminations were exhibited throughout the kingdom.’ He received the thanks of the House of Commons, and a pension of L.2000 a-year was granted to him for his own life, and for the lives of his two sons.

Captain Keppel was next ordered to remove, with his officers and crew, from the Torbay to the Valiant, and soon joined Sir Edward Hawke in Quiberon Bay. The system of harassing the enemy on their own coasts had proved so successful, that it was determined to pursue it, and Belleisle was fixed on to be the next point of attack. As little was known of this island, Keppel was selected, under secret orders, to obtain the necessary information, to make a survey of the coast, and report thereupon. After a careful examination of its shores and defences, he gave it as his opinion that a landing was practicable. An expedition was therefore resolved on, and a squadron of twenty-one ships of war, including bombs and fire-ships, was prepared, to which Keppel was appointed, and ordered to place himself under the orders of Sir Edward Hawke. On the 28th of November all was ready, but a letter from Mr Pitt directed its suspension till further orders. In March 1761, after the accession of George III., preparations were renewed, and the naval part was now entrusted exclusively to Keppel, who hoisted his broad pendant in the Valiant; and, on application to Lord Anson, his friend Adam Duncan, the subsequent hero of Camperdown, was appointed his captain.

Mr Keppel gives a detailed account of the naval and military operations carried on against this very strongly fortified island; the siege of which required all the vigour, perseverance, and courage of both army and navy, to surmount the many difficulties opposed to the invaders, and which were unremittingly struggled against for two months; when, ‘ on the 7th June, ‘ after a most vigorous resistance, the French garrison capitulated, and were allowed to march through the breach with the ‘ honours of war, in favour of the gallant defence they had ‘ made under the orders of their brave commander, the Chevalier de St Croix.’

Having landed the garrison at Port-Louis, Commodore Keppel distributed his force along the western coast of France, consisting of sixty-three men-of-war. ‘ The assignment of so ‘ important a command,’ says Mr Keppel, ‘ to a post-captain, ‘ is a proof of the high opinion that was held of his courage and ‘ abilities.’ But, during the remainder of the year, the French

made no movements, and their whole squadron in Brest Roads amounted only to seven sail of the line and three frigates. In January 1762, the Valiant experienced a most tremendous storm, which compelled her with other ships to seek shelter in the nearest British port. 'With five feet water in the hold, and, almost in a sinking condition, she got into Torbay.'

While France was at this time suing for peace with England, and even while negotiations were pending, she was concluding that secret alliance with the court of Spain, so well known as the *Family Compact*. On receiving intelligence of its completion, Mr Pitt strongly urged the expediency of an immediate commencement of hostilities against the two contracting powers; but as his colleagues were disposed to denounce such a measure as rash and unadvisable, he at once resigned. It was not long, however, before war was proclaimed against Spain, and an expedition, on a very extensive scale, prepared to act against the Havannah. The command of the land forces was given to General the Earl of Albemarle, assisted by his brother, General the Hon. William Keppel; and another brother, Captain the Hon. Augustus Keppel, was appointed, with a distinguishing pendant, as commodore and second in command of the naval forces, under the orders of Admiral Sir George Pococke. The combined forces, on their arrival at Cuba, amounted as follows: the navy, to nineteen sail of the line, besides frigates, bombs, and a multitude of shore-ships and transports; the army, to between eleven and twelve thousand men. Six ships of the line, and smaller vessels, were placed under the orders of Commodore Keppel, on whom devolved the important duty of landing the army.

It would be out of our province to give even a slight sketch of the operations carried on through a long siege, in which the strong fortresses of Chorea, Cavannos, and the Moro, and lastly the Havannah itself, fell into our possession. Suffice it to say, that the sailors, as usual, had their full share of the arduous operations of the siege, and that mostly by the exertions of the seamen the strong Moro castle was taken; and that Sir George Pococke does justice to the distinguished merit of Commodore Keppel, who executed the service under his directions with the greatest spirit, activity, and diligence. But that valuable and important conquest was not achieved without dreadful sufferings and great mortality. It appears from the casualties of the army alone, that, from the 1st June to the 8th October, 560 men were killed or had died of their wounds, and that 4708 had perished from sickness; and it is stated that 'the survivors returned to their native country with constitutions so broken and decayed, that a sickli-

'ness and languor were entailed on the remainder of their lives.' As some compensation for the severe shock which was here inflicted on the constitution of Commodore Keppel, his biographer informs us that his share of the prize-money alone amounted to L.24,539, 10s. 1d.; and that the Earl of Albemarle and Sir George Pococke each received L.122,697, 10s. 6d. Our author further adds, that 'In the beginning of January (1763) Keppel received two important communications;—the one, that the preliminaries of peace had been signed; the other, that the King had included him in the promotion of flag-officers made on the conclusion of the war, the list of which had been purposely extended to include him.'

The return of peace did not altogether afford Keppel that repose which thirty years of arduous and unremitting active service are stated to have made essential for the re-establishment of his health; for, on Lord Egmont succeeding to the situation of First Lord of the Admiralty in 1765, Admiral Keppel was appointed one of the junior lords. In 1766 he hoisted his flag in the Catharine yacht, to convey to Rotterdam the Princess Caroline Matilda, the ill-fated bride of the King of Denmark. On his return, on some changes being made in the ministry, he resigned his seat in the Admiralty. In 1768 he was returned member for Windsor; and, in the autumn of the same year, he conveyed his sister, the Marchioness of Tavistock, to Lisbon, whose mournful history was the source of deep affliction to her beloved brother the Admiral. This lady is described as one 'who, to a sweetness of disposition peculiarly her own, joined all those mild and unaffected virtues which tend to perpetuate the charm first given by personal grace and innate dignity of character.' The marquis, her husband, one of the most amiable and accomplished noblemen, met his death by a fall from his horse as he was hunting, little more than a twelvemonth after their marriage. She gave birth to a posthumous infant, the late Lord William Russell, who died by the hand of an assassin. Mr Keppel says, 'the settled melancholy of the widowed mother's heart appears, after the birth of the child, to have given way to keen sensibility and inconsolable sorrow.' We cannot resist inserting the following affecting incident, which is said to have occurred previous to her departure with her brother for Lisbon. 'At a consultation of the faculty, held at Bedford House in August, one of the physicians, whilst he felt her pulse, requested her to open her hand. Her reluctance induced him to use a degree of gentle violence, when he perceived that she had closed it to conceal a miniature of her late husband. "Ah, madam!" he exclaimed, "all our prescriptions must be useless whilst you

‘so fatally cherish the wasting sorrow that destroys you!’—“I have kept it,” she replied, “either in my bosom or my hand ever since my dear lord’s death; and thus I must, indeed, continue to retain it, until I drop off after him into the welcome grave.” A few weeks after her arrival at Lisbon, she found ‘the welcome grave,’—having survived her husband little more than a year; and then, in the words of Rogers, ‘died the victim of ex-ceeding love.’ Her sister, who had watched her with unceasing assiduity, speedily followed her; and, as if misfortune was destined to pursue this family, their brother, the subject of this article, ‘by a sudden lurch of the ship, fell down one of the hatchways, and thereby injured his back so severely, as ever afterwards to occasion him the greatest pain, and at times even to deprive him of the use of his legs.’

On a brevet of flag-officers in October 1770, Keppel was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the Red, and three days afterwards, to that of Vice-Admiral of the Blue. In 1773, the state of his health required that he should go to Bath. ‘Poor Admiral Keppel,’ says Captain Hood, ‘is now at Bath in a very deplorable way, having lost the use of his legs.’ In 1775, he sustained a heavy loss in the death of his friend Admiral Sir Charles Saunders; with whom, from the time they had served together in Anson’s expedition, he had lived on terms of the strictest and most intimate friendship. Sir Charles bequeathed him a legacy of £5000, with an annuity of £1200 a-year, and included him first in the entail of his property, if his two nieces, then unmarried, should die without issue. The one, however, married Lord Westmoreland, and the other Lord Melville. Walpole says, ‘Sir Charles was a pattern of most steady bravery, united with the most unaffected modesty. No man said less, or deserved more. Simplicity in his manners, generosity and good-nature, adorned his genuine love of his country.’

Lord Sandwich bestowed the rank of Lieut.-General of the Marines, vacant by the death of Sir Charles Saunders, on Sir Hugh Palliser, one of the junior admirals. It was rumoured also, that Lord Howe was to have the post of General of Marines on a contemplated vacancy. This drew from Keppel the following spirited remonstrance, which he says, ‘some combat in my mind, from a friendship to Lord Howe, made me hesitate on sending to the First Lord of the Admiralty.’

‘MY LORD,—It is much credited that Admiral Forbes is to retire from the post of General of Marines, and that Rear-Admiral Lord Howe is appointed his successor.

‘I am not used to feel disgrace or affronts; but indeed, my Lord, I must feel cold to my own honour, and the rank in which I stand in his

Majesty's service, if I remain silent, and see one of the youngest rear-admirals of the fleet promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-general of Marines, and, a few days afterwards, another rear-admiral made General of Marines. It is not for me to say who should, or should not, be appointed to those honours; but I may presume to say to your Lordship, and through you, as the head of the sea department, beg leave to have it laid before his Majesty with my humblest submission to him, that, little as I am entitled to claim merit, yet a series of long service may, I hope, permit me to observe, that such a repetition of promotion to the junior admirals of the fleet cannot but dispirit every senior officer, jealous of his own honour, inasmuch as it tends to manifest to the whole profession the low esteem he stands in; which, allow me to say, may at one time or other have its bad effects. Juniors cannot complain, nor are they dishonoured, when their seniors are promoted. My Lord, I must hope I stand excused for writing in such plain terms; but when I am writing or speaking from facts and feelings of honour, I cannot allow myself to express those sentiments in a doubtful manner.

'I have the honour to be, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

'A. KEPPEL.'

To this letter no answer appears; but as Keppel was now (1776) advanced to the rank of Vice-Admiral, he received a message from Lord Sandwich, stating that his Majesty desired to know, whether, in case of a war with a foreign power, he would undertake the charge of the home fleet? He had, in consequence, an audience of the King, and gave his consent to take the command of the Channel fleet. It is stated, however, by his biographer, that he had some misgivings of trusting his hard-earned fame to ministers whom he knew to be unfriendly towards him. This feeling seems to have been encouraged by a letter from 'his friend and cousin,' the Duke of Richmond, who says, 'I cannot wish you joy of having a fleet to command, prepared by the Earl of Sandwich. No one can be surprised that you should suspect a minister whom you have constantly opposed— if he has but a bad fleet to send out, 'tis doing Lord Sandwich no injustice to suppose he would be glad to put it under the command of a man whom he does not love, and yet whose name will justify the choice to the nation.' Such an illiberal sentiment we should not have expected from the noble lord. It has been held both in the army and navy, that it is not the politics of the man, but the character and talents of the officer, that the leading power ought, and, for his own sake, does generally select for an important command; and the Duke of Richmond had no cause hitherto to suspect Lord Sandwich of treachery towards Admiral Keppel, whom he had, on all occasions, selected for services above all others of his rank, notwithstanding his

opposition to ministers. We are therefore glad to find, that 'the friend and cousin's advice' was not followed. He accepted, and held himself in readiness for active employment; and in 1778, when hostilities with France and Spain were on the eve of breaking out, he was appointed to the command of the Channel fleet. It is much to his credit, that though of high rank and high political connexions, with a seat in Parliament, which must, almost of necessity, have drawn him towards one or other of the great political parties—though in constant familiar intercourse and correspondence with the Portlands, Richmonds, Rockinghams, and with Fox, Burke, and other Whig leaders in the House of Commons—he had too much regard for the welfare of the country, his own honour, and his love for the service, to suffer party prejudice to interfere in any way with his professional duty.

He left England on 13th June 1778, with a fleet of twenty-one sail of the line and three frigates, two of the line being shortly afterwards added. This fleet was placed by the commander-in-chief under three divisions—his own flag being in the *Victory*, of 100 guns; the second division under that of Sir R. Harland, Vice-Admiral of the Red, in the *Queen*, 90 guns; and the third under Sir Hugh Palliser, Vice-Admiral of the Blue, in the *Ocean*, (afterwards changed into the *Formidable*), of 90 guns.

He had scarcely arrived on his station when two French frigates and smaller vessels hove in sight. They were detained, and from papers found on board two of them, and from the prisoners, it appeared that the French had thirty-two sail of the line, and ten or twelve frigates, in Brest Roads. This intelligence was wholly unexpected; but Admiral Keppel had but one course to pursue, and that was to return to St Helen's, according to express injunctions in his instructions. 'If the French fleet shall be manifestly superior to yours, and should come out to meet you, or if you are satisfied that they are superior to you, *though they do not come out*, you are, in either of these cases, to return with the squadron under your command to St Helen's for a reinforcement.' With these clear, intelligible, and positive instructions, with only twenty-two ships of the line against thirty-two, 'I think myself obliged,' says the Admiral, 'unpleasant as my feelings are upon the occasion, to repair thither.'

No official notice was taken, either in the shape of approval or censure, of the course the Admiral had adopted in strict conformity with his instructions; but it is stated that certain publications, in the interest of government, ascribed his return to the most disgraceful motives; and some of them even directly threatened him with the fate of Byng. But we are assured that Admiral

Keppel, on this trying occasion, observed a prudent and manly forbearance; and bore in silence the unmerited obloquy lavished upon him by his anonymous accusers, who, it is charitable to suppose, were ignorant of the secret nature of his instructions. By a rigid attention to the wants of his squadron, which, by an addition of more ships, now amounted to thirty sail of the line, he was speedily ready to resume his station. The day previous to his again putting to sea, the French fleet, of thirty sail of the line, sailed from Brest, also under three divisions, commanded by Count D'Orvilliers, and assisted by the Count Duchaffault, the Duc de Chartres, and three other flag-officers. The third in command, who was afterwards well known as the infamous D'Orleans, told Sir George Rodney in Paris, that he was about to meet his countryman Mr Keppel, and asked him, with an insulting air, what he thought would be the result? 'That my countryman,' replied Rodney, 'will carry your 'Royal Highness home with him to learn English.' This royal boaster, in the action of which we are about to speak, is reported to have retired into the hold of his ship, and could not be prevailed upon to show himself on deck till the engagement had ended.

On the 23d of July the French fleet was discovered, on which Keppel immediately ordered the signal for forming the line to be made; but the French Admiral used all diligence and caution to defeat Keppel's object of commencing the engagement. For four days Keppel vainly endeavoured to bring the enemy to action, who generally had the weathergage, and whenever a shift of wind favoured him he made an effort to escape under a press of sail. On the 27th July, at daybreak, the French fleet was about three miles to windward, still endeavouring to avoid a meeting; but by a change of wind, and in the course of manœuvring, the centres and rears of the two fleets were brought within musket-shot, and a very sharp cannonading took place and continued for about two hours, all the time in line of battle. Keppel is said to have received the fire of six different ships in passing, before he returned a shot; the *Victory's* fire being reserved for D'Orvilliers' ship, and it was so powerful that two of her port-holes were driven into one.

The British ships being now dispersed, and many of them damaged in their masts and rigging, it required the remainder of the day to put them to rights, after which the signal was made again to form the line; but Sir Hugh Palliser, for some reason never explained, obstinately kept his squadron to windward, taking no notice of the signal, nor even of the message sent and delivered to him verbally by the captain of the *Fox*

frigate, directing him to bear down into the Admiral's wake. The Admiral was, therefore, under the necessity of making specific signals for each ship of the Vice-Admiral's division, and the delay thus occasioned put an end to any further operations on that day, except to make ready to engage at daylight. It appeared, however, that the French, under cover of the night, had made their escape. Nothing, therefore, was now left but to return to England to repair damages, the French, ludicrously enough, as Burke observes, 'having mistaken their way into 'their own harbour.' This was quite true, their own *Gazette* having announced that 'the astonishment was general when 'they discovered the Isle of Ushant itself, which the Count 'D'Orvilliers thought himself distant from 25 or 30 leagues; and 'that, seeing himself off the harbour of Brest, he determined to 'enter it.'

Notwithstanding the highly improper conduct of the Vice-Admiral of the Blue, the good-nature of Keppel would not allow him, in his official letter, to speak of him otherwise than with praise. 'The spirited conduct,' he says, 'of the Vice-Admiral Sir 'Robert Harland, Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, and the 'captains of the fleet, supported by their officers and men, deserves much commendation.' Alluding to this report in his defence on the trial, Keppel says—'It is very short and very general; but it goes as far as I intended it should. It does what I 'meant to do. I meant to commend his bravery in the engagement. As he stood high in command, to pass over one in his 'station would be to mark him. It would have conveyed the 'censure I wished for such good reasons to avoid.' Such was the good-nature and generosity of Admiral Keppel; and we shall presently see in what manner it was repaid.

Before a month had elapsed Keppel's fleet was equipped and at sea. Information was received that the French were seen to the westward of Ushant; but Keppel having cruised in vain in that track for two months, without finding or hearing any thing of them, returned with his fleet to Portsmouth. About the time of his arrival there appeared, in one of the daily papers, what was called a true recital of the conduct of Sir Hugh Palliser in the late action. No sooner had the Admiral reached London than Sir Hugh addressed him by letter, in which he claimed 'to have his conduct justified from those foul aspersions;' and desiring him to contradict those scandalous reports, by publishing, in his own name, a paper which he inclosed; to which Keppel very properly returned no answer. He was called upon next day by Sir Hugh for his signature to the paper, which Keppel immediately and disdainfully refused. Sir Hugh

went therefore to the office of the *Morning Post*, and gave his own version of the engagement, under his own name, which Captain Jervis pronounced to be 'replete with vanity, art, and falsehood.'

On the 9th December, five months nearly after the action, Admiral Keppel, to his great astonishment, received from the Secretary of the Admiralty a notification, that Sir Hugh Palliser had transmitted a charge of misconduct and neglect of duty against him, on the 27th and 28th July—desiring that a Court-Martial might be held for trying him for the same; and signifying their lordships' intention of complying with the desire of Sir Hugh, (*one of their lordships.*) The Admiral, in reply, expresses his utter astonishment at the countenance the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty should so far have given to this proceeding, as to resolve, on the same day on which such a charge is exhibited, to order a Court-Martial on the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet, on an attack from an inferior officer, under all the very peculiar circumstances in which he (Sir Hugh Palliser) then stood.

This extraordinary proceeding on the part of Sir Hugh, and still more extraordinary on that of the Board of Admiralty, on the requisition of one of its members, and wholly unprecedented, from the indecent haste in which it was complied with, is difficult to explain. It can only be ascribed, either to the mortification which Keppel's refusal to sign a document in which he had no concern gave him, or to the mistaken courtesy of Keppel in suppressing the misconduct of the Vice-Admiral in his report of the action. Unhappily, it is by no means a singular instance of an act of kindness or forbearance being acknowledged by ingratitude; but, in the present case, it was followed up by a vindictive attempt to destroy the character, and even endanger the life, of the benefactor. Great indignation spread itself over the naval service; and twelve British admirals, at the head of whom was the veteran Hawke, presented a memorial to the King, on what they designated to be 'an outrageous and unprecedented proceeding.'

How Lord Sandwich could have been prevailed on to give his assent to such 'an outrageous and unprecedented proceeding' is quite inexplicable. He was well versed in naval affairs, having, for the third time, filled the office of First Lord, and in the whole, for upwards of ten years. He was a man of considerable ability: he alone negotiated and signed the treaty of peace at Aix-la-Chapelle. Walpole hated and abused him; but the late Lord Holland, who edited his (Walpole's) *Memoirs*, says—'Our author disparages his abilities; he was a lively, sensible man, attentive to busi-

'ness, and not a bad speaker in Parliament;'—and Sir John Barrow observes, 'His lordship might have added, that his voyage round the Mediterranean proved him to be a scholar, a man of just observation, cultivated intellect, and vigorous mind.' It is equally extraordinary that such a man should have failed so miserably in his defence, in the Lords, for having brought Keppel so rashly and *outrageously* to trial. That defence was neither consistent nor true. 'He had no discretion,' Lord Sandwich said, 'with regard to refusing the order for a court-martial.' His Lordship could not have forgotten the remarkable circumstance of the House of Commons having petitioned the King to order the Admiralty to try Matthews and Lestock; that Anson, in the absence of the Duke of Bedford and himself, waited on the Duke of Newcastle, and prevailed upon him to advise the King to rescind the order he had given, as being a violation of the jurisdiction of the Admiralty, as by law established, and by royal patent confirmed; that he (Lord Sandwich) had highly approved of what Anson had done, observing that, 'if this opportunity to establish our jurisdiction is not made use of, I fear it will be a long time before another will offer.' His Lordship could not, therefore, be ignorant that not only the Lord High Admiral, but every Commander-in-Chief on a foreign station, has full discretionary power to grant or refuse Courts-Martial; and to exercise other matters, under constitutional responsibility, with which neither King nor Parliament can interfere.

The trial on Keppel went forward; the court consisted of five flag-officers and eight captains. They sat some thirty days, and examined most of the captains of the fleet who were in the action, and brought forward by the prosecutor; after which the court, having maturely and seriously considered the whole evidence, and the prisoner's defence, was of opinion, 'that the charge was malicious and ill-founded, and that the Admiral had behaved himself as a judicious, brave, and experienced officer; and they, therefore, unanimously and honourably acquitted the said Admiral Augustus Keppel of every part of the charge exhibited against him.'

The sentence was pronounced amidst a general acclamation of joy from the assembled crowd; the ships at Spithead, and the Indiamen at the Mother-Bank, fired salutes. Riots followed the rejoicings. Sir Hugh Palliser was burnt in effigy; his house entirely gutted, and its contents burnt; the Admiralty attacked, and its gates unhinged; the windows of Lords North, Bute, Sandwich, Lisburne, and Mulgrave, were broken. The fury of the populace was ungovernable; the riot act was read, and parties of the Horse Guards paraded the streets. The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were given to Keppel, and dinners from

all the great bodies in the capital; in short, there never was so complete a triumph. This ebullition of the public feeling was treated with contempt, by one member in particular, in the House of Commons. 'What,' said he, 'London illuminated for three nights together, on account of the glory gained on the 27th July!' To which Burke replied 'It was not that the trial had proved the 27th to be a day of triumph to Great Britain. No; they rejoiced because they saw that a gallant officer, a worthy and an honest man, had escaped from the malice of his accusers; because so excellent a public character was acquitted with honour; and because generosity, sincerity, and virtue had gained a victory over malice, treachery, and meanness! These, and these only, were the causes of the public illuminations and rejoicings; and what honest Englishman was there whose bosom would not expand with the highest satisfaction, and the most exalted rapture, on such an occasion?'

On the 15th of February, four days after the trial, Keppel went on board the *Victory*, and rehoisted his flag amidst the cheers and salutes of all the ships assembled at Spithead and Portsmouth; and on the 18th of March received an order to strike his flag and come on shore, given in consequence of his reply to a letter from the Admiralty, asking whether he intended to continue in the command of the Channel fleet? . This was the last of his services at sea.

Two or three awkward circumstances came out in the course of the trial. The masters of the several ships were required to make oath that the log-book produced was the ship's original log, without alterations or additions since made, between the 23d and 30th July. The master of the *Robuste* declined taking this oath, alleging that both alterations and additions had been made by order of his captain, Alexander Hood, (afterwards Lord Bridport,) respecting what took place on the 27th and 28th July. Captain Hood admitted the fact, and thought himself fully authorized to do so. Keppel asked him where the original entry on those days was. Captain Hood—'Upon my word I do not know.' Then Keppel said, 'As that alteration in Captain Hood's log-book tends to affect my life, I shall ask him no more questions.'

The next circumstance is that Admiral Montagu, in looking over the *Formidable's* log, discovered three leaves had been cut out, from the 25th to 28th, and one leaf put in with a fresh tacking of thread. Captain Bazely was then asked how these three leaves came to be cut out? Captain Bazely, 'I do not know, so help me God.' Keppel proposed to have the master before them forthwith. Sir Hugh then said, 'I

‘mean to call the master to-morrow morning, he is not here now,’—he was then waiting in the witness-room. The master, on being examined, admitted he had been, in the course of the night, with Sir Hugh Palliser and his two lawyers, in conversation about the log-book, for about an hour and a half. The master further stated that the altered log was approved by the Vice-Admiral; but he believed that neither he nor Captain Bazely were aware of the leaves being cut out. The evidence of Bazely was reluctantly given, and in a shuffling manner. Being asked if Keppel, on the 27th July, had been guilty of neglect in not performing his duty.—Said, ‘I do not hold myself a competent judge to judge the behaviour and conduct of an admiral in so high a department.’ And the same question, frequently repeated, procured no other answer—and this from a flag captain! Lord Mulgrave, of the *Courageux*, a Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir Hugh Palliser’s colleague, being asked as to Keppel’s conduct on the 27th and 28th July, declined answering; and after several attempts of the court to elicit a definite answer, said, ‘he was an injured man if he were obliged to answer the question.’ The manner and language of Lord Mulgrave were such as to produce a reprimand from the court.

These three are the only hesitating, we had almost said prevaricating, witnesses out of more than twenty called for the prosecution; the rest gave a distinct and positive negative to the charges preferred against the Admiral. The whole of the proceedings must, indeed, have been extremely mortifying to the feelings of Sir Hugh Palliser; and not very agreeable to the Board of Admiralty, which unquestionably manifested an indecent and unprecedented haste in bringing the Admiral to trial; which never could have happened had Lord Sandwich been fortunate enough to have had such men as Anson or Howe for his colleagues, instead of Palliser and Mulgrave.

The failure to convict Keppel induced Palliser to ask for a Court-Martial on himself. It assembled at Portsmouth, and twenty-one days were spent in examining witnesses; after which the court took three more in debating on the sentence, which was, ‘that his conduct and behaviour on the 27th and 28th July were, in many respects, highly exemplary and meritorious; they blame him for not having made known to his commander-in-chief the disabled state of the *Formidable* (by an explosion;) that notwithstanding this omission, he is not in any other respect chargeable with misconduct or misbehaviour, and therefore acquit him.’ But he was not tried for disobedience to command.

In the twenty-five sail of the line of the fleet of Keppel, the number that were engaged, were lost, 133 men killed

—and 373 wounded. The action and its result were much canvassed, as all general actions are, and opinions were very different—‘*laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis*’—influenced, as it would appear, in some respect by party-politics; but Englishmen, as the Duke of Richmond observed, are never satisfied if one-half, at least, of the enemy’s fleet are not brought into port. Jervis, who was in the action, and no mean judge, says—‘I have often told you that two fleets of equal force never can produce decisive events, unless they are equally determined to fight it out, or the commander-in-chief of one of them mis-conducts his line.’ On which our author observes, ‘the hero of St Vincent lived to be of a different opinion,’—alluding, no doubt, to the battle of that name, where, we would remark, his *line* was fortunately so far misconducted, as utterly to be disregarded and broken up: the result is well known.

One of those critics who passed a censure on Keppel, says—‘he lost his chance of a victory by not passing through the enemy’s line with his van, before the shift of wind.’ This his biographer considers unfair, as blaming a man for not having adopted a system of tactics not known at the period when the action was fought. There was not, however, any novelty in Keppel’s time in the occasional practice of breaking through the enemy’s line, though not done systematically. Thus Blake, in 1653, cut through the fleet of De Ruyter and Van Tromp, when protecting their merchant vessels off the Isle of Wight, and captured several. In 1706, Monk bore down upon the Dutch fleet, and passed through their line. But we need not go further back than the year 1747, when Anson, in pursuit of a flying enemy attempting to escape in closely formed line, threw out a signal for his whole fleet to pursue the enemy, and attack them, without any regard to the preservation of the line of battle. The result was the capture of six ships of war and four Indiamen. In the same year Rear-Admiral Hawke, falling in with a fleet under M. Letendeur, finding that much time was likely to be lost in forming the line, while the enemy was escaping *in line*, threw out a signal for the whole squadron to chase, and come to close engagement; the result was, that six sail of the enemy struck their colours, and two escaped. The French lost above 800 men in killed and wounded; the British 154 killed, and 558 wounded: among the former was Captain Philip Saumarez, of the Nottingham, the companion of Anson in his celebrated voyage. Again, in 1759, Sir Edward Hawke, with twenty-three sail of the line, engaged the French fleet of twenty-one sail of the line, under M. Conflans. The latter were evidently retiring in compact line of battle. Hawke, therefore, made the

signal for a general chase, without any regard to order, observing to his officers, 'he did not intend to trouble himself by forming lines, but to attack the enemy in the old way, and make down-right work with him.' Eight of our ships were the first, and almost the only ones engaged, and of these, first and most active, was the *Victory*, commanded by Hawke, the *Magnanime*, by Howe, and the *Torbay*, by Keppel; the result we have already stated. Keppel, having borne so conspicuous a part in this action, must have been fully aware of the very great advantage over the enemy by breaking up and throwing his line into confusion; and we are persuaded that if Sir Hugh Palliser had not misconducted himself in so unaccountable a manner, but rejoined the fleet in the evening, Keppel would have done it.

- We have heard officers of high rank in the navy say, that the only advantage of forming the line in a large fleet is the knowledge it gives to the Commander-in-Chief of the position of each ship, so that he may dispose of them in coming to action, either singly or in masses, as may to him appear most advisable. Among the most intelligent and best informed writers on naval subjects, is M. Charles Dupin: this author, in his 'Comparative view of the marine forces of England and France,' ridicules what he terms 'the pious respect of his countrymen for the sacred order of the line of battle,' to which, he says, the combined fleets were sacrificed at Trafalgar, by the two wings remaining immovable; while the two columns of Nelson were employed in overwhelming the centre of this sacred line, and while the combined fleet was looking on *avec une effrayante impassibilité*, until its centre was destroyed. Nelson had no regard for his own line of battle, or that of the French. Lord Collingwood distinctly says that Nelson's plan of attack was 'to avoid the inconvenience and delay of forming a line of battle in the usual manner.' The addition of a number of powerful 68-pounder steamers to our fleets, which in future we shall have, will afford additional means, and an additional reason, for running through, and breaking up, the enemy's line of battle.

The difference in the two modes of conducting an action, by the French and English, consists chiefly in this, that the French use every endeavour to keep their line compact, and, by firing high, to cripple the English ships in their masts, sails, and rigging, so as to disable them from a pursuit. The efforts of the English, on the contrary, are directed to the means of throwing the enemy's line into disorder, that every ship may seek for an opportunity of attacking her opponent. M. Dupin, indeed, tells us there is an *Ordonnance* by which the French fleet is directed to keep the sea, for the longest period it can

remain out, without the necessity of coming to an action; and if forced to engage, to avoid compromising the fate of their fleet by a conflict too decisive. They are therefore compelled to fight while retreating, which is always to be done *in line of battle*, just as it was done by D'Orvilliers in Keppel's action. 'Thus then,' says Dupin, 'to maintain, at a great expense, a naval armament; to forbid it from making the best use of its effective power; to send it in search of an enemy; to retreat shamefully from its presence; to receive battle instead of offering it; to commence an action only to finish it by the phantom of a defeat; to lose the moral for the sake of sparing the physical force—this was the principle which, from the reign of Louis XIV. to the mistakes of Napoleon, has guided the administration of the French marine.' Whether the same system is to continue under Louis Philippe is yet to be seen. One thing practised by them is well deserving our serious consideration. The French have adopted a system of establishing a corps of sharpshooters, or riflemen, or musqueteers, which are intended to be stationed in the tops of ships of the line, preparatory to the event of being compelled into close action. This will make it necessary for us to train a number of marines for a similar purpose, to counteract the destructive effects of such a practice.

The English go differently to work, and under very different feelings to those described by M. Dupin: their anxiety is to get into action, to attack the enemy, as Hawke said, 'in the old way'—that is, to throw them into confusion, and, when it can be done, to engage ship to ship, not merely to cripple but to capture the enemy; the officers relying on the cool and steady conduct of the men, their obedience to command, and on that imposing silence of the crew when actually engaged, which Dupin says is characteristic of British seamen—'*c'est la calme de la force, c'est le recueillement de la sagesse*;' and we may also add, all hands, at the same time, relying on the practical seamanship, and efficient skill in gunnery, of the officers themselves. There are, it is true, among the latter, in the present day, certain naval officers indiscreetly loud in extolling every thing belonging to the French navy, and, at the same time, disparaging their own:—let no such men be trusted. How different is the conduct of the intelligent French engineer above mentioned, who condemns alike the vicious system of instruction, and the want of skill in the practical seamanship of his own countrymen, which he pronounces as infinitely inferior, in every respect, to those of the British navy.

One or both of two results may, almost to a certainty, be reckoned on, by breaking through, or otherwise throwing into a state

of disorder, the enemy's line, to which the French in particular are so partial. The one is, that by cutting off a portion of it, the part so separated may, by a previous understood arrangement, fall into the hands of the aggressors. The other, supposing the hostile fleets pretty nearly equal; is the plan of Hawke, 'to attack the enemy in the old way, and make downright work with him;' in other words, that when once in confusion, every ship in the attacking fleet may choose its bird, and, from a multitude of examples, (some of which we shall produce,) the attacking ship is almost sure of its prey. In the present action, Jervis, in a private letter, says, the *Foudroyant* (in parading along the line) received the fire of seventeen sail, to each of which she, no doubt, returned her share, but it was seventeen to one between the *Foudroyant* and seventeen of the enemy: had this fire of the *Foudroyant* been reserved and directed against a single ship, (the *Bretagne* or *Ville de Paris*, which, he says, were upon her at the same time,) she would unquestionably have captured one or both. We have, indeed, a brilliant example of what this same *Foudroyant* did accomplish on another occasion: Captain Jervis, in his engagement with the *Pegase*, by his consummate skill in seamanship, kept his ship in the position known to seamen as 'the angle of impunity,' till he could fairly run the Frenchman on board, when she struck her colours, having upwards of eighty of her crew killed and wounded, while the *Foudroyant* had only four wounded, one of whom was Jervis himself. This same eighty-four gun ship had been captured from the enemy by the *Monmouth*, of sixty-four guns, commanded by Captain Gardiner, who fell in the action. The contest was continued by the first lieutenant, Carket, when she struck, after a dreadful slaughter of one hundred killed and ninety wounded—that of the *Monmouth* being twenty-eight killed and seventy-nine wounded. Such is the difference between the same ship when fought by a Frenchman and by an Englishman.*

* This memorable action of Jervis is ingeniously recorded by the supporters of the heraldic bearings of the St Vincent's arms, these being the Thunderer's eagle and the winged horse of Helicon. The motto is simply, *Thus*—

‘*Thois, very well, thois!*’—

the well-known direction to the helmsman.

The late Captain Brenton, in his 'Life of the Earl of St Vincent,' tells a story concerning the captain of the *Foudroyant*, to which we are reluctant in giving credence, and yet he says he had it from Lord St Vincent himself. This captain had written a letter to the Minister of

Another brilliant instance may be mentioned in the action of the Nottingham of sixty guns, commanded by Captain Saumarez, and the *Magnanime*, of seventy-four guns and six hundred and eighty-six men; when the latter, after losing forty-five men killed and one hundred and five wounded, struck to the Nottingham, having sixteen killed and eighteen wounded. A third case occurs to us, between a minor class of ships, in which the results of superior skill and seamanship were displayed in a very remarkable manner. Two thirty-six gun frigates—the Crescent, commanded by Captain Sanmarez, (afterwards Lord de Saumarez,) and the Reunion, with seventy more men than the Crescent—fought an action of two hours; when the Reunion struck her colours, having lost thirty-four men killed and eighty-four wounded; while the Crescent had not a man killed, and only one hurt, not by the enemy, but by having his leg fractured by the recoil of a gun.

One case, however, we cannot prevail on ourselves to omit. In the fleet under the command of Lord Howe in America, was the *Isis* of fifty guns, commanded by Captain Raynor. This ship was chased by a French seventy-four, carrying a flag, and, being a better sailer, soon came up with and commenced an attack upon the *Isis*. The action continued within pistol-shot for an hour and a half, when the Frenchman bore up and made off before the wind. The *Isis* having suffered so much in her masts and rigging, was unable to follow her. It was afterwards ascertained that she had left France with 900 men; that Captain Bougainville lost his arm and an eye, and since had died of his wounds—and that seventy were killed and one hundred and fifty wounded; and, extraordinary as it may appear, the *Isis* lost only one man killed and fifteen wounded, two of whom died of their wounds. Such was the result of the consummate skill of her commander, and the disciplined activity of her brave crew. Lord Howe, in his despatch, says he must supply the deficiency of the commander's mode of recital, by observing that the superiority acquired over the enemy appears to be not less the effect of Captain Raynor's skilful management of his ship, than of his distinguished resolution, and the bravery of his men and officers.

Fifty other examples might be produced to show what skill in

the Marine, acquainting him with the unfortunate issue of the action, which he showed to Jervis, and asked his opinion of it. 'I have but one objection,' said Jervis, 'and that is, that not one word of it is true.' '*Mais comment! pas vrai?*' 'No, sir, not one word of it is true; but you can send it if you please.' He did send it, and when he was tried for the loss of his ship, the letter was produced—he was dismissed the service, and his sword broken over his head.

seamanship, and steady conduct, are able to effect, and from which we may lay down as an axiom in naval warfare, That good ships, well officered and manned, and skilfully handled, cannot fail, in any contest with any power, to sustain the high character of the British navy throughout the world. With such ships and such officers, we may despise those murderous schemes of charlatans, with their catamarans, their torpedos, and other concealed modes of attack, calculated only to alarm the weak and astonish the ignorant—and with such examples, our Commanders-in-Chief need be little solicitous about preserving their line of battle, and breaking up that of the enemy.

The same writer who blamed Keppel for not passing through the enemy's line, gives a further opinion, that he 'lost another opportunity of defeating the French fleet, by not attacking it in the night,'—quoting, as his authority, an observation of Nelson, who said, 'If I fall in with the French fleet in the night, I shall engage them immediately; they do badly in the day, but much worse by night.' On which our author observes, 'that the night of the 27th July was a very dark night;' and moreover, it was remarked by one of the witnesses on Keppel's trial, 'The Admiral's signals had been so ill obeyed by the Vice-Admiral of the Blue during the day, that he durst not venture to make any chasing signal in the night.' On this subject Lord Howe, when about to engage a superior fleet of French and Spanish ships in the vicinity of Gibraltar, suggested to Admiral Barrington—that as the enemy had at least fifty sail of the line, (he having thirty-four of the line and six frigates,)—Whether, from the superior state of discipline and tactics in his own fleet, and in order to compensate the inequality of his force, advantage might not be gained by the inferior fleet attacking the superior in the night? Barrington proposed they should take the opinions of the senior captains. Most of these, supposing it to be Howe's plan, were inclined favourably to it; but on coming to the turn of Sir John Jervis, he said he must declare, in the most decided manner, against any such night attack, even should the Commander-in-Chief be in favour of it; for that such confusion would be created, that friends might engage with friends, instead of with enemies. Admiral Barrington concurred with Jervis, adding, that he proposed daylight, if it was for no other reason than this—'that it would then be seen who did and who did not do his duty; and that, if there happened to be a *white feather* in the fleet, it would then show itself. Give us daylight, my Lord, by all means, that we may see what we are about.'

'Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more.'

We have a most striking practical illustration of the opinion given by Jervis, in the action off Algeziras, by the squadron under Sir James Saumarez; in which two of the largest three-deckers, of a hundred and twelve guns each, the *Hermenegilda* and the *Real Carlos*, both blew up with a tremendous explosion, and the whole nearly of their numerous crews perished, having run on board each other; each supposing he was attacking an English seventy-four, the *Superb*, under Captain Keats, who, having engaged the *Real Carlos* till she was on fire, moved on to another, leaving the *Hermenegilda*, who thought her an enemy, to attack and run on board her, and thus to share her melaucholy fate.

On the whole, therefore, we are of opinion that, circumstanced as Keppel was with regard to one division of his fleet, the superior sailing of that of the enemy, and their determination not to engage him, after parading in their line four days without affording an opportunity of coming to close action, the gallant Admiral will stand fully acquitted by posterity—as the Court ‘unanimously and honourably’ acquitted him: and whatever censure the opposite party in politics may have endeavoured to fix upon him, we must absolve him of all blame in not bringing ‘half the French fleet into port,’ as the Duke of Richmond said our countrymen always expected.

The conduct of the government, instanced in that of the Admiralty towards Admiral Keppel, ‘led,’ as his biographer observes, and as might be expected, ‘to many angry discussions ‘in parliament, and, night after night, a series of charges were ‘brought against the ministers.’ On a motion of Mr Dunning, condemnatory of the Admiralty, Mr Fox declared, ‘that the man ‘(the Earl of Sandwich) who deprived this country of two of her ‘bravest admirals, (Keppel and Howe,) was a greater traitor to ‘the nation than the man who set fire to the dockyard;’ and he moved for the removal of Lord Sandwich from the Admiralty—but he took nothing by his motion. Lord Sandwich, in spite of the attacks made on him, maintained his ground three years after this period; when, on the formation of the Rockingham ministry in April 1782, he resigned his place to Admiral Keppel, who on this occasion was not only appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, but promoted to the rank of Admiral of the White, at this time the highest in the service; and was, moreover, created a peer, by the title of Viscount Keppel and Baron Eldon.

One of his early acts in the capacity of First Lord of the Admiralty met the general approbation of the officers in the navy—this was the appointment of Lord Howe to the chief command of a powerful fleet. His next, however, was so-unfor-

tunate as to give umbrage to the whole nation: this was the appointment of Admiral Pigot to supersede Sir George Rodney, with orders to proceed immediately to relieve him. Pigot had scarcely left the shores of England, when intelligence arrived of Rodney's glorious victory over the Count de Grasse. A fast-sailing cutter was forthwith dispatched, to stop the sailing of Pigot; and, if sailed, to endeavour to overtake him, but the pursuit was in vain. The biographer of Keppel endeavours to make it appear, and we think on strong grounds, that the recall was not Admiral Keppel's act, but that of the cabinet; and he quotes a passage from the 'Life of Rodney,' which says—There is reason to believe that Keppel remonstrated, in warm terms, against the measure, threatening, if it were persisted in, to resign his new appointment. Certain it is, the recall occasioned no breach of friendship between Keppel and Rodney.

The short space of three months, in which Keppel remained in office, afforded him but little scope for the exercise of his talents; long enough, however, to learn that a First Lord of the Admiralty may be blamed for measures over which he has no control. The death of the Marquis of Rockingham dissolved the government for the time; but in the following year, when the Coalition administration was formed, Keppel was replaced in the Admiralty. This administration, which afforded but few symptoms of a long life, was overthrown in eight months; partly by the fate of Fox's Indian bill, but chiefly by the dislike of the King to the Whig section of it. Mr Keppel introduces an amusing anecdote, from a well-known recorder of 'reminiscences,' which happened on the same evening that the Indian bill was thrown out in the Lords:—'The same night Keppel had an audience of the King. He had previously appointed Mr Adair to sup with him at ten o'clock. It was past twelve before Keppel returned home. "Why, Admiral," said Adair, "where have you been? Here have I been waiting for my supper these two hours." Keppel replied—"I have been with the King; I thought I should never have got away. His Majesty has been most kind to me; he enquired about our prospects and plans, and treated me with so much openness and honesty, that I entered fully into the state of affairs, with which he seemed highly pleased."—"And you believe him?" dryly asked Mr Adair. Keppel felt hurt at the doubt. Adair contented himself with saying—"Well, we shall see." Before they parted, a note arrived from Lord Temple, to inform Lord Keppel that his Majesty had no further occasion for his services. This was one of those apparent marks of kindness which the King knew so well how to practise.'

Keppel, we believe, acted with great impartiality in the

small distribution of patronage that fell to his disposal. The appointment of Howe gave universal satisfaction; but the Admiral whom he is said to have made his third in command, affords an instance of a placable and forgiving disposition for an injury of the most serious nature, that cannot be too highly admired and extolled—‘ He (Keppel) had been repeatedly urged ‘ to give this post to one of his early friends, but he resisted all ‘ solicitations, and appointed Sir Alexander Hood, because he declared, “ Hood was the senior admiral of the two, and one of the ‘ best officers in his Majesty’s service.” When Hood’s conduct ‘ to Keppel, at the time of the court-martial, is remembered, this ‘ appointment must be considered as an example at once both of ‘ his zeal for the public service and his great placability of ‘ temper.’*

On the breaking up of the Coalition administration, Lord Keppel was succeeded in his office at the Admiralty by his friend and companion in arms, Lord Howe. From this period, he withdrew entirely from public life. In September 1785, he embarked for Naples to pass the winter, on the score of his health; the failure of it caused, or at least greatly aggravated, by that pestilential fever caught at the Havannah, which had carried off thousands of his comrades, accelerated the death of both his brothers, and from which, it is said, not one of the survivors of that dearly purchased conquest ever ultimately recovered. Lord Keppel returned to England in the spring of 1786; and on the 23d October, of the same year, expired in the sixty-third year of his age.

The character of Lord Keppel, as justly observed by his biographer, ‘ is comprised in the pages which record his ‘ actions;’ and which, we may add, are stated therein in a manner worthy of the recorder of them, by whose talents and diligence a page has been added to the history of the distinguished naval heroes of this country, which was wanting to complete the catalogue of those of our own times. Keppel had few enemies either in the service or out of it; and he lived long enough to conciliate the affections of all. ‘ I ever looked on Lord ‘ Keppel,’ says Burke, ‘ as one of the greatest and best men of ‘ his age; and I loved and cultivated him accordingly. He was

* This fact was communicated by Lord Keppel’s nephew, the present Sir Robert Adair. Sir John Barrow states, though he does not mention his authority, that it was at Lord Howe’s suggestion that Sir Alexander was appointed third in command. The two accounts are not inconsistent.

‘ much in my heart ; and, I believe, I was in his to the very last beat.’ * * * ‘ Lord Keppel was something high. It was a wild stock of pride, on which the tenderest of all hearts had grafted the milder virtues.’

With the following extract, descriptive of his person, qualities, and opinions, we shall conclude this article :—

‘ The epithet “ little ” fondly given by the sailors to Keppel, denotes him to have been low of stature. In his early manhood, a blow received from the but-end of a pistol, in a scuffle with foot-pads, fractured the bridge of his nose. His face, by this accident, was seriously and permanently disfigured ; yet the fascination of his smile, and the lively and benevolent expression of his eyes, redeemed the countenance from extreme plainness. The “ hereditary charm ” of his demeanour has been mentioned already. It combined a professional honesty and frankness with the ease and simplicity of address which, if not altogether acquired, are certainly confirmed and perfected by intercourse with the best society. His popularity with all classes appeared not only at his trial, but in the esteem with which both those under whom he served, and those whom he commanded, at all times regarded him ; in the zealous affection of his friends, and in the enforced respect of his political opponents.

‘ The political opinions of Keppel were inherited from ancestors who for centuries had been citizens of a free state, and whose descendants shared in our own revolution of 1688. Reason and experience confirmed these sentiments in him ; and he was, throughout his life, the steady and fearless supporter of civil and religious freedom, even when an opposite course, or neutrality alone, would have smoothed and accelerated his professional advancement. His darling object was active employment ; yet, when required to serve against his unrepresented brethren on the opposite shores of the Atlantic, Keppel courted neglect and misrepresentation rather than lend his services to a cause which his feelings and his principles equally disapproved. In his numerous encounters with the enemy, we find him, while in a subordinate station, distinguished for his gallantry and his nautical science ; for sagacity in comprehending, for promptness in executing, his orders ; and when in superior command, successful on every occasion except the indecisive action of the 27th of July. How far the result of that day was attributable to Keppel, as well as of the circumstances which caused the exception, the foregoing pages will, perhaps, have enabled the reader to judge. As a member of the legislature he made no pretensions to eloquence, or even to political eminence. Yet, on all subjects connected with his profession, he was listened to with attention, and distinguished for the impartiality of his representations, and the practical wisdom of his opinions. His letters exhibit similar features of character. On all public questions they display, without effort or pretence, a generous ardour, comprehensive views, and an active and temperate mind. And where they relate to his personal friendships and connexions, they reflect an ingenuous and affectionate nature which neither success nor disappointment could disturb.’

ART. III—*Edwin the Fair: an Historical Drama*. By HENRY TAYLOR, author of 'Philip Van Artevelde.' London: 12mo. 1842.

THIS is a dramatic poem full of life and beauty, thronged with picturesque groups, and with characters profoundly discriminated. They converse in language the most chaste, harmonious, and energetic. In due season, fearful calamities strike down the lovely and the good. Yet 'Edwin the Fair' is not to be classed among tragedies, in the full and exact sense of the expression.

'To purge the soul by pity and terror,' it is not enough that the stage should exhibit those who tread the high places of the earth as victims either of unmerited distress, or of retributive justice. It is further necessary that their sorrows should be deviations from the usual economy of human life. They must differ in their origin, and their character, from those ills which we have learned to regard as merely the established results of familiar causes. They must be attended by the rustling of the dark wings of fate, or by the still more awful march of an all-controlling Providence. The domain of the tragic theatre lies in that dim region where the visible and invisible worlds are brought into contact; and where the wise and the simple alike perceive and acknowledge a present deity, or demon. It is by the shocks and abrupt vicissitudes of fortune, that the dormant sense of our dependence on that inscrutable power in the grasp of which we lie, is quickened into life. It is during such transient dispersions of the clouds beneath which it is at other times concealed, that we feel the agency of heaven in the affairs of earth to be a reality and a truth. It is in such occurrences alone (distinguished in popular language from the rest, as providential) that the elements of tragedy are to be found in actual or in imaginable combination. There the disclosure of the laws of the universal theocracy imparts to the scene an unrivalled interest, and to the actors in it the dignity of ministers of the will of the Supreme. There each event exhibits some new and sublime aspect of the divine energy working out the divine purposes. There the great enigmas of our existence receive at least a partial solution. There, even amidst the seeming triumph of wrong, may be traced the dispensation of justice to which the dramatist is bound; and there also extends before his view a field of meditation drawn from themes of surpassing majesty and pathos.

Such is the law to which all the great tragic writers of ancient

or of modern times have submitted themselves—each in his turn assuming this high office of interpreting the movements of Providence, and reconciling man to the mysteries of his being. Thus Job is the stoic of the desert—victorious over all the persecutions of Satan, till the bitter sense of unjust reproach and undeserved punishment breaks forth in agonies which the descending Deity rebukes, silences, and soothes. Prometheus is the temporary triumph over beneficence, of a power at once malignant and omnipotent, which, at the command of destiny, is blindly rushing on towards the universal catastrophe which is to overwhelm and ruin all things. Agamemnon returns in triumph to a home where, during his long absence, the avenging Furies have been couching to spring at last on the unhappy son of Atreus—every hand in that fated house dropping with gore, and every voice uttering the maledictions of the Infernals. Œdipus, and his sons and daughters, represent a succession of calamities and crimes which would seem to exhaust the catalogue of human wretchedness; but each in turn is made to exhibit the working of one of the most awful of the laws under which we live—the visitation of the sins of parents on their children to the third and fourth generation. Macbeth is seduced by demoniacal predictions to accomplish the purposes, by violating the commands, of Heaven; and so to meditate, to extenuate, and to commit, the crimes suggested by the Fiend in cruel mockery. Hamlet is at once the reluctant minister and the innocent victim of the retributive justice, to the execution of which he is goaded by a voice from the world of departed spirits. Lear is crushed amidst the ruins of his house, on which parental injustice, filial impiety, foul lusts, and treacherous murder, had combined to draw down the curse of the avenger. Faust moves on towards destruction under the guidance of the Fiend, who lures him by the pride of knowledge and the force of appetite. Walenstein plunges into destruction, drawing down with him the faithful and the good, as a kind of bloody sacrifice, to atone for treachery to which the aspect of the stars and the predictions of the diviner had impelled him. And so, through every other tragic drama which has awakened the deeper emotions of the spectator or the reader, might be traced the operation of the law to which we have referred. How far this universal characteristic of tragedy—the perceptible intervention in human affairs of powers more than human—is to be discovered in ‘*Edwin the Fair*,’ the following brief and imperfect outline of the plot may sufficiently determine.

In the fresh and dewy dawn of life, Edwin and Elgiva had been wont to rove—

' O'er hill, through dale, with interlacing arms,
And thrid the thickets where wild roses grow,
Entangled with each other like themselves.'

But their sun had scarcely risen above the eastern horizon, when the dreams of childhood faded away before the illusions of youth. He ascended the Anglo-Saxon throne, and she plighted her troth to Earl Leolf, the commander of the English armies. The Earl was 'a man in middle age, busy and hard to please,' and not happy in the art of pleasing. Such, at least, was the more deliberate opinion or feeling of Elgiva. In a day of evil augury to herself, and to her house, the inconstant maiden crushed the hopes of her grave, though generous suitor, to share the crown of her early playmate.

It sat neither firmly nor easily on his brows. Athulf, the brother, and Leolf, the discarded suitor of his queen, were the chief opponents of the powerful body which, under the guidance of Dunstan, were rapidly extending over the monarchy, and the Church of England, the authority of the monastic orders. In the approaching alliance of Athulf's family to Edwin, the Abbot of Glastonbury foresaw the transfer, to an hostile party, of his own dominion over the mind of his young sovereign. Events had occurred to enhance and justify his solicitude. Athulf's energy had enabled Edwin to baffle the pretexts by which Dunstan had delayed his coronation. It was celebrated with becoming splendour, and was followed by a royal banquet. The moment appeared to the king propitious for avoiding the vigilant eye of his formidable minister. He escaped from the noisy revels, and flew on the wings of love to an adjacent oratory, where, before his absence had excited the notice and displeasure of his guests, he exchanged with Elgiva the vows which bound them to each other till death should break the bond. They little dreamed how soon it should thus be broken. Resenting the indignity of the king's abrupt desertion of the festive board, the assembled nobles deputed the Abbot and the Archbishop of Canterbury to solicit, and if necessary to compel his return. They found him in the society of his newly-affianced bride, and assailed them with gross imputations, which she indignantly repelled by an open avowal of her marriage. Availing himself of the disorder of the moment, and of the canonical objections to their union, founded on their too near consanguinity, Dunstan caused them to be seized and imprisoned. Elgiva was dispatched to Chester, the King and Athulf being secured in the Tower of London.

Leolf, who had absented himself from the coronation, was in command of the royal forces at Tunbridge, where he was quickly joined by Athulf, who had found the means of escaping from

prison. The two earls then separated—Leolf proceeding to the north, with a part of the army, to rescue Elgiva, and Athulf assuming the conduct of the power destined for the deliverance of the King.

Whatever may have been the indignation of the confederate lords, their policy dictated pacific measures; and to these the Archbishop, offended and alarmed by the audacity of Dunstan, willingly lent himself. He convened a synod to deliberate on the validity of the royal marriage, and on the propriety of applying to Rome for a dispensation. Long and fervent debate ensued. The Church, as represented in that holy conclave, had given strong indications of a conciliatory spirit, when, casting himself in vehement prayer before a crucifix, Dunstan invoked the decision of Him whose sacred image it bore. An audible voice, which seemed to proceed from the cross, (though really uttered by a minister of the Abbot's crimes, who had been concealed for the purpose within its ample cavity,) forbade the ratification of the royal nuptials. Rising from the earth, the holy Abbot pronounced a solemn excommunication of Edwin, Elgiva, and their adherents, and dismissed the assembly which had so vainly attempted to defeat the will of heaven, and of heaven's chosen minister.

The triumphant Dunstan then proceeded to the Tower, to obtain from the captive and excommunicated King the abdication of his crown. He was answered by indignant reproaches, and at length withdrew, but not till he had summoned into the royal presence an assassin, prepared to bring the controversy to a decisive and bloody close. At that instant Athulf with his forces burst into the Tower. Edwin regained his freedom, and Dunstan fled in disguise into Hampshire.

But the saint of Glastonbury possessed too powerful a hold on the attachment and reverence of the multitude, to be thus defeated by any blow however severe, or by any exposure however disgraceful. A popular insurrection in his favour arrested his flight to France. He resumed his self-confidence, appeared again in his proper character, and lifted up his mitred front, with its wonted superiority, in a Wittenagemot which he convened at Malpas. There, surrounded by his adherents and his military retainers, he openly denounced war on his sovereign.

Under the guidance of Athulf, the King had moved from London towards Chester, to effect a junction with Leolf and his army. The attempt was not successful. Impatient of her prison, Elgiva had exercised over her jailer the spell of her rank and beauty, and had rendered him at once the willing instrument and the companion of her escape. Leolf was apprised of her design, and anxious for the safety of her who had so ill required

his devotion, advanced to meet her, supported only by a small party of his personal attendants. They met, and, while urging their flight to Leolf's army, were overtaken by a party attached to the cause of Dunstan, and slain.

For this catastrophe Dunstan was not, in intention at least, responsible. Alarmed by intelligence of a Danish invasion, he had become desirous of a reconciliation with Edwin, and was making overtures for that purpose. But it was now too late. The King, maddened by the loss of Elgiva, rushed forward with blind and precipitate haste to Malpas, where the body of his murdered wife awaited a royal sepulture, and where was intrenched the haughty rebel who had brought her down to a premature grave. Deaf to every voice but that which from the inmost recesses of his soul cried for revenge, Edwin plunged wildly into his fate. Covered with wounds, he fell once more into the toils of his deadly enemy. An awful sound recalled him to momentary animation and strength. It was the low dirge from the choir of the neighbouring cathedral, chanting the funeral obsequies of Elgiva. He flew from his dying couch, cast himself with delirious ravings on her cold and inanimate form, and then, invoking the vengeance of heaven on their persecutor, descended with her to the grave.

Incomplete, and therefore inaccurate, as it is, this slight abridgement of the tale will show, that the dramatic action of 'Edwin the Fair' is rather disastrous than tragical. We witness, indeed, the deadly conflict of thrones, spiritual and temporal. The Sceptre falls from a feeble grasp, and the Crozier is elevated in sanguinary triumph. But it is the triumph of power over weakness, of craft over simplicity, of mature worldly wisdom over childish inexperience. An overwhelming calamity befalls Edwin and Elgiva, but it is provoked neither by any gigantic guilt, nor by any magnanimous self-devotion. They perish, the victims of imprudence rather than of crime—of a rash marriage and a venial inconstancy. This is quite probable—quite in accordance with truths to be gathered from the experience of each passing day; but for that very reason, it is a fable which does not fulfil the laws imposed on the stage by Æschylus and Shakespeare—by their imitators and their critics—or rather by reason and nature herself. It does not break up our torpid habitual associations. It excites no intense sympathy. It gives birth to no deep emotion, except, indeed, regret that vengeance does not strike down the oppressor. There is a failure of poetical justice in the progress and in the catastrophe of the drama. If it were a passage of authentic history, the mind might repose in the conviction that the Judge of all must eventually do right. But as it is a fiction, it is impossible not to repine that right is not

actually done. Such unmerited disasters and prosperous injustice are, we know, consistent with the presence of a superintending Deity. But they do not suggest it. The handwriting on the wall has no pregnant meaning, nor mythic significance. It is not apparently traced by the Divine finger, nor has the Seer given us any inspired interpretation. It is one of those legends from which a moralist might deduce important lessons of prudence, but from which a dramatist could hardly evoke a living picture of the destiny of man;—of man opposed and aided by powers mightier than his own, engaged in an unequal though most momentous conflict, impotent even when victorious, and majestic even when subdued.

This objection to the plot of his drama has evidently been anticipated by Mr Taylor himself. He summons some dark clouds to gather around Dunstan at the moment of his success, and dismisses him from our view, oppressed by the only domestic sorrow to which his heart was accessible, and by omens of approaching calamity from an inroad of the Northmen. Thus the triumph of the wicked is tempered, and some endeavour is made to gratify, as well as to excite, the thirst for his punishment. It is hardly a successful attempt. The loss in mature life of an aged mother, is a sorrow too familiar and transitory to be accepted as a retribution for crimes of the deepest dye; and war, however disastrous to others, has seldom any depressing terrors for the rulers of mankind. Besides, there are yet some fetters, however light, which chronology will throw over the volatile spirit of poetry; and it is hard to forget the historical fact, that no Danish invasion ever disturbed the tranquillity of Dunstan; but that he lived and died in that century of repose, for which England was indebted to the wisdom and the valour of the two great predecessors of Edwin.

Mr Taylor has therefore employed another and more effectual resource to relieve the inherent defects of the subject he has chosen. He avails himself of the opportunity it affords for the delineation and contrast of characters, which he throws off with a careless prodigality, attesting an almost inexhaustible affluence. In every passage where the interest of the story droops, it is sustained by the appearance of some new person of the drama, who is not a mere fiction, but a reality with a fictitious name. The stage is not possessed by its ancient tenants provided with a new set of speeches, but with recruits, who represent some of the many aspects under which man has actually presented himself to a most sagacious and diligent observer. This, however, is not true of Dunstan, the most conspicuous of all those who contribute to the action or to the dialogue. He is drawn, not from actual life, but from books. In the great drama of society,

which is acted in our age on the theatre of the civilized world, no part has been, or could be, assigned to a Spiritual Despot, in which to disclose freely the propensities and the mysteries of his nature. The poet has therefore taken the outline from the Anglo-Saxon Chroniclers, and has supplied the details and the colouring from his own imagination. Hence the central figure is less congruous—less in harmony with itself—than those of the group by which it is surrounded; but then it is more ideal, is cast in bolder relief, and is thrown off with greater force and freedom.

The real Dunstan, the Recluse, the Saint, and the Statesman of the Tenth Century, had his full share of the inconsistencies which distinguish man as he is, from man as he is painted. He was endowed with all the faculties by which great actions are achieved, and with the temperament without which they are never undertaken. Conversant in his early manhood with every science by which social life had then been improved, and by every art by which it had been embellished, his soul was agitated by ambition and by love. Unprosperous in both, his wounded spirit sought relief in solitude and penitential exercises; and an age familiar with such prodigies, regarded with astonishment and reverence the austerity of his self-discipline. When, at length, he emerged from the grave, (for in that similitude he had dug his cell,) he was supposed by others, and probably by himself, to have buried there all the tastes and the passions which had once enslaved him to the world. But other spirits as secular as the first, though assuming a holier garb, had entered his bosom, and taken up their abode there. All the energies once wasted on letters, music, painting, and science, or in the vain worship of her to whom his young heart had been devoted, were henceforth consecrated to the church and to his order. He became the foremost champion of sacerdotal celibacy and monastic retirement; assumed the conduct of the war of the regular against the secular clergy; and was the founder of the ecclesiastical system which continued for five centuries to control all the religious, and to affect all the political institutions of his native land.

But the Severn leaping down the rocks of Plinlimmon, and the same stream when expanded into a muddy and sluggish estuary, does not differ more from itself, than St Dunstan the Abbot of Glastonbury, from Dunstan the Metropolitan of the Church, and the Minister of the Crown of England. During five successive reigns, all the powers of the government were in his hands, but he ruled ingloriously. When his supreme power had once been firmly secured, all the fire and genius of his earlier days became extinct. With the sublime example of Alfred, and the more recent glories of Athelstan before his eyes, he accomplished

nothing, and attempted nothing for the permanent welfare of his country. No one social improvement can be traced to his wisdom or munificence. He had none of the vast conceptions, and splendid aims, which have ennobled the usurpations of so many other churchmen. After an undisputed possession of power of forty years' continuance, he left the State enfeebled, and the Crown in hopeless degradation. To him, more than to any man, must be ascribed the ruin of the dynasty under which he flourished, and the invasions which desolated the kingdom during half a century from his death. He had commanding talents, and dauntless courage, but a low, narrow, selfish spirit. His place in the Roman calendar was justly assigned to him in acknowledgment of his incomparable services to the Papacy; but he has no station in the calendar of the great and good men who, having consecrated the noblest gifts of nature or of fortune to their proper ends, live for the benefit of all generations, and are alike revered and celebrated by all.

The Dunstan of this tragedy is not the lordly churchman reposing in the plenitude of success, but the fanatic grasping at supreme command. He is the real hero of '*Edwin the Fair*,' towering over all his associates, and distinguished from them all by a character, which, in the full and proper sense of the term, may be pronounced to be dramatic. He is at once the victim of religious misanthropy and self-adoration. He has worshipped the world, has been rejected by his idol, and has turned away mortified, but not humbled, to meditate holier joys, and to seek an eternal recompense. But, in the pursuit of these sublime objects, he is haunted by the memory of the delights he has abandoned, and of the injustice which has expelled him from the ways and the society of mankind. These thoughts distil their bitterness even into his devotions. His social affections droop and wither as their proper aliment is withdrawn. His irascible feelings deepen, and pass into habits of fixed antipathy and moroseness. To feed these gloomy passions he becomes the calumniator of his species, incredulous of human virtue, and astute in every uncharitable construction of human motives. His malignity establishes a disastrous alliance with his disordered piety. He ascribes to the Being he adores the foul passions which fester in his own bosom. His personal wrongs are no longer the insignificant ills of an individual sufferer, nor have his personal resentments the meanness of a private revenge—for his foes are antagonists of the purposes of heaven; and to crush them can be no unacceptable homage to the Supreme Arbiter of rewards and punishments. With the cold unsocial propensities of a withered heart, disguised from others and from him-

self by the sophistries of a palsied conscience, Dunstan finds his way back to the busy world. He lives among men to satiate an ambition such as might be indulged by an incarnation of the Evil Spirit—an ambition exulting in conscious superiority, and craving for the increase and the display of it, but spurning and trampling in the dust the victims over whom it triumphs. Patriotism, loyalty, humility, reverence—every passion by which man is kind to his brethren—all are dead in him; and an intense selfishness, covered by holy pretexts, reigns in undisputed sovereignty in his soul. Man is but the worthless instrument of his will; and even to his Creator he addresses himself with the unawed familiarity of a favourite. Proud, icy-cold, and remorseless, he wades through guilt sneeringly and exultingly—the subject of a strange spiritual disease, compounded of a paralysis of all the natural sympathies, and a morbid vigour of all the mental energies. This portrait is terrible, impressive, and (unhappily) not improbable. It labours, however, under one inconsistency.

The fanaticism of Dunstan, as delineated in this tragedy, is wanting in one essential element. He has no profound or deeply-cherished convictions. He does not believe himself to be the selected depositary of divine truth. He does not regard dissent from his own opinions as criminal; nor does he revel in any vindictive anticipations of the everlasting woe of his theological antagonists. He is not clinging to any creed which, if rejected by others, may elude his own grasp. The enemies of the Church are indeed his enemies; but they are so because they endanger his power, not because they disturb the repose or the self-complacency of his mind. He has (to borrow the distinction of a great writer) the fanaticism of the scourge, the brand, and the sword, without having the fanaticism of the creed. He is a fanatic, without being an enthusiast. His guilt is not extenuated by any passionate attachment for truth or sanctity, or for what he believes to be true and sacred. He rushes into oppression, treachery, fraud, and plunder, not at the impulse of a disordered imagination, but at the bidding of a godless, brotherless heart.

This absence of theological hatred, founded on the earnest attachment to some theological opinions, impairs both the congruity and the terror of Dunstan's dramatic character. He is actuated by no passion intense enough to provoke such enormous guilt; or familiar enough to bring him within the range of our sympathies; or natural enough to suggest, that some conceivable shifting of the currents of life might hurry us into some plunge as desperate as that which we see him making. His homicides are not bloody sacrifices, but villanous murders. His scourge is not the thong of Dominic so much as the lash with

which Sancho (the knave!) imposes on the credulity of his master. His impious frauds are not oracular deceptions, but the slight-of-hand tricks of a juggler. He is waited on by an imp of darkness, who is neither man nor fiend; for he perpetrates the foulest crimes without malignity or cupidity, or any other obvious motive. He slaughters Elgiva and Leolf; raises his hand to assassinate the king; and, at Dunstan's command, climbs a tree, to howl there like the Devil; and then enters the cavity of the crucifix, to utter a solemn response in the person of the Redeemer.

The objection to this is not the improbability, but the revolting hatefulness of the guilt which Dunstan and his minister divide between them. Unhappily it is not historically improbable, but the reverse. Sanguinary and devious have been the paths along which many a canonized saint has climbed that celestial eminence. Tricks, as base and profane as that of Dunstan's crucifix, have been exhibited or encouraged, not merely by the vulgar heroes, but by some of the most illustrious fathers of the Church. But if they violated the eternal laws of God, it was to accomplish what they devoutly believed to be the divine will. Saints and sinners might agree in the means to be used, but they differed entirely as to the ends to be accomplished. Ambrose, preaching at Milan over the bleeding remains of the disinterred martyrs, lent himself to what he must have suspected or known to be a lie. But the lie was told and exhibited for the confutation of the Arians, to which holy object Ambrose would as readily have sacrificed his life. And though evil done that good may come, be evil still—nay, an evil peculiarly pestilent and hard to be forgiven—yet there is, after all, a wide difference between Bishop Bonner and Jonathan Wilde. Devout fanaticism, if it may not extenuate, does at least sublimate crime. By the intensity of his convictions, the greatness of his aims, and the energy of his motives, the genuine fanatic places himself beyond the reach of contempt, of disgust, or of unmixed abhorrence. We feel that, by the force of circumstances, the noblest of men might be betrayed into such illusions, and urged into such guilt as his. We acknowledge that, under happier auspices, he might have been the benefactor, not the curse of his species. We perceive that, if his erring judgment could be corrected, he might even yet be reclaimed to philanthropy and to peace. If we desire that retributive justice should overtake him, the aspiration is, that he may fall 'a victim to the gods,' and not be hewed as 'a carcass for the hounds.' Not such is the vengeance we invoke on the dramatic Dunstan and his ministering demon. We upbraid the tardiness of human invention, which laboured a thousand years in the discovery of the tread-

mill. Or rather our admiration of the genius which created so noble an image of intellectual power, ruthless decision, and fearful hardihood, is alloyed by some resentment that the poet should so have marred the work of his own hands. How noble a work it is will best be understood by listening to the soliloquy in which Dunstan communes with his own heart, and with his Maker, on the commission entrusted to him, and on the spiritual temptations he has to encounter in the discharge of it :—

‘ Spirit of speculation, rest, oh rest !
 And push not from her place the spirit of prayer !
 God, thou’st given unto me a troubled being—
 So move upon the face thereof, that light
 May be, and be divided from the darkness !
 Arm thou my soul that I may smite and chase
 The spirit of that darkness, whom not I
 But Thou thro’ me compellest.—Mighty power,
 Legions of piercing thoughts illuminate,
 Hast Thou committed to my large command,
 Weapons of light and radiant shafts of day,
 And steeds that trample on the tumbling clouds.
 But with them it hath pleased Thee to let mingle
 Evil imaginations, corporal stings,
 A host of Imps and Ethiops, dark doubts,
 Suggestions of revolt.—Who is’t that dares’—

In the same spirit, at once exulting, self-exploring, and irreverent, Dunstan bursts out in a sort of pæan on his anticipated success, as he enters the Tower to persuade the abdication of his sovereign.

‘ Kings shall bow down before thee, said my soul,
 And it is even so. Hail, ancient Hold !
 Thy chambers are most cheerful, though the light
 Enter not freely ; for the eye of God
 Smiles in upon them. Cherish’d by His smile
 My heart is glad within me, and to Him
 Shall testify in works a strenuous joy.
 —Methinks that I could be myself that rock
 Whereon the Church is founded,—wind and flood
 Beating against me, boisterous in vain.
 I thank you, Gracious Powers ! Supernal Host !
 I thank you that on me, though young in years,
 Ye put the glorious charge to try with fire,
 To winnow and to purge. I hear you call !
 A radiance and a resonance from Heaven
 Surrounds me, and my soul is breaking forth
 In strength, as did the new-created Sun
 When Earth beheld it first on the fourth day.
 God spake not then more plainly to that orb
 Than to my spirit now. I hear the call.

My answer, God, and Earth, and Hell shall bear.
 But I could reason with thee, Gracious Power,
 For that thou givest me to perform thy work
 Such sorry instruments.'

The spirit thus agitated had not always been a prey to disquieting thoughts. Dunstan had once loved as other men love, and even on his seared heart were engraven recollections which revive in all their youthful warmth and beauty as he contemplates the agonies of his captive king, and tempts him to abdicate his crown by the prospect of his reunion to Elgiva.

' When Satan first
 Attempted me, 'twas in a woman's shape ;
 Such shape as may have erst misled mankind,
 When Greece or Rome uprear'd with Pagan rites
 Temples to Venus, pictured there or carved
 With rounded, polish'd, and exuberant grace,
 And mien whose dimpled changefulness betray'd,
 Thro' jocund hues, the seriousness of passion.
 I was attempted thus, and Satan sang,
 With female pipe and melodies that thrill'd
 The soften'd soul, of mild voluptuous ease,
 And tender sports that chased the kindling hours
 In odorous gardens or on terraces,
 To music of the fountains and the birds,
 Or else in skirting groves by sunshine smitten,
 Or warm winds kiss'd, whilst we from shine to shade
 Roved unregarded. Yes, 'twas Satan sang,
 Because 'twas sung to me, whom God had call'd
 To other pastime and severer joys.
 But were it not for this, God's strict behest
 Enjoin'd upon me,—had I not been vow'd
 To holiest service rigorously required,
 I should have owned it for an Angel's voice,
 Nor ever could an earthly crown, or toys
 And childishness of vain ambition, gauds
 And tinsels of the world, have lured my heart
 Into the tangle of those mortal cares
 That gather round a throne. What call is thine
 From God or Man, what voice within bids thee
 Such pleasures to forego, such cares confront?'

Dunstan is a superb sophister. Observe with what address he reconciles himself to the fraud so coarse and degrading as that of making his instrument, Gurmo, shake the forest with dismal howlings, to intimate to the passers-by that the hour of fierce conflict between the Saint and the Prince of Darkness had arrived. Contempt of mankind, and of his supposed adversary, are skilfully called up to still the voice of honour and the remonstrances of conscience.

' And call'st thou this a fraud, thou secular lack-brain?
 Thou loose lay-priest, I tell thee it is none.
 Do I not battle wage in very deed
 With Satan? Yea, and conquer! And who's he
 Saith falsehood is deliver'd in these howls,
 Which do but to the vulgar ear translate
 Truths else to them ineffable? Where's Satan?
 His presence, life and kingdom? Not the air
 Nor bowels of the earth, nor central fires
 His habitat exhibits; it is here,
 Here in the heart of Man. And if from hence
 I cast him with discomfiture, that truth
 Is verily of the vulgar sense conceived,
 By utterance symbolic, when they deem
 That, met in bodily oppugnancy,
 I tweak him by the snout. A fair belief
 Wherein the fleshy and the palpable type
 Doth of pure truth substantiate the essence.
 Enough. Come down. The screech-owl from afar
 Upbraids thy usurpation. Cease, I say.'

It is with admirable truth and insight into human character that Dunstan is made to resort to artifices, as various as the occasions suggesting them, to evade the expostulations with which conscience still tracks him in the path of guilt. From scorn of man he passes to a kind of adoration of the mystical abstract Being, to which, in the absence of more palpable idols, it is so easy to render an extravagant homage. What a labyrinth of gigantic, vague, half-conceived images is it into which he plunges, in the endeavour to sustain his own mind, by contemplating the majesty and the holiness of the impersonation in the cause of which he is willing to believe himself engaged.

' The Church is great,
 Is holy, is ineffably divine!
 Spiritually seen, and with the eye of faith,
 The body of the Church, lit from within,
 Seems but the luminous phantom of a body;
 The incorporeal spirit is all in all.
 Eternity *a parte post et ante*
 So drinks the refuse, thins the material fibre,
 That lost in ultimate tenuity
 The actual and the mortal lineaments,
 The Church in Time, the meagre, definite, bare,
 Ecclesiastical anatomy,
 The body of this death translates itself,
 And glory upon glory swallowing all
 Makes earth a scarce distinguishable speck
 In universal heaven. Such is the Church
 As seen by faith; but otherwise regarded,

The body of the Church is search'd in vain
To find the seat of the soul; for it is nowhere.
Here are two Bishops, but 'tis not in them.'

To the dramatic character of Dunstan, the antithesis is that of Wulfstan the Wise. An idealist arrested in the current of life by the eddy of his own thoughts, he muses away his existence in one long, though ever-shifting dream of labours to be undertaken, and duties to be performed. Studious of books, of nature, of the heart, and of the ways of man, his intellectual wealth feeds a perennial stream of discourse, which, meandering through every field of speculation, and in turns enriching all, still changes the course it ought to pursue, or overflows the banks by which it should be confined, as often as any obstacle is opposed to its continuous progress. Love, poetry, friendship, philosophy, war, politics, morals, and manners, each is profoundly contemplated, eloquently discussed, and helplessly abandoned, by this master of ineffectual wisdom; and yet he is an element in society which could be worse spared than the shrewdest practical understanding in the Camp, or the Exchange. His wide circuit of meditation has made him catholic, charitable, and indulgent. In the large horizon which his mental eye traverses, he discerns such comprehensive analogies, such countless indications of the creative goodness, and such glorious aspects of beauty and of grace, as no narrower ken could embrace, and no busier mind combine and harmonize. To form such combinations, and to scatter prodigally around him the germs of thought, if happily they may bear fruit in intellects better disciplined, though less opulent than his own, is the delight and the real duty of Wulfstan, the colloquial. His talk, when listeners are to be had, thus becomes a ceaseless exercise of kindness; and even when there are none to heed him, an imaginary circle still enables him to soliloquize most benevolently. In this munificent diffusion of his mental treasures, the good man is not merely happy, but invulnerable. Let fortune play her antics as she will, each shall furnish him with a text; and he will embellish all with quaint conceits or diagnostic expositions. His daughter steals an unworthy match; but he rebounds from the shock to moralize on parental disappointment and conjugal constancy. He is overborne and trampled down by the energy of Dunstan, and immediately discovers in his misadventure a proof how well the events of his own age are adapted for history; and how admirably a retirement to Oxford will enable himself to become the historian. Could Samuel Taylor Coleridge have really thus blossomed in the iron age of the Anglo-Saxons? It is a hard problem. But the effluence of his theatrical representative is rendered probable to all who ever performed the pilgrimage to the Hierophant at Highgate, in the golden era of George IV. Never

was there a group of auditors better disposed or better able to appreciate the wisdom of a sage, than those who are collected round Wulfstan. See with what fine discrimination and keen relish his portrait is sketched by one of them.

‘ Still

This life and all that it contains, to him
Is but a tissue of illumious dreams
Fill'd with book-wisdom, pictured thought, and love
That on its own creations spends itself.
All things he understands, and nothing does.
Profusely eloquent in copious praise
Of action, he will talk to you as one
Whose wisdom lay in dealings and transactions ;
Yet so much action as might tie his shoe
Cannot his will command ; himself alone
By his own wisdom not a jot the gainer.
Of silence, and the hundred thousand things
'Tis better not to mention, he will speak,
And still most wisely.—But, behold ! he comes.'

Leolf, who thus delineates the character of Wulfstan, is about to announce to the old man the secret marriage of his daughter ; and as the Earl cautiously approaches the unwelcome topic, the philosopher finds in each turn of the discourse some theme which hurries him away to a boundless distance from the matter in hand. Obeying the law by which his own ideas are associated, but with the tendency observable in all dreamers, sleeping or waking, to reconcile the vision with any suggestion from without, he involves himself in an enquiry how a man in middle life should wed, and on that critical topic thus makes deliverance :—

‘ Love changes with the changing life of man :
In its first youth, sufficient to itself,
Heedless of all beside, it reigns alone,
Revels or storms, and spends itself in passion.
In middle age—a garden through whose soil
The roots of neighbouring forest-trees have crept—
It strikes on stringy customs bedded deep,
Perhaps on alien passions ; still it grows
And lacks not force nor freshness : but this age
Shall aptly chuse as answering best its own,
A love that clings not, nor is exigent,
Encumbers not the active purposes,
Nor drains their source ; but proffers with free grace
Pleasure at pleasure touch'd, at pleasure waded,
A washing of the weary traveller's feet,
A quenching of his thirst, a sweet repose
Alternate and preparative, in groves
Where loving much the flower that loves the shade,

And loving much the shade that that flower loves,
 He yet is unbewilder'd, unenslaved,
 Thence starting light, and pleasantly let go,
 When serious service calls.

Mr Shandy's expenditure of eloquence on the death of his son, was not more consolatory to the bereaved rhetorician, than are the disquisitions of Wulfstan on his daughter's undutiful marriage. She must no longer be mutable of purpose. She must study the excellent uses of constancy, and abide in quietude of mind. The fickle wind may be her teacher. Then, as if himself floating on the wings of some soft and balmy gale, the poetical sage drowns all his parental anxieties in this light and beautiful parable :—

' The wind, when first he rose and went abroad
 Thro' the vast region, felt himself at fault,
 Wanting a voice ; and suddenly to earth
 Descended with a wafture and a swoop,
 Where, wandering volatile from kind to kind,
 He woo'd the several trees to give him one.
 First he besought the ash ; the voice she lent
 Fitfully with a free and lashing change
 Flung here and there its sad uncertainties :
 The aspen next ; a flutter'd frivolous twitter
 Was her sole tribute : from the willow came,
 So long as dainty summer dress'd her out,
 A whispering sweetness, but her winter note
 Was hissing, dry, and reedy : lastly the pine
 Did he solicit, and from her he drew
 A voice so constant, soft, and lowly deep,
 That there he rested, welcoming in her
 A mild memorial of the ocean-cave
 Where he was born.'

The spirit of rumination possesses all the persons of this drama. No wonder, then, that Leolf feeds on his own thoughts, as best becomes a discarded lover. But of that deplorable class of mankind, he is a remarkable, if not altogether a new variety. He had climbed the central arch in the bridge of life, painfully conscious of the solitude of his heart in the midst of the busy crowd, and cherishing a vague but earnest desire for deliverance. An ideal form, lovely as the day-spring, and radiant with love to him, haunted his path, and he lived in the faith that the bright reality would at length be disclosed, when his spirit should know the blessedness of that union which mystically represents to man the design and the perfection of his being. She came, or seemed to come, in the form of Elgiva—the glorious impersonation of that dazzling fantasy—the actual fulfilment

of many a dream, too fondly courted by his solemn and overburdened mind. Nature had made her beautiful, and, even when the maiden's ruby lips were closed, her beaming eye and dimpled cheek gave utterance to thoughts, now more joyous or impassioned, now more profound or holy, than any which could be imparted through the coarser vehicle of articulate speech. So judged the enamoured interpreter of that fair tablet—mistaking for emanations of her mind the glowing hues reflected by that brilliant surface from his own. He threw over the object of his homage all the most rich and graceful draperies stored in the wardrobe of his own pensive imagination; unconsciously worshipped the creature of his own fancy; and adorned her with a diadem which, though visible to him alone, had for a true heart a greater value than the proudest crown which could be shared with kings. Such was not Elgiva's judgment. Her ear drank in the flatteries of Edwin; nor had he long to sue for the hand which had been plighted to the champion and defender of his throne. A ready vengeance was in the grasp of Leolf. One word from him would have sealed the doom of his successful rival. But no such word passes his lips. In his solitude he probes the incurable wound which had blighted all the hopes, and dispelled all the illusions of life. He broods with melancholy intentness over the bleak prospect, and drains to the dregs the bitter cup of irremediable desolation. But in his noble spirit there is no place for scorn, resentment, or reproach. His duty, though it be to protect with his life the authors of his wretchedness, is performed in the true spirit of duty;—quietly, earnestly, and without vaunt or ostentation. He has sympathy to spare for the sorrows of others, while demanding none for his own. He extenuates with judicial rectitude and calmness Elgiva's infidelity to himself, and loyally dies to restore her to the arms of her husband.

Leolf is the portrait of a man in whose mind justice, in the largest conception of the word, exercises an undisputed sway;—silencing, though it cannot assuage, the deepest sorrow, repressing all the importunities of self-love, restraining every severe and uncharitable censure, and exacting the faithful, though unrequited, discharge of all the obligations of loyalty, and love, and honour. The world in which we live abounds in models, which may have suggested, by the power of contrast, this image of a statesman and a soldier. Haughty self-assertion is not merely pardoned in our public men, but takes its place among their conventional virtues. We are accustomed to extol that exquisite sensitiveness which avenges every wrong, and repels every indignity, even though the welfare of our common country be

the sacrifice. To appreciate the majesty of a mind which, in the most conspicuous stations of life, surrenders itself to the guidance of perfect equity—and of humility, the offspring of equity; which has mastered resentment and pride as completely as all the baser passions—we must turn from the real to the mimetic theatre, and study man not as he actually is, in camps and parliaments, but as he is here exhibited on the stage.

Relieved from attendance on his feeble sovereign and faithless queen, Leolf (a great soliloquist) takes his stand on the sea-shore, and thus gives utterance to the thoughts which disappointment had awakened in his melancholy, though well-balanced mind:—

‘Rocks that beheld my boyhood! Perilous shelf
 That nursed my infant courage! Once again
 I stand before you—not as in other days
 In your grey faces smiling—but like you
 The worse for weather. Here again I stand,
 Again and on the solitary shore
 Old ocean plays as on an instrument,
 Making that ancient music, when not known?
 That ancient music only not so old
 As He who parted ocean from dry land
 And saw that it was good. Upon my ear,
 As in the season of susceptible youth,
 The mellow murmur falls—but finds the sense
 Dull’d by distemper; shall I say—by time?
 Enough in action has my life been spent
 Through the past decade, to rebate the edge
 Of early sensibility. The sun
 Rides high, and on the thoroughfares of life
 I find myself a man in middle age,
 Busy and hard to please. The sun shall soon
 Dip westerly,—but oh! how little like
 Are life’s two twilights! Would the last were first
 And the first last! that so we might be soothed
 Upon the thoroughfares of busy life
 Beneath the noon-day sun, with hope of joy
 Fresh as the morn,—with hope of breaking lights,
 Illuminated mists and spangled lawns
 And woodland orisons and unfolding flowers,
 As things in expectation.—Weak of faith!
 Is not the course of earthly outlook, thus
 Reversed from Hope, an argument to Hope
 That she was licensed to the heart of man
 For other than for earthly contemplations,
 In that observatory domiciled
 For survey of the stars?’

It is in his last interview with Elgiva that the character of Leolf is best exhibited. He has rescued her from captivity, and, during a transient pause in her flight with him to Edwin, the inconstant Queen expresses her gratitude, and suggests her contrition. It is a scene of pathos and dignity which we should rejoice to transfer into our pages, but which would be impaired by abridgement, and is too long for quotation as it stands.

If Leolf is the example of the magnanimous endurance of the ills of life, Athulf, his friend and brother soldier, is the portrait of a man born to encounter and to baffle them. It is drawn with the elaborate care, and touched and retouched with the parental fondness with which authors cherish, and sometimes enervate, their favoured progeny. Unfortunately, Athulf is surrounded by a throng of dramatic persons, who afford him no sufficient space for action or for speech. We become acquainted with him chiefly by observing the impression he leaves on the minds of his associates, his enemies, and his friends. Wulfstan the Wise is one of these; and he will describe Athulf with a warmth and vigour which it is impossible to emulate, although it must be admitted to be not inconsiderably abstruse—an infirmity to which the good Wulfstan is greatly addicted.

‘ Much mirth he hath, and yet less mirth than fancy.

His is that nature of humanity

Which both ways doth redound, rejoicing now

With soarings of the soul, anon brought low :

For such the law that rules the larger spirits.

This soul of man, this elemental crisis,

Completed, should present the universe

Abounding in all kinds ; and unto all

One law is common,—that their act and reach

Stretch'd to the farthest is resilient ever,

And in resilience hath its plenary force.

Against the gust remitting fiercelier burns

The fire, than with the gust it burnt before.

The richest mirth, the richest sadness too,

Stands from a groundwork of its opposite ;

For these extremes upon the way to meet

Take a wide sweep of Nature, gathering in

Harvests of sundry seasons.’

With Dunstan, Leolf, Wulfstan, and Athulf, are associated a rich variety of other characters—some elaborately, some slightly, sketched—and some exhibited in that rapid outline which is designed to suggest, rather than to portray the image which occupies the poet's fancy. There is Odo the Archbishop, the sport of the winds and currents, into which this victim of dignity and circumstances is passively borne—a sort of *rouge dragon*, or *ela-*

renchieux king-at-arms, hurried by some misadventure in feats of real chivalry, with nothing but tabard and mantle to oppose to the sharp sword and heavy battle-axe ;—and Clarenbald, by office a Lord Chancellor, a pompous patronizing appendage of royalty, who, in an age of war and treason, and amidst the clash of arms, is no better than a kind of master of the ceremonies in the *Aula Regia* ;—and Ruold, a hare-brained gallant, whom the frown of a polished brow, or the smile of a dimpled cheek, will mould to the fair one's purposes, though faith, life, and honour should be the forfeit ;—and Edwin himself, the slave in turn of every passion which assails him, love, anger, despondency, impatience, and revenge, ever wasting his energies to no purpose, and playing the fool with the indefeasible dignity of him who at once wears and worships an hereditary crown ;—and Elgiva, the storm-compelling beauty, who sets a world in flames, and who has proceeded from the hands of her dramatic creator with a character entirely neutral and unformed ; in order that all may ascribe to her such fascinations as may best explain to each the mystery of her influence over the weak and the wise, the feeble and the resolute ;—and Emma, a damsel whose virtue (for she is virtuous and good and firm of heart) is but little indebted to her discretion ; for the maiden is possessed by the spirit of intrigue and intermeddling, and, at his bidding, assumes by turns the disguises of a wife, of a strolling minstrel, and of a priest, to disentangle the webs which she has spun ;—and there are military leaders and ecclesiastics, fortune-tellers and scholars, jesters, swineherds, and foresters—to each of whom is assigned some share in the dialogue or in the plot—which glows like the firmament with stars of every magnitude, clustering into constellations of endless variety.

This crowding of the scene at once conduces to the beauty, and impairs the interest of this drama. If our arithmetic fail us not, there appear on the stage not fewer than fifty interlocutors, who jostle and cross each other—impede the development of the fable, and leave on the mind of the reader, or of the spectator, an impression at once indistinct and fatiguing. It is not till after a second or a third perusal, that the narrative or succession of events emerges distinctly from the throng of the doings and the sayings. But each successive return to this drama brings to light, with a still increasing brilliancy, the exquisite structure of the verse, the manly vigour of thought, and the deep wisdom to which it gives most musical utterance ; the cordial sympathy of the poet with all that is to be loved and revered in our common nature, and his no less generous antipathy for all that debases and corrupts it ; his sagacious and varied insight into the chambers of imagery in the human heart ; and the all-controlling and fault-

less taste which makes him intuitively conscious of the limits which separate the beautiful from the false, the extravagant, and the affected.

A great writer is his own most formidable rival. If 'Edwin the Fair' shall fail of due acceptance, it will be more to 'Philip Van Artevelde' than to any other hostile critic that such ill success will be really owing. Mr Taylor has erected a standard by which he must be measured and judged. The sect of the Takers-down is a large and active fraternity, among whom there are never wanting some to speak of powers impaired, and of exhausted resources. Untrue, in fact, as such a censure would be, it would not be quite destitute of plausibility. 'Philip Van Artevelde' has a deeper and a more concentrated interest than 'Edwin the Fair.' It approaches far more nearly to the true character of tragedy. Virtues, hazardous in their growth, majestic in their triumph, and venerable even in the fall, shed a glory round the hero, with which the guilt and the impunity of Dunstan form a painful contrast. The scene of the play, moreover, is more warm and genial, and the versification flows more easily, and in closer resemblance to the numerous prose of Massinger, and of Fletcher. There is also less of the uniformity which may be observed in the style of 'Edwin,' where churchmen, laics, and ladies are all members of one family, and have all the family failing, of talking philosophy. The idle King himself moralizes not a little; and even the rough huntsman pauses to compare the fawning of his dogs with the flatteries of the court. But if the earlier work be the greater drama, the later is assuredly the greater poem. More abundant mental resources of every kind are there—knowledge more comprehensive—an imagination at once more prompt and more discursive—the ear tuned to a keener sense of harmony—the points of contact and sympathy with the world multiplied—and the visible traces of that kind influence which passing years have obviously shed on a mind always replete with energy and courage, but which had not, till now, given proof that it was informed in an equal degree by charity, benevolence, and compassion.

It is, indeed, rather as a poet than as a dramatist that Mr Taylor claims the suffrage of those with whom it rests to confer the high reward of his labours. In a memorable essay, prefixed to his former tragedy, he explained and vindicated, not his dramatic but his poetical creed, and then, as now, proceeded to illustrate his own doctrines. To the credit of having discovered any latent truth, or of having unfolded any new theory of the sublime art he pursues, he, of course, made no pretension. It would have been utterly at variance with the robust sense which

is impressed on every page he writes. His object was to refute a swarm of popular sectarians, by proclaiming anew the ancient and Catholic faith. As the first postulate of his argument, he laid it down, that if a man would write well, either with rhythm or without, it behoved him to have something to say. From this elementary truth, he proceeded to the more abstruse and questionable tenet, that 'no man can be a very great poet who is not 'also a great philosopher.'

To what muse the highest honour is justly due, and what exercises of the poetic faculty ought to command, in the highest degree, the reverence of mankind, are problems not to be resolved without an enquiry into various recondite principles. But it is a far less obscure question what is the poetry which men do really love, ponder, commit to memory, incorporate into the mass of their habitual thoughts, digest as texts, or cherish as anodynes. This is a matter of fact, which Paternoster Row, if endowed with speech, could best determine. It would be brought to a decision, if some literary deluge (in the shape, for example, of a prohibitory book-tax) should sweep over the land—consigning to the abyss our whole poetical patrimony, and all the treasures of verse accumulated in our own generation. In that frightful catastrophe, who are the poets whom pious hands would be stretched out to save? The philosophical? They would sink unheeded, with Lucretius at their head. Or the allegorical? The waves would close unresistingly over them, though the Faery Queen herself should be submerged. Or the descriptive? Windsor Forest and Groggar Hill would disappear, with whole galleries of inferior paintings. Or the witty? In such a tempest even Hudibras would not be rich enough to attract the zeal of the Salvors. Or the moral? Essays on man, with an infinite variety of the 'pleasures' of man's intellectual faculties, would sink unwept in the vast whirlpool. There too would perish, Lucan, with a long line of heroic cantos, romances in verse, and rhymes—amorous, fantastic, and bacchanalian. But, at whatever cost or hazard, leaves would be snatched, in that universal wreck, from the digressions and interstitial passages of the three great Epics of Greece, Italy, and England. The bursts of exultation and agony in the 'Agamemnon' would be rescued; with some of the Anthologies, and a few of the Odes of Anacreon and Horace. There would be a sacred emulation to save, from the all-absorbing flood, 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso;' with the 'Odes and Fables of Dryden,' 'Henry and Emma,' 'The Rape of the Lock,' and 'the Epistle to Abelard;' Gray's 'Bard,' and 'Elegy,' 'Lord Lyttleton's Monody,' 'The Traveller,' 'The Deserted Village,' and 'The Task,' Mr Campbell's Shorter

Poems, and some of Mr Wordsworth's Sonnets; while the very spirit of martyrdom would be roused for the preservation of Burns, and the whole Shakspearian theatre; ballads, and old songs out of number; much devotional Psalmody, and, far above all the rest, the inspired songs of the sweet singers of Israel.

No man, says Johnson, is a hypocrite in his pleasures. At school we learn by heart the *De Arte Poeticâ*. At college we are lectured in the Poetics. Launched into the wide world, we criticise or write, as it may happen, essays on the sublime and beautiful. But on the lonely sea-shore, or river-bank, or in the evening circle of familiar faces, or when the hearth glows on the silent chamber round which a man has ranged the chosen companions of his solitary hours, with which of them does he really hold the most frequent and grateful intercourse? Is it not with those who best give utterance to his own feelings, whether gay or mournful; or who best enable him to express the otherwise undefinable emotions of the passing hour? Philosophy is the high privilege of a few, but the affections are the birthright of all. It was an old complaint, that when wisdom lifted up her voice in the streets, none would regard it; but when was the genuine voice of passion ever unheeded? It is the universal language. It is the speech intelligible to every human being, though spoken, with any approach to perfection, by that little company alone, who are from time to time inspired to reveal man to himself, and to sustain and multiply the bonds of the universal brotherhood. It is a language of such power as to reject the aid of ornament, fulfilling its object best when it least strains and taxes the merely intellectual faculties. The poets, whom men secretly worship, are distinguished from the rest, not only by the art of ennobling common subjects; but by the rarer gift of imparting beauty to common thoughts, interest to common feelings, and dignity to common speech. True genius of this order can never be vulgar, and can, therefore, afford to be homely. It can never be trite, and can, therefore, pass along the beaten paths.

What philosophy is there in the wail of Cassandra? in the last dialogue of Hector and Andromache? in Gray's 'Elegy?' or in the Address to 'Mary in Heaven?' And yet when did philosophy ever appeal to mankind in a voice equally profound. About four-and-twenty years ago Mr Wolfe established a great and permanent reputation by half a dozen stanzas. Almost as many centuries have passed since the great poetess of Greece effected a similar triumph with as small an expenditure of words. Was Mr Wolfe a philosopher, or was Sappho? They were simply poets, who could set the indelible impress of genius on what all

the world had been feeling and saying before. They knew how to appropriate for ever to themselves a combination of thoughts and feelings, which, except in the combination, have not a trace of novelty, nor the slightest claim to be regarded as original. In shorter terms, they knew how to write heart-language.

A large proportion of the material of which the poetry of David, Æschylus, Homer, and Shakspeare is composed, if presented for use to many of our greatest writers in its unwrought and unfashioned state, would infallibly be rejected as common-place, and unworthy of all regard. Our poets must now be philosophers; as Burke has taught all our prose writers and most of our prosaic speakers to be, at least in effort and desire. Hence it is that so large a part of the poetry which is now published is received as worthy of all admiration, but not of much love—is praised in society, and laid aside in solitude—is rewarded by an undisputed celebrity, but not by any heartfelt homage—is heard as the discourse of a superior, but not as the voice of a brother.

The diligent students and cultivated admirers of poetry will assign to the author of 'Edwin the Fair' a rank second to none of the competitors for the laurel in his own generation. They will celebrate the rich and complex harmony of his metre, the masculine force of his understanding, the wide range of his survey of life and manners, and the profusion with which he can afford to lavish his intellectual resources. The mere lovers of his art will complain, that in the consciousness of his own mental wealth, he forgets the prevailing poverty; that he levies too severe a tribute of attention, and exacts from a thoughtless world meditations more deep, and abstractions more prolonged, than they are able or willing to command. Right or wrong, it is but as the solace of the cares, and as an escape from the lassitude of life, that most men surrender their minds to the fascination of poetry; and they are not disposed to obey the summons to arduous thinking, though proceeding from a stage resplendent with picturesque forms, and resounding with the most varied harmonies. They will admit that the author of 'Edwin the Fair' can both judge as a philosopher, and feel as a poet; but will wish that his poetry had been less philosophical, or his philosophy less poetical. It is a wish which will be seconded by those who revere his wisdom, and delight in his genius; and who, therefore, regret to anticipate that his labours will hardly be rewarded by an early or an extensive popularity.

ART. IV.—*Souvenirs de M. BERRYER*. 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1839.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES may be divided into two classes; those which interest principally as a history of the mind of the writer, and those which derive their chief value from the events which they relate, or the persons whom they describe. The first class require the union of several rare conditions. Few men know their own history. Few men know the fluctuating nature of their own character;—how much it has varied from ten years to ten years, or even from year to year; or what qualities it would exhibit in untried circumstances, or even on the recurrence of similar events. Few men attempt to distinguish between the original predispositions and the accidental influences which, sometimes controlling and sometimes aggravating one another, together formed at any particular epoch their character for the time being. Still fewer attempt to estimate the relative force of each; and fewer still would succeed in such an attempt. The conversations, the books, the examples, the pains and the pleasures which constitute our education, exert an influence quite disproportioned to their apparent importance at the time when they occurred. Such influences operate long after their causes have been forgotten. The effects of early education are confounded with natural predisposition, and tendencies implanted by nature are attributed to events which were merely the occasions on which they burst forth. The bulk of men think of their minds as they think of their bodies: they enjoy their strength and regret their weakness, they dwell with pleasure on the points in which they are superior to others, and with pain on those in which they are inferior; but they cannot account for the one or for the other. They know no more of the causes of their talents or of their morals, than they do of their beauty or their vigour.

Again, among the few who have the power to relate their mental history, few indeed have the wish. Most men dread the imputation of egotism or vanity. Most men, too, are aware that a full narrative of their feelings, wishes, and habits, must frequently excite the disapprobation of a reader. ‘Each mind,’ says Foster, ‘has an interior apartment of its own, into which none but itself and the Divinity can enter. In this retired place the passions mingle and fluctuate in unknown agitations. There, all the fantastic, and all the tragic shapes of imagination have a haunt where they can neither be invaded nor descried. There, the surrounding human beings, while quite unconscious of it, are made the subjects of deliberate thought, and many of the designs respecting them revolved in silence. There, projects,

‘convictions, vows, are confusedly scattered, and the records of past life are laid. There, in solitary state, sits conscience, surrounded by her own thunders, which sometimes sleep, and sometimes roar, while the world does not know.’*

Men are unwilling to reveal, even posthumously, the secret which a whole life has been employed in concealing. Even those who could bear to excite disapprobation would be afraid of ridicule, and perfect frankness is certain to be absurd. We do not believe that a really unreserved autobiography has ever been written. Rousseau's appears to approach most nearly to one. Almost every chapter tends to make the writer hateful, contemptible, or ridiculous. And yet we now know that even the ‘Confessions’ are not to be depended upon. We now know that much has been concealed, and that much has been positively invented.

Under these circumstances, autobiographies of the first class are almost as rare as epic poems; but those of the second class—those which amuse or instruct as pictures of the events and the people among whom the writer lived—are among the most abundant products of modern literature.

It is remarkable, however, that while soldiers, statesmen, diplomatists, men of letters, actors, artists, courtiers—in short, almost all classes who have something to tell, and who have been accustomed to notoriety—have been anxious to relate their own story to the public, one body of active men, though ready enough to talk of others, have been almost uniformly silent as to themselves. With the exception of the beautiful fragments by Sir Samuel Romilly, and they belong rather to the former class of autobiographies, and of the work the title of which we have prefixed to this article, we scarcely recollect an instance in which a Lawyer, either British or foreign, has thought fit to be his own biographer. And yet there are scarcely any persons the result of whose experience would be more instructive; since there are none who obtain so close or so undisturbed a view of human nature. In courts, in public assemblies, in business, in society, men are masked, and they generally believe that their success depends on their disguise. But few men think that any thing is to be gained by deceiving their lawyer. He is not their rival, but their instrument. His skill is to extricate them from difficulties where they know neither the amount of the danger nor the means of escape. He is to be the tool of their avarice or of their revenge. They generally know that, in order to enable him to execute their purposes, they must stand naked before him; and

* Foster's *Essays*, p. 41.

even when they are absurd enough to attempt concealment, his experience will almost uniformly detect it.

These remarks, however, do not apply to the bar of England or of Scotland. The professional rule which excludes counsel from the real client, except in the presence of the client's solicitor, deprives our barristers of almost all these peculiar opportunities of observation. But on the Continent, not only does no such rule exist, but the counsel appear to perform almost all the duties which with us are confined to the solicitors. We shall find M. Berryer receiving his clients, calling on them, travelling with them, obtaining evidence, in short, acting almost always in the double capacity of counsel and attorney. This circumstance adds greatly to the interest of his memoirs, and appears also to have added greatly to the interest of his professional life. His clients, instead of being mere names to be forgotten as soon as the suit should terminate, become his friends and associates. Unhappily, indeed, the miserable period through which he lived made such intimacies often a source of pain. They naturally included the men most eminent in commerce, manufactures, and banking; and those were precisely the persons whom the anarchists thought fit to suspect at a time when suspicion was death.

But without further anticipation, we proceed to give a general view of M. Berryer's memoirs. They belong to the second class of autobiographies—those in which the interest is fixed, not on the author, but on the objects which surround him. M. Berryer's professional life endured sixty-four years, from 1774 to 1838; the most remarkable period in the history of France, perhaps in the history of the world. It extended through the delusive calm of the unreformed royalty, the brief attempt at constitutional monarchy under the Constituent Assembly, the anarchy under the Legislative Assembly and the Convention, the tyranny of the Directory, the restorative interval of the Consulate, the glories and despotism of the Empire, the impotent reaction of the Restoration, and the intrigues and corruption of the kingdom of the French. The other institutions of the country were still more unstable than the government. M. Berryer found the Roman Catholic religion established with vast wealth and exclusive domination. It is now one among several sects acknowledged and salaried by the state. During the interval its priests have been despoiled, transported, and massacred; every form of worship has been abolished; and it depended on one man whether France should be Protestant or Catholic. All the laws regulating the nature, the enjoyment, the exchange, and the devolution of real and personal property—the laws of marriage, of divorce, of legitimacy, of adoption, and of inheri-

tance—the franchises and privileges of individuals, and of bodies politic—in short, all the rights of persons and of things, while M. Berryer was engaged in enforcing them, were altered, abolished, restored, and amended, by a legislation so transitory as really to deserve to be called, as he has called it, ephemeral. The criminal law was equally fluctuating. New crimes, new modes of trial, new rules of evidence, new tribunals, and new punishments, were invented, repealed, renewed, and modified, as it suited the convenience of a party, a faction, or an individual. A similar fate befell the law of procedure. Within two years from the meeting of the first National Assembly, not a court in which M. Berryer had practised during the first fifteen years of his professional life, was in existence. Soon afterwards, the order of which he was a member was abolished, and the law ceased to be a profession. For some years again there was no standard of value. To use, or even to possess metallic money, was a capital crime, and the only legal tender, the assignat, sank to about one four-hundredth part of its nominal value. The seller of a commodity was no longer allowed to fix its price. The price was to be determined by a committee, with reference to the ability of purchasers, whether the dealer could afford to sell at that price or not. To discontinue, or even to diminish any accustomed trade, was to incur the crime of being ‘suspected;’ and to be suspected was to be imprisoned; to be imprisoned was at one period to be massacred, and at another to be guillotined.

The picture of a society subjected to such influences would be most valuable, and no one had better opportunity of drawing it than M. Berryer. He had for materials not only his own experience, but that of his clients, and of clients taken from every class of society.

His recollections, as might be expected from a writer of his advanced age, seem to be more vivid as they recede towards the past. His first consultation in the dressing-room of the Duchess of Mazarin, where the aristocratic beauty, surrounded by her maids, and going through the details of her complicated toilette, listened to the conference between the timid junior and Gerbier, the leader of the bar; his first pleading in the Grand Chamber of the Parliament of Paris, its vaulted roof dimly illuminated at a seven o'clock sitting on a winter's morning, and the profound silence of the court, which awed him until he fainted; his first negotiation in the moated chateau of a feudal magistrate, while his client was concealed in the avenue;—all these scenes are dwelt upon with a minuteness of detail, and brilliancy of colouring, which gradually disappear as he approaches the modern part of his narrative. Of this, however, we do not complain. Equality is not picturesque:

a society in which it prevails may perhaps be good to live in, but can seldom be good to describe; and we shall imitate our author in drawing our materials rather from the eighteenth century, than from the nineteenth.

M. Berryer was born in the year 1757 at St Ménéould in Champagne, a small town of 3000 inhabitants, which seems to have been a nest of lawyers, since it contained nine different courts, and all the accessories of *avocats*, *notaires*, *procureurs*, and *greffiers*.* In September 1774 he commenced his legal studies in the office of a solicitor to the *Parlement de Paris*, which then extended its jurisdiction over the greater part of France. The state of the law was such as might have been expected in a system created, not by statesmen, but by lawyers. 'The forms of procedure,' says M. Berryer, 'were operose and intricate, and to prolong and complicate their entanglement was the business and the pride of the practitioner. Many suits were eternal; they descended from the solicitor who commenced them to his successors, or rather to generations of successors, as the property—the patrimony of the office.†' The number of persons supported by this legal property was enormous. The Grand Châtelet, an inferior court having jurisdiction only over a part of Paris, gave occupation to nearly 300 attorneys.‡

M. Berryer was admitted to the bar in 1778. One of the first transactions in which he was engaged is so striking an instance of the pride and the despotism of the aristocracy of France, as it then was, that we shall relate it at some length.

M. du B——, a man of considerable fortune, was a member of the provincial parliament of Normandy. In 1771, when the parliaments were exiled by Louis XV., he retired to Holland, leaving his affairs under the management of his wife, who, together with his son, a young man of twenty-two, resided in one of the country mansions of the family, a few leagues from Rouen. In that reign, and in that country, to be out of favour with the government was almost an exclusion from society. Neither neighbours, friends, nor even relations, visited the *château*, and the young man, solitary and unemployed, fell in love with his mother's maid. The mother's consent was obtained; her general powers of acting for her husband were supposed to enable her to give the father's assent, and the marriage took place in the

* Vol. i. p. 41. M. Berryer expresses a *naïve* regret that all the work is now done by a single tribunal.

† *Ibid.* p. 24.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 29.

chapel of the *château*. Two children were born, when, in 1774, the parliaments were recalled, and M. du B—— returned. His daughter-in-law and her children fled before him and took refuge in England. The son, now in his twenty-sixth year, remained. M. du B—— required him to take proceedings to annul the marriage; and on his refusal obtained a *lettre de cachet*, under which he was confined in the prison of Saint Yon. The father visited him in his cell on the second floor of one of the towers. What passed between them is not known; but the result of the interview was, that as the father was descending the staircase, the son threw himself from the window, and was found by the father on the pavement of the court, with a fractured limb and a concussion of the brain. It does not appear that the father was softened, but the government was induced, by the horror of the catastrophe which its interference had occasioned, to revoke the *lettre de cachet*. The son, at liberty, but a cripple for life, fled to join his wife and children in England. In London, however, they must all have starved, or have had recourse to parish relief, unless a M. Tubeuf, a French jeweller established in England, had supported them. M. Tubeuf's advances for this purpose amounted during four years to about L.1200. They were made at the request of the mother, and with the knowledge of the father, but without his express authority. M. Tubeuf returned to France, demanded repayment from the father, was refused, commenced a suit against him in the Parliament of Paris, and engaged M. Berryer as his counsel. The first step was to obtain an order for the examination of M. du B—— on interrogatories—an order which was made, as of course, without notice to the party to be examined. Armed with this order M. Berryer and M. Tubeuf travelled to the *château* of the magistrate. When they entered its long avenue the carriage with M. Tubeuf was left concealed by the trees, and M. Berryer proceeded on foot. The first person whom he saw was Madame du B——. But such was the awe inspired by the domestic despot, that she would not venture even to hint to her husband the object of M. Berryer's mission. He was forced, therefore, to explain it himself, and to communicate to M. du B—— the astonishing fact that MM. de Paris, his brethren, had subjected him to a public examination. The result, however, was, that the fear of an open discussion prevailed, where justice, compassion, and natural affection had all been powerless. M. Tubeuf was sent for, and before they recrossed the drawbridge all had been arranged. Sixty years afterwards M. Berryer again visited Rouen as an advocate, and the matter was again a family contest originating in aristocratic pride. The

château and the family of B—— had long disappeared. M. Berryer interested his audience by a narrative of which he was probably the only depository; and urged them to crown his second appearance in their country with equal success.

As a further illustration of the morals of the old *régime*, we shall introduce in this place the notice of a more important cause of M. Berryer's, though it terminated at a later period of his career—that of Madame de Pestre de Seneffe. When the events which we have to relate commenced she was between fifty and sixty years old, and resided at Brussels, a widow with seven children, and a still more numerous progeny of grandchildren; enjoying a high reputation for virtue and morals, and a very large jointure derived from property in Belgium and France. At a supper in the palace of the Prince de Soubise, a set of Parisian fashionables resolved that one of them should proceed to Brussels and marry the opulent widow. The necessary funds were supplied by a contribution, and the choice of the emissary was left to chance. The lot fell upon the Comte de Wargemont, a man of high family and of considerable property heavily encumbered. On his arrival at Brussels he introduced himself to Madame de Pestre, and secured the services of her maid and of her confessor. The maid concealed him one evening in her mistress's bed-room. In the middle of the night he showed himself. Madame de Pestre called for assistance. This was the signal for the appearance of the maid, who urged on her mistress the danger to her reputation of an *éclat*, and proposed that the advice of the confessor should be taken. The Count protested that his indiscretion had been forced on him by the violence of his passion; and the confessor recommended that all scandal should be avoided by an immediate marriage. Madame de Pestre was weak enough to consent; but as she yielded, not to love, but to fear, she insisted that the marriage should take place in Brussels, that she and all her estates should continue subject to the laws of Flanders, that her husband should have no power to require her to enter France, that she should continue absolute mistress of her property, and that the only benefit derived by the Count should be a life income of 20,000 francs, and 100,000 francs as capital. The marriage on these terms took place in February 1776. The husband almost immediately quitted his wife, and in June wrote to ask her whether she could suppose that he had any motive for marrying an old woman except the full command of her fortune. A few days afterwards he informed her that he intended to seize all her property in France, and to force her to join him there. His attempts to execute these threats produced a compromise, in pursuance of which a divorce

a mensa et toro, in a suit instituted by the husband, was pronounced by the ecclesiastical tribunal of Mechlin; and the Count, in exchange for all his claims under the marriage or the settlement, received 350,000 francs and an annuity of 10,000 more. The 350,000 francs, however, were soon spent, and the Count renewed his legal warfare. He attempted to set aside the divorce, succeeded in getting possession of the French estates, and kept up a never-ending litigation respecting those in Belgium. Madame de Pestre died, worn out with care and vexation. The annexation of Belgium rendered the whole property of her children subject to the jurisdiction of the French laws, and the Count spent the remainder of his life in prosecuting them from tribunal to tribunal. M. Berryer was counsel for Madame de Pestre and for her descendants; and he dwells upon his exertions in their cause as one of the most arduous, and of the most brilliant parts of his professional career. They procured him on one occasion a curious testimony of admiration. M. de Wargemont was dead, and his sister, Madame de Querrieux, had succeeded to some of his claims, and apparently to some of his litigiousness. As her brother's representative, she prosecuted an appeal against the Pestre family. An elderly lady sat behind M. Berryer while he conducted the defence. She was observed to listen with great emotion, and, as soon as he sat down, pressed him to accept, as a mark of her admiration, a ring made of the hair of her youth.

The episode of Madame de Pestre has led us to anticipate a portion of M. Berryer's history. Nature had given him the bodily qualifications most useful to an advocate, a fine voice, and health independent of exercise. In the strict discipline of a *procureur's* office, where the hours of business, with a few minutes' interval for breakfast and an hour for dinner, lasted from between six and seven in the morning till nine at night, he acquired intrepid diligence and the love of a sedentary life. He was stimulated too, as he tells us,* by the splendid pecuniary rewards of the profession. He saw Gerbier receiving 300,000 francs for a single cause, and Duvaudier's exertions in securing a jointure, paid by an equipage and an annuity of 4000 francs for its support. He began early to emancipate himself from the *procureur's*, by obtaining a set of clients of his own. He succeeded first in becoming counsel to the eminent merchants constituting the India Company, in a cause which lasted many years; then in obtaining the conduct of a claim depending on an

* Vol. i. p. 87.

ancient pedigree, which appears to have remained undisposed of for more than twenty years ; and lastly, in obtaining as his clients the two great ecclesiastical chapters of Brioude and Bourges. His marriage in January 1789 with Mademoiselle Gorneau, whose father, as *Procureur aux Conseils*, had for his clients the chief bankers and merchants of Paris, placed him at once in possession of the first mercantile practice. The heads of the great houses became his clients and his friends ; and we may judge of the extent of litigation in which they were engaged, when we are told that one of them, M. Magon de la Balue, paid him a daily visit.*

It does not appear that, when he married, he was aware that a time was approaching when the bravest man might wish to have no safety to provide for but his own. He had, indeed, been somewhat surprised, but not disquieted, by the anti-monarchical spirit of the press, and had felt some alarm at the opposition of the parliaments to the court ; but his fears did not exceed a vague uneasiness. He does not appear, indeed, to be more of a statesman than the Carlist deputy, his son. The extent of his political sagacity may be estimated by the three causes, to which even now, after fifty years' experience, he assigns the Revolution ;—namely, financial difficulties, which he thinks might have been got out of by economy ; the contest between the parliaments and the crown ; and the reduction of a portion of the household troops.

His fears, however, were soon to be awakened. On the evening of Sunday, the 12th of July, he was returning with his young wife from a country holiday—that day was, in fact, the last but one of the monarchy—but so little were they aware of the real nature of the events which had disturbed the previous weeks, that they felt, as he tells us, perfect security. But at the *Barrière du Trône*, they heard of the sanguinary conflict between the Royal Allemand and the procession carrying the busts of Orleans and Necker ; and as they passed the paper manufactory of Réveillon they saw the gates guarded by soldiery, and were told that behind them lay the bodies of those who had perished in the attack on the building. Two mornings after, † M. Berryer was roused from his bed by the tocsin ; he

* Vol. ii. p. 325.

† M. Berryer's recollection has misled him as to these dates. He supposes the storming of the Bastille to have taken place on the Monday, and therefore that Sunday was the 13th. But in fact Sunday was the 12th, and a day intervened between the riot of that day and the insurrection of the 14th.

was summoned, by what authority he does not know, to a meeting of the inhabitants of his parish, in the church of St Méry. He found there crowds as ignorant of the cause of their assembling as himself. For hours they wandered, without an object, up and down the aisles of the church. At length some persons talked of organizing the parish as a municipal body. M. Berryer suggested the means to those about him—they carried him to the pulpit, and thence he proposed his plan, which was to divide the parish into quarters, or, as we should call them, wards; the inhabitants of each ward grouping themselves round a particular pillar; and then, that each ward should present a list of six persons, to constitute the *bureau* or common council of the parish—one being the president, and another the secretary. His plan was adopted by acclamation; he refused the office of president, but accepted that of secretary. The *bureau* was elected, and directed to provide for the civil and military organization of the parish.

In the evening the *bureau* assembled; M. Berryer was quietly engaged in his duties as secretary; it was hot, and the windows were open, when some pikes bearing bloody heads were thrust in, and they were told that one was that of De Launay, and that the others were those of the Swiss massacred within the Bastille. This horrible incident influenced permanently the fortunes of M. Berryer. With his talents and his advantages, it was obvious that the highest professional honours were within his grasp. His advance had been checked by no difficulties, and, till then, seemed to be attended by no dangers. But the 14th of July dispelled his dream of safety. He saw the time coming when the servants of the public might have to choose between death and crime. He doubted how he might stand the trial, and he felt certain that no reward was worth the risk. He resolved therefore, and he kept his resolution, to remain for life in a private station. His companions at the bar acted differently. Some perished for their virtues, some for their crimes, and some obtained and kept the most elevated civil dignities. But it was in vain that they pressed him to accompany them in their rise. He preserved his conscience, and perhaps his life, by the sacrifice of his ambition.

He soon found, however, that the humbler path of an advocate had its difficulties and its dangers. The order to which he belonged was abolished; in its room were substituted *défenseurs officieux*—a function which every one, whatever were his previous employments or his previous ignorance, was allowed to exercise. The great objects of his veneration, the Parliaments, which, with a strange misconception of history, he describes as the sup-

porters of pure monarchy, shared the fate of the bar. New tribunals were erected in their room, with inferior powers and a more limited jurisdiction. The greater part of the old bar refused to plead before them; and the character of the new judges, generally selected from among fierce political partizans, accounts for their refusal. As an illustration of their judicial conduct, M. Berryer relates the history of a cause tried before the *Tribunal des Minimes*, one of the new metropolitan courts, over which M. Le Roy Sermaise, a violent democrat, presided. The parties were two villagers from Montreuil; the matter in dispute a small estate. The plaintiff rested his claim on a deed of conveyance, which appeared on inspection to have nothing to do with the property; the defendant's case depended on uninterrupted possession. 'How long,' said M. Le Roy Sermaise, 'has this possession lasted?' 'Why, citizen president,' replied the peasant, 'it must be at least eighty or ninety years, taking in my great-grandfather, my grandfather, my father, and myself.' 'Then,' replied the judge, 'you ought to be satisfied; every one in his turn—yours has lasted long enough in all conscience—now let your poor neighbour have his.*' It must be added that the new *défenseurs officieux*, untrained in the conventional hostility of the bar, sometimes resented opposition as a personal injury; and no one could tell, in such times, what might be the consequence of making an enemy of the most insignificant or the most worthless individual. On one occasion, M. Berryer had the misfortune of being opposed to Coffinhal, afterwards the sanguinary vice-president of the revolutionary tribunal; and he tells us that, after he had heard that Coffinhal had threatened to punish him, he shuddered with terror whenever the threat returned to his memory—and with great reason, for Coffinhal might have said with Cæsar, that it was much less trouble to him to destroy than to menace.

But these were preludes. Monarchical government was destroyed by the insurrection of the 10th August 1792; republican government by that of the 2d June 1793. The strange sort of rule arose, which, for want of a more definite word, has been called the 'Reign of Terror';—a mixture of anarchy and despotism, of democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny, which combined all the worst faults of all the worst institutions. Two powers strove for mastery in this chaos, the Convention, and the Commune or municipal council of Paris, and each of these was subdivided into hostile factions. In all of them the objects of the leaders

* Vol. i. p. 183.

were power and safety; and in all of them the object of the subordinate members was safety. All joined in the endeavour to effect their purposes by the means resorted to in what has been called the state of nature;—by the destruction or intimidation of those whose power or whose safety they thought inconsistent with their own. The ordinary instruments employed by each party were the *loi des suspects*, the revolutionary committees, and the revolutionary tribunal. The extraordinary instrument was the armed population of Paris, consisting of the National Guards, furnished by the forty-eight sections into which Paris was divided;—a force generally called, in the histories of the times, by the somewhat puzzling name of ‘the Sections.’ The whole body, if it could have been collected, amounted to above 80,000 men, some provided with guns, but many more with pikes; their principal arms consisted of some pieces of artillery attached to each section.

The forty-eight revolutionary committees of Paris were appointed by the inhabitants of the forty-eight sections, voting by universal suffrage. Their duty, for which they received a regular pay, was to enquire into all conduct which might affect the public safety, to give certificates of *civisme*—that is to say, of attachment to the Revolution—and to order the arrest of all suspected persons.

The *loi de suspects* declared guilty of being suspected, and therefore subject to arrest, four principal classes:—1. All those who, by their connexions, their conversation, their writings, or their conduct, appeared to be opposed to liberty. 2. All those who could not prove their means of living, and of performing their civil duties. 3. All those who had been refused certificates of *civisme*. 4. All persons of noble birth, and all relations of emigrants, unless they could prove their ardent devotion to the Revolution.

The revolutionary tribunal was a criminal court of equity; a court for the punishment of those who were unpunishable by law. It is a strong proof of the little progress which France has made towards real liberty, that M. Berryer approves of the principle of such an institution, and recommends its adoption as a restraint on the press.*

It consisted of a public accuser, judges and jurymen, all nominated by the Convention, restrained by no form of procedure or rules of evidence, and authorized, on an application from the Convention, or from one of its two committees of *sûreté générale*

rule and *salut public*, to judge all conspirators and opposers of the Revolution; and all those whose conduct or whose expression of opinion had a tendency to mislead the people. At first evidence was required, and the accused were allowed defenders; but as the trials increased in number, these forms were found inconvenient; and, after all, they were mere forms, for the business of the tribunal was not to try but to condemn. They were therefore abolished, and the tribunal was required to decide without hearing any witnesses, if there were grounds, material or moral, (such were the words of the decree,) for believing the accused to be an enemy to the people.

Lists were kept ready of persons accused, others of persons condemned, with the names left in blank. Every evening the list of the accused was prepared by Fouquier-Tinville, the public accuser, settled by the *comité de salut public* of the Convention, and sent round to the prisons; those named in it were taken to the Conciergerie; the next morning they were before their judges, and before the evening they had suffered. That there were grounds, material or moral, for conviction, was always assumed; no witnesses were examined; and the trial, if it could be called one, was generally merely identifying the prisoner with one of the names on the list of persons accused. Even this might be dispensed with. When, as it sometimes happened, prisoners were brought to the bar whose names, in the hurry of business, had been left out of the list, the only result was that the public accuser immediately supplied the omission; and thus, in three minutes, a man might be indicted, tried, convicted, and sentenced, and an hour after executed.

As the Convention possessed the power of appointing and removing the members of the revolutionary tribunal, and of selecting its victims, it was, while its orders were obeyed, despotic in Paris; and when two committees of the Convention, that of *salut public* and *sûreté générale*, could send before the tribunal—that is to say, could send to death—any members of the Convention, the two committees became despotic in the Convention.

The inflicting death seems, like many other acts which are at first painful, to become a passion. No other explanation can be given of the condemnation by the revolutionary tribunal of many of the humblest and obscurest persons among the petty shopkeepers, and even workmen, of Paris. No other explanation can be given of some of the capricious murders related by M. Berryer. We give one or two examples:—In 1787, money had been borrowed in Paris on printed debentures for L.100 each, signed by the Prince of Wales, the Duke

of York, and the Duke of Clarence. They went by the name of *actions du Prince de Galles*. The transaction was an unfortunate one; the debentures were refused payment, lost their value, and disappeared. Six years afterwards, all persons concerned in their introduction into the Parisian market, or in their circulation, were accused as *contre-révolutionnaires*, and enemies of the people. The Duc de St Aignan, a former client of M. Berryer, on whom a money-lender had forced some of these debentures, and who had obliged him by law to take them back, was among the accused. So was his duchess, a young woman of fashion, whom no one could suppose to have been acquainted with her husband's transactions. So were even the notaries in whose hands they were deposited, and their clerks; and even M. Chaudot, who had merely given a notarial attestation which he could not legally refuse. All were condemned, and all were executed.

Another notary, M. Martin, a friend, like M. Chaudot, of M. Berryer, met at his door, on his return from a morning's walk, a *gendarme*, who required his immediate attendance before the revolutionary tribunal. He found there three persons accused of having signed a pedigree certificate, which had been deposited in his office. There was nothing objectionable in the certificate, but it was said that some ill use might be made of it. The public accuser simply asked him if the paper had been placed with him; and on his admitting it, required the tribunal to convict and sentence him to death, together with those previously accused. The tribunal instantly complied; the four prisoners were removed from the bar; room was found for them in the carriages which were setting off for the guillotine; and within three hours M. Martin was an un-accused man, and an executed criminal!

During the 'Reign of Terror' M. Berryer gave up the public exercise of his profession. No one could act as *défenseur officieux* without a certificate of *civisme* from the revolutionary committee of his section. But he could not rely upon obtaining one from the uneducated and violent persons—a brothel-keeper, a knife-grinder, a porter, and a shoe-cleaner—who were paid forty sous a-day to administer the affairs of the section. A person to whom such a certificate had been refused, became, as we have seen, by express enactment suspected, and certain, from the notoriety of the fact, to be arrested the next day; and equally certain to be executed, as soon as the malice of an enemy, or the caprice of the public accuser, should call him forth. He at first proposed to shut himself up in his study, and act solely as a chamber counsel; but he was soon told that seclusion would

inevitably attract suspicion, and that he must find some mode of life which would not bear the interpretation of fear. Fortunately he had been counsel, in happier times, for the National Treasury, and M. Turpin, the agent, (a functionary corresponding, we believe, to our secretary,) was his intimate friend. M. Turpin, indeed, was not safe; for, though intrusted with matters of the utmost confidence, and daily transacting business with the heads of the department, he was an object of such jealousy, that a *gendarme* watched all his proceedings, and, in fact, never quitted him by day or night. Notwithstanding the want of a certificate of *civisme*, the previous services and the reputation of M. Berryer, and the friendship of M. Turpin, effected his admission into the offices of the Treasury as sub-agent—a favour great, not only from its importance to the person admitted, but from the danger to which it exposed them who admitted him.

In this new post, his days were passed in the office, and his evenings in transacting the legal business of his former clients; and again he fancied himself safe. Some vexations, indeed, he was exposed to, but they were almost ludicrous annoyances. He and his wife were forced to bring their table into the street, and consume, in the presence of the passers-by, “le dîner patriotique.” His wife was sometimes forced to attend at the bakers to inspect the sale of bread, to see that no one was served before his turn, and that no one was allowed to purchase beyond his strict wants. At other times she had to head an address from the women of the section to the Convention, deliver a patriotic speech, and receive the fraternal embrace of the President.

Suddenly, however, he was roused to a sense of imminent danger by an accidental visit to the Treasury offices of a M. L——, one of his former brethren of the bar, now become a member of the Convention. The visiter loudly expressed his astonishment that an aristocrat, and a counter-revolutionist, in whose house conspirators met every evening, should fill a Government employment. Such remarks were deadly. They were sure to be whispered about, and to be acted upon by some wretch anxious to pay court to the deputy. It was probable that, in twenty-four hours, M. Berryer would be in one of the dungeons of the Abbaye, and in a week afterwards in the Place de la Guillotine; and there was no knowing how many of those who had favoured his employment might accompany him. Fortunately he had two friends in the Convention, Charles Lacroix and Bourdon de l’Oise, both colleagues of M. L——, and both staunch members of the *Montagne*. He ran to the chamber;

and found Bourdon de l'Oise entering it, clattering, as he went, the huge sabre which he had carried in the storm of the Bastille. What were the persuasions applied by his two friends to their colleague, M. Berryer does not tell us, but they were sufficient. M. L—— returned to the Treasury, praised loudly the patriotism of M. Berryer, informed the hearers that the nightly visitors were inoffensive clients, and ended by stating that his remarks had been quite misunderstood, and in fact were meant for a different person.

But the danger had been averted, only to reappear in a form less direct, but more painful. Among M. Berryer's most honoured clients were the great bankers of the Place Vendôme, MM. Magon de la Balue and Magon de la Blinai, MM. Laurent Le Couteulx, and Le Couteulx Cautelen, and M. Pourrat. One Heron, a merchant of Marseilles, had become bankrupt, had fled to South America, and returned in the beginning of the Revolution with some bills of the Spanish government of considerable nominal value. He offered them to the principal banking-houses, but could not get them discounted. This rankled in his mind, and as soon as the *loi des suspects* gave arms to malignity, he denounced all those who had refused him. MM. Laurent Le Couteulx, and Le Couteulx Cautelen, were detained for eleven months in the Conciergerie; saw it weekly emptied and weekly filled, but escaped at an enormous expense, by bribing the clerks to place the papers relating to them always at the bottom of the bundles of accusations. M. Pourrat fell early a victim to his own precautions. He became a member of the Jacobin club. The singularity of a banker in such a society attracted attention, and he was arrested on the benches of the club. MM. Magon de la Balue and Magon de la Blinai, both venerable men between eighty and ninety, were confined in the *Maison de santé de Belhomme*; a place celebrated for having exhibited the last traces of the ancient aristocratic habits. There those who could afford the expense of such a prison, spent the last weeks of their lives among the enjoyments and the forms to which they had been accustomed. The *roturiers* and the nobles, and among the nobles, those of the sword and those of the robe, kept their distinct circles. There were ceremonious visits, and full-dress evening parties, where the younger portion of this short-lived society amused themselves by rehearsing the trial and the execution. Passports signed by Robespierre, Couthon, Carnot, and Barrère, the four principal members of the ruling committee of Public Safety, were exhibited to M. Berryer; and he was desired to offer to MM. Magon, for 300,000 francs, liberty, and an escape across the frontiers. They replied, that to fly

from trial would be a confession of guilt—that their perfect innocence was a security—and refused. A week after, M. Berryer read in the papers the conviction of the conspirators, Magon de la Blinais, Magon de la Balue, the woman St Perne, daughter, the woman Cornulier, grand-daughter of the latter, and the Sieur Coureur, his secretary. Mixed with his regrets were his fears. He was known to have been their counsel. The fierce Dubarran, a member of the formidable *Comité de Sécurité générale*, had already threatened him with the consequences of defending aristocrats and conspirators, and he knew that among their papers must be found whole bundles of his letters. He does not appear to be even now able to explain his escape, unless by imputing it to gratitude in Fouquier Tinville for an early service; a solution, perhaps, as improbable as the imputation of any monstrous wickedness to a man of ordinary virtue.

These dangers, however, were at length to terminate. The party of which Robespierre and his immediate friends formed the nucleus, had risen to power by a process of constant contraction. Originally, it comprised nearly the whole of the deputies of the *Tiers Etat*, for who was there that refused the oath of the Tennis Court? First it threw off and destroyed the aristocratic Royalists, then the Girondists, then the Hébertists, and at last even the Dantonists. At every change, while it destroyed a rival, it deprived itself of a supporter. At first it spoke the voice of a nation, afterwards that of an assembly; then that of a party, and at length that of a committee. But the committees of *salut public*, and *sécurité générale*, were omnipotent. Fielding has remarked, that a man with a pistol may hold at bay a multitude; for though he can shoot but one man, every one feels that the first who attacks him will be that one. Nothing in the history of the Revolution is more striking than Thibaudeau's picture of the submission of the fierce and violent Convention before the governing Committee of Public Safety:—'The object of every member, 'from the instant that he entered the house, was to prevent his 'behaviour there from being a crime. Every movement, every 'look, every murmur, every smile, was calculated. Those who 'ventured to have a place crowded to the *Montagne*, (the high 'benches of the left,) as the republican seats; or took refuge in 'the centre, (answering to our benches near the bar,) as the 'seats which manifested no party feeling. Others wandered 'from bench to bench, in the hope that they might be supposed 'to be opposed to no party and to no opinion; but the more 'prudent never ventured to sit. They stood in groups at the 'bar, and slunk away whenever a vote was probable. The sit- 'tings, once so long and so violent, were cold and short. Trifling

‘ details were discussed until the Committee of Public Safety appeared. The Committee, headed by their *rapporteur*, (the member charged to announce their decisions,) entered with the air of masters. In their progress to the tribune they were preceded and followed by those who were striving to propitiate them by apparent devotion. There was deep silence until the *rapporteur* spoke: every one sought to read in his countenance whether he was to announce a victory or a proscription. His proposals, whatever they were, were servilely adopted, generally in silence; but if a word were spoken, it was merely an echo.’*

Such was the state of things when, on the 24th *Prairial* (12th June 1794), Bourdon de l’Oise requested a visit from M. Berryer. He went, little expecting the frightful confidence that was to be reposed in him. ‘ Robespierre,’ said Bourdon, ‘ has become my enemy. He intends to murder me by the guillotine. I have resolved to be beforehand, and to destroy him with my own hand.’ As proofs of his courage and resolution, he displayed the dress which he had worn at the storm of the Bastille, still covered with the blood of its defenders; the plumes which had ornamented his cap in the Vendéan war, torn by balls in every feather; and the huge sword with which he had pierced many an enemy, and which was now to be plunged into the heart of Robespierre. M. Berryer listened in terror; but still more dangerous matter was to come. Bourdon added, that he had selected him as depositary not only of his secrets but of his last wishes and of his fortune, and placed in his hands a parcel containing his will, his title-deeds, and instructions to be followed in the very probable event of Bourdon’s fall before he had an opportunity to execute his attempt, or in consequence of the attempt.

For forty-five† anxious days, and almost sleepless nights, M. Berryer retained this terrible deposit. He was now for the first time an actual conspirator. His connexion with the chief conspirator was notorious. His safety seemed to depend on Bourdon’s immediate success in destroying, by his own hand, both Robespierre and the oligarchy of which he was the president. Assassination is a desperate resource. The attempt itself rarely

* *Mémoires sur la Convention et le Directoire.* Paris, 1827. Vol. i. p. 47.

† M. Berryer says sixteen days; but the time between the 24th *Prairial* and the 9th *Thermidor*, that is, from the 12th of June to the 27th of July, was forty-five days. Perhaps the error may lie in the date of the conversation.

succeeds, and where it does succeed rarely produces the intended result.

Happily for M. Berryer events took a different turn. We have said that the committees were omnipotent; but their power depended more obviously and immediately than that of governments in general, on opinion. They had not, like the tyrannies that succeeded them, an armed force trained to unreflecting obedience. While the Convention bent before them, they seemed to be irresistible; but the Convention was obedient, not from affection or confidence, for the committees were objects of distrust and hatred, but because they were supposed to have the support of the National Guards: how far that supposition was true, was a doubt not to be solved without extreme peril, for the fact could be ascertained only by resistance, and if they really had that support those who resisted must perish. Dissensions among themselves forced the decision of this tremendous question. Robespierre threw all his colleagues in the committees into shade. He formed, with his devoted adherents St Just and Couthon, what began to be called the triumvirate; a sort of committee of the committees, which controlled all their operations. It was rather, however, a dictatorship than a triumvirate; for St Just from fanaticism, and Couthon from servility, were mere instruments.

Robespierre did not owe his predominance to his talents; for his talents, though it is absurd to deny him great talents both as a writer and as a speaker, were inferior to those of several of his rivals, and even of his dependents; nor to his courage, for there he was positively deficient. But he had insatiable ambition, and insatiable vanity, and no passion that interfered with them. He had no love of money, of ostentation, of pleasure, or of ease. He had no friendship, no pity, no truth, no shame, and no remorse: he appeared, therefore, to have an inflexible will. The weakest part of his character was the combination of ambition with vanity; but during the earlier part of his career these passions acted well together. His desire of immediate applause led him to flatter the self-love of the Parisian mob, by an adulation of which no man with self-respect could have been guilty; to encourage all their most mischievous prejudices, and to stimulate all their worst passions. In any ordinary state of society such conduct would have been fatal to his prospects as a statesman; but in a revolution it gave him unbounded popularity, and popularity was power. On the other hand, his love of power impelled him to destroy those whose influence interfered with his own, and thus pleased at the same time his vanity by leaving him the only prominent figure.

But the time was come when the gratification of both these

passions at once became impossible. He might, perhaps, have retained predominant power if he had been satisfied with the reality, and allowed his colleagues to appear to the world as his equals; but this was repugnant to his vanity. He might have remained the general object of admiration if he had allowed them to be really his associates in power; but this interfered with his ambition. He wished to absorb all power and all reputation; to be the dictator of a republic of which his will was to be the law; and to be the high priest of a religion which his recognition had established. To do this it was necessary to destroy his present associates; and as their removal would have revived the more moderate revolutionary party, of which Danton had been the head, it was also necessary to destroy the remnant of Dantonists. These objects could be effected, however, only by the aid either of the Convention, or of the Commune of Paris, and the National Guards. If he could obtain from the Convention a decree for their arrest and accusation, he would have succeeded; the remainder of the Convention, deprived of all its influential members, would have been at his feet. The Commune was already devoted to him, so was Henriot, the commander of the National Guards; and he relied on the obedience of these citizen troops to orders in which all the authorities should concur. But if the Convention took part with the committees, he still hoped, with the aid of the Commune and of Henriot, to dispose of the National Guards, and put an end, by terror or by force, to all resistance. It may appear that it would have been simpler to begin by force; but, in the first place, he expected submission from the Convention; and, in the second place, until the Convention had refused his demands, there was no pretext for rising against it, and some pretext was required even in these times, and even for an insurrection.

At the meeting of the Convention on the 8th *Thermidor*, An. 2, (26th July 1794,) Robespierre commenced his attack. After a long description of the general mal-administration of the country, he inferred 'that there was a conspiracy to destroy the republic and the patriots; that the members of the two committees were among the conspirators; and that it had become necessary to punish the traitors, to crush all factions under the weight of the national authority, and to raise from the ruins the supremacy of justice and freedom.'

This speech was received, as no speech of Robespierre's had ever before been received in that assembly, with dead silence. The usual motion, however, for its being printed and distributed, was made and carried, and the Convention seemed to remain in obedience. But the extremity of the peril now gave courage to the

members of the two committees. Those who spoke first ventured only to defend themselves; those who followed dared to recriminate. Robespierre, unaccustomed to opposition, began to explain and retract: the Dantonists joined his opponents, and the sitting terminated by rescinding the resolution for printing his speech.

The first attack, therefore, had been repulsed. The evening and the night were spent by each party in preparation. It was resolved on the part of Robespierre that the Commune should meet the next morning; that in the Convention a definite motion, denouncing the crimes and requiring the arrest of those whom it was intended to sacrifice, should be made by St Just, and enforced by Robespierre; and that, if the Convention refused, the Commune should declare that the people had resumed the direct exercise of its sovereignty, should assemble the National Guards, and march to deliver the Convention from the criminals who were misleading it. In the mean time the members of the committees and the Dantonists, united into one party by their common danger, were employed in endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of the other parties in the Convention. Such was the detestation which they themselves had inspired, and such the fear of Robespierre, that it was only after many repulses that they began to make any progress. Succeed, however, they did, and the next day, the celebrated 9th *Thermidor*, when Robespierre entered the assembly, he probably had not ten adherents left in a body of which two days before he had been the dictator.

We need not do more than refer to the scene of the 9th *Thermidor*—a scene probably unequalled in any deliberative assembly; when St Just was interrupted after his first sentence, and Robespierre had to listen hour after hour to the long-compressed hatred of his revolted subjects—his cries and screams for the right of reply, drowned by the imprecations of his accusers, and the bell of the president; until at length, as he lay on the bench gasping with fatigue, rage, and terror, he was ordered into arrest, together with his adherents, St Just, Couthon, Le Bas, and Robespierre the younger, and seized by the attendants of the house.

It was now five o'clock, and the House adjourned to seven, exhausted by the struggle, and scarcely venturing to believe the result. The Commune in the mean time had assembled, but had not acted. It had adjourned before the arrest of Robespierre was known. Indeed, considering the strangeness and the magnitude of that event, the news appears to have circulated very slowly. Thihaudeau tells us that, when the Convention met in the evening, the greater part of the members heard for the first time the events of the morning.* It is probable that

the morning attendance had been comparatively thin, and consisted chiefly of those who the night before had concerted their proceedings.

The Commune had adjourned only till six. When they re-assembled, and heard of the arrest of Robespierre and his companions, they declared that the People, and the Commune, as the organ of the People, had resumed its sovereignty; ordered the tocsin to ring in every section; dispatched messengers on all sides to call out the National Guards, and in short set in motion the insurrectional machinery which had never failed during the previous course of the Revolution. They soon collected a force sufficient to rescue the prisoners from their confinement in one of the committee rooms, and to carry them in triumph to the headquarters of the Commune, the Hôtel de Ville. By this time it was nearly eight. The Convention reassembled, but it was only to communicate their alarms. 'A few,' says Thiibaudeau, 'had gained courage by their success in the morning; others awaited the result in silence; the greater part were unable to comprehend what was going on. As it became dark the horror of our situation increased. We heard the noise of the drums and of the tocsin. A few members formed themselves into a committee to consider the course to be adopted, the others listened in the utmost anxiety to the reports brought back by those who had ventured to ascertain the state of things without. At length, about midnight, the crisis appeared to approach. Collot d'Herbois, the President, said in his sepulchral voice, "Representatives, the time is come for us to die at our posts; I am informed that Henriot's forces surround us." Instantly all the spectators fled from the galleries, the members who had been standing together in groups, took their usual seats, and prepared to die with decency. As for myself, I had not the slightest doubt that our last moment was come.*' It was true that Henriot had led his men to the attack. His cannon even were pointed at their doors. But when he gave the word to fire, his artillerymen hesitated, and at last refused. Henriot, finding that his troops could not be depended on, thought it prudent to march them back to the Hôtel de Ville. It was thus that, on the caprice or the irresolution of half a dozen men, the fate of the Convention, and perhaps the future history of France, and even of Europe, depended. For if the cannon had fired, and Henriot's forces, many of them the same men who three years before had stormed the Tuileries and destroyed the defenders, had rushed

* *Mémoires*, Vol. I. p. 83.

into the hall where the members were sitting, merely awaiting their fate without any plan of resistance, it seems probable that the greater part of the assembly would have been massacred on their seats; and certain that all who escaped would have been treated as they themselves treated their adversaries a few hours afterwards, condemned and executed without a trial. Robespierre would have been absolute master of Paris. Whether he would or would not have been able to summon another representative assembly, or without one to retain the provinces and the armies in subjection to Paris, is more questionable. But, on any supposition, the whole subsequent course of events would have been different; there would have been different scenes and different actors. Pichegru might have imitated Monk, and royalty have been restored by a native army in 1794, instead of a foreign one in 1814; or Nantes, and Lyons, and Bordeaux, and Toulon, and La Vendée, might have successfully risen against Paris, and France have split into hostile communities. Reform would have been delayed in Germany, and accelerated in Great Britain and Ireland. The half minute during which it was undecided whether the artillery would fire or not, is the most important half minute in history.

The retreat of Henriot seems to have given to the Convention the courage necessary to active resistance. They declared Henriot, Robespierre, and his associates, and the whole Commune of Paris, *hors de la loi*; invested Barras with the command of the National Guards, and appointed members to act under him; dispatched others to the headquarters of the different sections, to announce these decrees and summon the National Guards, and resolved as soon as a sufficient body could be collected, to march and attack the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville. The events of this night have been told in so many different ways, that some future Strauss may treat the whole as a legend. The following is M. Berryer's narrative:—

‘The *corps de garde* of my section, La Réunion, was at the Hôtel d’Asnières, and I determined not to return home during the night. There was great indecision among us, until the exhortations of the messengers from the Convention, marked by their dress, and raised, from their being on horseback, above the audience, decided the wavering to side with the Convention. We resolved to march immediately to the defence of the Assembly. I was armed as usual with my pike, which was the common weapon; a very few had muskets. When we reached the Place of the Carrousel, which at that time joined the Tuileries, receiving no orders, we sat down on the pavement. Between midnight and one in the morning we were ordered to form column, and march on the Hôtel de Ville, then occupied by Robespierre and his associates. On our left was the section Marat, consisting, like ourselves, of about

200 men, about as well armed as we were. Three guns with lighted matches preceded us. By the time we had reached the Oratoire in the Rue St Honore, our artillery, very ill commanded, was in the centre of the column. I now discovered by the cries of Bourdon de l'Oise, as he was rectifying this blunder, that we were under his command. When we reached the open space before the Hôtel de Ville, we found there many pieces of cannon, and the troops of several other sections, apparently directed like ourselves against the Commune.* Our officers had ranged us in front of the Hôtel de Ville, with our cannon behind, so that we should have been the first objects of a discharge. While Bourdon de l'Oise was setting this right, he noticed me, and congratulated me on my display of courage.

‘ Suddenly a sort of commotion was heard in the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville; and immediately afterwards I saw Bourdon de l'Oise, with some determined followers, rush up the large open staircase. He held a pistol in each hand, a drawn sabre between his teeth, and with his fiery eyes and burning cheeks, looked more like a fury than a human being. In a minute or two we heard shots in the interior. Robespierre the younger jumped out of one window, Henriot was thrown out of another, Robespierre was wounded, and Le Bas killed in the struggle. Couthon, pretending to be dead, was laid at full length on the coping of the Quai Pelletier, until a prick from a bayonet made him wince, and he was removed in custody; Robespierre was carried by me on a litter to endure the utmost bitterness of death.

‘ The next morning I found it so difficult to believe my recollections of the night, that, notwithstanding my horror of executions, I went to the Terrace of the Tuileries, which overlooks the Place de la Revolution, to watch the carts filled with the conquered party enter the enclosure of the guillotine. The long-continued shouts and applause which soon followed, left me no doubt that the head of Robespierre had really fallen.

‘ The next day, however, perished some whom I could not but pity. These were the seventy-two members of the Commune of Paris, who had been all seized in their hall of assembly, kept in custody for thirty-six hours, and then, without any trial beyond a mere identification, thrown into seven or eight carts, carried to the Place de la Revolution, and executed. The greater part of them had committed no error except that of taking office in such times as these. This punishment *en masse* of a whole body, though it may comprehend a minority who have protested against the acts of the majority, is the *ne plus ultra* of political iniquity. As I saw them pass by to their dreadful fate, I congratu-

* On comparing M. Berryer's statements with those of other witnesses, we are inclined to believe that the greater part of these troops consisted of the National Guards, who had originally obeyed the summons of the Commune; and whom the retreat of Henriot, the decree which outlawed the Commune, and the arguments of the members who had been sent out, had subsequently induced to support the Convention.

lated myself again and again on my resolution to refuse public employment.

‘Heron, the murderer of the Magons, was arrested under a resolution of the Convention, and immediately executed. My formidable enemy Coffinhal, who had contrived to add to the ferocity even of judgments such as his, by the jests with which he embittered them, was destroyed by the ingratitude of a wretch like himself. He had escaped from the Hôtel de Ville in the confusion of the night of the 9th Thermidor, fled to the river side, and lay hid for two days at the bottom of a barge. At length he was forced by hunger from his retreat, and reached the house of a petty shopkeeper, who owed to him his marriage and his establishment in business. It was late, and he found the husband and wife in the back room. While the wife was providing him with food, the husband went forward under the pretence of closing his shop; but in fact it was to denounce his benefactor and call in the police. Coffinhal resisted, was tied and thrown into a cart, and carried to instant execution, shouting and screaming in impotent rage.’ *

Experience had proved the mischiefs and the dangers, both to rulers and to subjects, of what had been called revolutionary government; that is to say, government by a single assembly representing the omnipotence of the people, and exercising or delegating to its own instruments all legislative and executive powers. The surviving leaders, therefore, in the Convention, a small minority of the remarkable men whom it once contained, employed themselves in preparing, for the third time, a constitution. The constitution of 1791 had failed, partly from its intrinsic defects, partly from the disinclination of the separate authorities to acknowledge the rights which the constitution gave to others, or the restraints which it imposed on themselves; and partly from the violent and unjust aggressions of foreign powers. That of 1793 had been prepared in a week, accepted by the people in three days, and immediately suspended. It scarcely differed, in fact, from the existing revolutionary government, except by subjecting to annual re-election the single assembly which was to govern as a sort of committee of the nation. The wisdom of the constitution of 1795 has been highly praised. We have been told that it would have endured, and endured beneficially, if any government not monarchical could have supported itself in France. It was prepared at leisure, and by men of talents, knowledge, and integrity; and, as it was the result of six years’ experience in revolution, it provided against the most obvious of the disorders under which the pre-

* Vol. I. p. 231, 237.

vious governments had fallen. It provided against the dangers of universal suffrage by establishing indirect election; and by requiring from the first body of electors, the members of what were called the primary assemblies, a qualification depending on taxation; and from the second body, the members of the electoral assemblies, a qualification depending on property. It guarded against rash legislation, by dividing the legislative body into two chambers; one intrusted with the preparation of laws, the other with their acceptance or rejection. It created a separate executive, consisting of a Directory of five persons appointed by the Chambers, and endeavoured to prevent the union of legislative and executive powers, by prohibiting any member of either chamber from filling any other office whatever. It guarded against permanence in office, by enacting that no one should be an elector of the higher order, that is to say, a member of an electoral assembly, for two successive years, or a member of the legislative body for more than six successive years, or a director for more than five years. One director and a third of the legislature were to retire annually; the first by lot, the second according to seniority of election.

It is impossible to believe that, under any circumstances, such a constitution could have been permanent. Its fundamental principles were change and collision. Neither the electoral, the legislative, nor the executive body were to remain unaltered for more than one year. It made experience in public affairs a positive disqualification. A member of the legislature was not re-eligible till after two years' interval, nor a member of the Directory till after five. The members of the legislature, incapable of any other functions, were necessarily in opposition to the Directory. The five directors, with no head, and no common interest, whom accident had made colleagues, and accident was to separate, necessarily split into factions. All the principles of good government were sacrificed to republican jealousy of those to whom power was to be intrusted.

The fitness of this new government to withstand assaults from without, cannot be said to have been tried. Before it had lasted two years it was destroyed from within; and with it was destroyed, for many years, all hope of constitutional, or even legal, government in France. From the unhappy morning of the 18th *Fructidor*, An. 5, (Sept. 4, 1797,) when a portion of the Directory used a military force to overpower their colleagues and the two representative bodies of France, the army had become the masters of the state. Such a precedent once set was not to be recalled. For many subsequent years the drum was substituted for the tocsin, the voice of the general for that of the demagogue,

and a military commission for a revolutionary tribunal. From that time the history of France loses its interest. From the history of a nation it becomes the history of an army; and soon afterwards the biography of the individual whose genius enabled him to seize that coarse but irresistible instrument. The picturesque and exciting acts of the vast drama were ended; the great actors, whose audacity of thought, language, and conduct, had crowded into six years changes that seemed to require centuries, had perished, were exiled, or were silenced. The work of destruction ended with the Convention: that of reconstruction began with the Consulate. The Directory was an interval of fraud and force applied to personal purposes—combining the insecurity of a revolution without its enthusiasm, and the oppression of a tyranny without its vigour.

The establishment, however, of something resembling regular government, restored M. Berryer to the public exercise of his profession. One of his first appearances was in defence of a member of the revolutionary committee who had been the petty despots of his section. Their acts of oppression were passed over as incidental to their office, but it was thought safe to attack their miserable peculations. Among these was the robbery of a chapel; the knife-grinder had appropriated the cloth, the president had turned the velvet of the high altar into a pair of breeches, the shoe-cleaner had taken the silk, the porter the silver fringes, and the fifth member the linen. The shoe-cleaner had been M. Berryer's patron, had obtained a passport for him at a critical time, and had given countenance and protection to some others of the inhabitants of the section, who had the merit of being the customers of his stall. These services were urged by M. Berryer, and accepted by the judges as an excuse for the sacrilege.

More serious questions soon arose. In a country in which the law had been powerless for nearly two years—in which property had been a ground for proscription, and every stratagem had been used to conceal it—in which the legal currency had been in a course of daily depreciation, while death was the punishment of those who ventured to refuse it, or even to take it at less than its nominal value—where even the connexion and mutual rights of husband and wife, and parent and child, had been fluctuating—the relations of individuals towards one another, and towards the property which had escaped confiscation, required to be ascertained.

M. Berryer's narratives of his contests on questions depending on marriage, divorce, and legitimacy, are interesting. They describe a community unsupported by religion, delicacy, or morality—in which virtues had so often been declared to be criminal,

and crimes to be virtuous, that public opinion had been destroyed, and with it the conscience and even the self-respect of individuals. Brothers and sisters bred up together attack one another's legitimacy, women set aside their own marriages, husbands disavow their wives, and parents their children; in short, all the misery is exhibited of a society in which mere law is the only restraint. But M. Berryer's stories of this kind are too concise, and too much alike in their features, to be interesting in such an abridgement as we could give of them. We shall select, therefore, some other incidents from his parti-coloured narrative.

One of the most remarkable, and one of those which throw most light upon the internal state of France, during the interval between the Reign of Terror and the Consulate, is a trial before the tribunal of Chartres, in which M. Berryer was only a spectator. For some years previous to the trial, which appears to have taken place in the year 1795, a large tract of country, of which the forest of Orgeres, extending to within thirty miles of Chartres, is the centre, had been infested by bands of ruffians, who, from their use of fire as an instrument of torture, acquired the name of *Chauffeurs*. They were accustomed to surround lonely farm-houses in numbers too large for resistance, bind the males, and force the females, by fire applied to the feet, to discover the property of the family. From the number of their outrages, the uniformity of their proceedings, and the skill with which they were conducted, it was inferred that they formed a large confederacy, acting on system, and obeying some central authority. But this was mere suspicion: common as the crime was, not one of the criminals was identified. One day, however, two *gendarmes*, as they crossed a portion of the forest, found a child about ten years old, the singularity of whose dress excited their curiosity. He asked for food, and was persuaded to accompany them to a neighbouring town. A good breakfast and a glass of wine obtained his confidence. He told them that he lived with his father and mother, and many other families, in a vast cavern in the forest. That a great many men came there from time to time, bringing with them sometimes plate and other valuables, which were afterwards taken away, and sometimes provisions and clothes for the inhabitants. It seemed probable that the headquarter of the *Chauffeurs* was now detected; but, instead of attacking the cavern, the result of which would have been only the seizure of those who might be in it at the time, and the alarm and escape of the other members of the confederacy, it was resolved to use the child as a means of arresting the out-door brigands, one by one, and to reserve the cavern for the

last. For this purpose, the child, to whom we will give, by anticipation, the name of *Finfin*, which he afterwards acquired by the dexterity with which he played his part, was disguised by good clothes, and placed, under the care of a woman who acted as his nurse, at the corners of the markets of the towns to which it was supposed that the brigands would resort to sell the plundered property. Whenever he saw a face with which he had become familiar in the cavern, he gave a sign, and the person indicated was arrested. At length the number exceeded a hundred; descriptions of the prisoners, and of the property found on them, were published; and evidence poured in from all sides. The trial lasted several days. Every morning the accused, about 112 in number, were marched in a long column, guarded by a numerous escort, through the streets of Chartres, to a church in the centre of the town, which had been fitted up on this occasion as a court, and was large enough to exhibit them all to the witnesses and the jury. M. Berryer dwells on the horrors of the evidence, particularly on that of the daughters of an opulent proprietor, three sisters, whose feet had been destroyed by fire, so that they were forced to come on crutches into the court.

It appeared that the cavern, or rather the collection of caverns, from whence *Finfin* had wandered, was situated in the least accessible portion of the forest; and formed out of the quarries which had furnished the stone for the magnificent cathedral of Chartres. Here a colony of malefactors, male and female, had been founded, which recruited itself, partly by immigration and partly by natural increase. Like the Indian associations of the Thugs, it had a government, laws, and police, adapted to the frightful profession of its members. It had corresponding members, who indicated the dwellings most fit for attack, and an executive, which planned expeditions, and appointed the persons who were to effect them. The whole 112 were convicted. At a subsequent period, it would have been difficult to dispose of a body of criminals for whom death was the only appropriate sentence, and who would have been thought too numerous for such a punishment; but in 1795, and in France, men were accustomed to such scenes, and M. Berryer passes over their execution without remark.

During the six years which elapsed between M. Berryer's return to his profession and the peace of Amiens, his principal employment, as honourable as it was ineffectual, was the defence of neutral owners against French privateers. At the breaking out of the war in 1793, a decree of the Convention had given jurisdiction in all cases of capture to the local tribunals of France, and even to the French consuls in foreign parts.

'It became,' says M. Berryer, 'a presumption of law in those local prize courts, that not a vessel that traversed the ocean was really neutral; that every cargo was in fact English property; and that all the exteriors of neutrality were frauds to be exposed or eluded. The most frivolous objections were raised to the different papers by which the nationality of the ship, or the ownership of the cargo, was proved, and always with success. Every syllable in every passport was challenged, and every change that, during a long voyage, had taken place in the crew. But when the law of 1798 had declared good prize every vessel containing goods (*marchandises*) the produce of England, or of any English dependency, the robberies of the privateers were unrestrained. They seized, absolutely without exception, every vessel which they met with at sea, whatever the flag, for they were sure to find on board some English goods. It might have been supposed that the word goods (*marchandises*) meant something intended for sale, or at least something for which freight was to be paid. It was held to comprehend the mere furniture of a cabin, a bed, a chair, or a carpet, or even a knife or a razor used by the captain. The presence of any such article drew after it the confiscation of ship and cargo, valued perhaps at millions. An appeal was, indeed, given from the tribunal which sat in a French port to the tribunal of the district, and from the judgment of the French consul abroad to a court sitting in France; but the right was so given as to be beneficial only to captors. In the rare case of a judgment favourable to the neutral, the captor could appeal, and the vessel and cargo were detained till the event was known; but every sentence of an inferior court in favour of a captor was put into immediate execution. No security for costs or for restitution was required, and the neutral, supposing him to succeed on appeal, had generally a mere claim for damages; a claim which the captors rendered nugatory, by converting these undertakings into a joint stock, of which the shares passed by mere delivery, so that the persons liable were unknown, and were constantly changing.

'Such was the state of the law, or of the administration of the law, under which, in the beginning of the year 1798, I was called, for the first time, as counsel to Nantes. My clients were Messrs Duntzfelds and Co., one of the first mercantile houses in Copenhagen. They were the owners of the Bernstorf and the Norge, worth more than three millions of francs, which had been captured by Nantes privateers, and condemned by the inferior tribunal. It was admitted, indeed stated in the sentence, that they were *bonâ fide* Danish property. The only pretence for condemnation was non-compliance, on the part of the captain, with some mere formal regulations, imposed indeed by the recent municipal law of France, which could not, except in violation of the treaty made between France and Denmark in 1742, be applied to the ships of our allies the Danes. I urged the express words of the treaty. I urged its recognition in a similar case by the neighbouring tribunal of St Brienne. Such was the influence of my arguments on public opinion, even in Nantes, that instruments, purporting to assign shares in the prizes, were not saleable except at nominal prices. By an abuse which had become habitual, the superior court of justice in Nantes applied for instructions

to the Directory, then the rulers of France. I instantly returned to Paris, in the hope of inducing the Directory, if they interfered in a matter of law, at least to interfere in favour of the treaty. But it was in vain. I soon heard that the law of nations had been overruled, and the vessels finally condemned. The notoriety of these decisions gave a still further extension to the piracy of our privateers. They seized even the coasting traders of the Mediterranean, as they were proceeding, at a distance from any seat of war, from one port belonging to our allies to another. Hundreds of appeals were put into my hands, not from the hope of redress, but because the policies which insured against capture required that every means to ward off condemnation should have been exhausted. The neutral captains and supercargoes crowded to my office—men who had been entrusted with millions; and now, deprived of their own little funds, and even of their baggage, had to depend on the consuls of their countries for the means of existence during the suit. In one matter, I so far shook the Court of Appeal as to delay its judgment for one day. It was the case of the *Federalist*, a ship belonging to citizens of the United States of America, with whom we were in strict alliance. The ground of confiscation was a strip of carpet by the captain's bedside. It was discovered, or pretended to be discovered, that this bit of carpeting was of English manufacture. On this pretence the ship and her whole cargo, worth a million and a half of francs, had been condemned. At the conclusion of my address, the court was proceeding to reverse the condemnation. One judge only suggested a doubt. The decision was adjourned to the next day, and was then given in favour of the captors. Generally, I had no clue to the proceedings of the Court of Appeal, but sometimes I could account for them. Early in the morning sittings of the Council of Five Hundred, (Lower Chamber of France,) or when the attendance was thin, the pirates used to obtain from the members present resolutions of the Chamber, declaring in their favour the law on any litigated point, and these resolutions were considered decisive. One day, during the hearing of a case, I saw a man, whom I believe to be a deputy from the south, give a paper to the Government commissioner. While they were whispering together, I rushed towards them, in order to ascertain the nature of the business which brought the deputy into court. He instantly disappeared, for his business was over. The paper contained a resolution of the house, deciding the question against my client.

'The ultimate results were, that not a vessel ventured to approach a French port; that we were cut off from the supply of indispensable commodities; that our privateers, acting without concert and without prudence, fell into the power of the English cruisers; that our maritime population was crowded into the English prisons, where many perished from ill-treatment; that our colonies were lost, for want of sailors to form a military marine; and, ultimately, when the day of retribution arrived, the state had to pay for the plunder which had been profitable only to a few individuals.*'

* This narrative is extracted, with some changes of arrangement, from the second volume, cap iii. § 1, 2.

The revolution which placed Bonaparte on the consular throne was unquestionably beneficial. The despotism which seems to be the inevitable result of military rule, was more tolerable than that of the factions which owed to treason their rise and their fall. Even the tyranny of the Empire was as great an improvement on the intrigues and violence of the Directory, as the Directory was on the anarchy of the Convention.

We are inclined, indeed, to consider the eighteen months of the Peace of Amiens, as the most brilliant portion of the history of France since the death of Charlemagne. England was supposed to be incapable of any but maritime war, and had accepted an insecure and dishonourable peace. The force of Russia was unknown, and neither Austria nor Prussia had yet adopted the systems which, at the expense of all the other objects of government, now give them powers offensive and defensive, which their happier ancestors never contemplated. The military supremacy of France seemed established; and it was supported by a territory as extensive as can be usefully united in one empire. She had incorporated Savoy, Piedmont, the Milanese, a considerable part of Switzerland, and all the great and rich countries that lie between her present frontier and the Rhine. The portions of Holland, Switzerland, and Northern Italy which she had not made French, were her dependencies. It is true that under the Empire she acquired a still more extended territory, and a still larger body of subordinate allies; but her subsequent acquisitions were not ratified by England. They were mere incidents in a fearful game, liable to be torn away, and in fact actually torn away, as soon as her fatal system of playing double or quits should produce its usual result. At the Peace of Amiens her gains were realized. Had she remained contented with them, she would probably now form the most powerful empire that the world has seen. She would possess fifty millions of rich, warlike, and highly civilized inhabitants, with the best soil, the best climate, the best frontier, and the best position, on the Continent.

The same remark may be extended to the extraordinary man who had seized the command of her destinies. He then enjoyed more real power, more real popularity, and more real glory, than at any subsequent period of his career. As a soldier, he never repeated the miracles of his Italian victories. In his subsequent campaigns he obtained vast and decisive advantages when he had a superior force; suffered vast and decisive defeats when his force was inferior; and when the force on each side was nearly balanced, as at Eylau, Aspern, Borodino, and Ligny, so was the success. As a politician, he was known only as a Pacificator; he

had had nothing to do with the origin of the three great wars in which he had been an actor; and he had concluded each of them by a glorious peace. He owed, it is true, his power to usurpation, but it was the most pardonable usurpation that history records. Those whom he deposed were themselves usurpers, and for hundreds that regretted the change, there were millions that hailed it with delight. Never was there an easier or a more popular revolution; and, up to the time of which we are speaking, the millions appeared to be right. He had given to France internal as well as external peace. He had restored the rule of law, and made it omnipotent against all except himself. He had laid the foundation of a Code which, with all its defects, is superior to that of any other Continental nation. He had restored Religion, not indeed in its purest form, but in the form most attractive to a people among whom imagination and passion predominate over reason, and who yield more readily to feeling, to authority, and to example, than to conviction. With religion he had restored decency of manners, and, in a considerable degree, decency of morals. He had effected all this under the forms of a constitution which, depending not on the balanced rights and privileges of classes, but on the simple basis of centralized power, gave to the body of the people the equality which they seem to prefer to real liberty and to real security.

One of the first acts of the Consulate was to withdraw matters of prize from the ordinary tribunals, and place them in the hands of a department of the government, denominated the *Conseil des Prises*. The unfitness of the petty local courts had been shown; but the referring questions of pure law to an administrative instead of a legal body, was a strange anomaly. And when we add that the persons appointed to decide between French captors and neutral owners, were mere officers of the executive, removable at pleasure, the anomaly became an oppression. It is strange that M. Berryer, himself a lawyer, approves of this institution: he had soon a remarkable opportunity of ascertaining its impartiality and its integrity.

‘Holland,’ says M. Berryer, ‘at that time forming the Batavian Republic, was in the year 1797 the unhappy ally of the Republic of France. The price of the alliance had been the loss of all her colonies, and of all maritime commerce under her own flag: for all Indian commodities, and particularly for tea, in Holland a necessary of life, she depended on that of Denmark, the only flag respected by England on the southern ocean. The respect paid by England to the Danish flag was, indeed, a pretence for its violation by France. The French privateers and the French tribunals affected to believe that England used Danish vessels as the means of her Eastern communication. When it is recollected that the Indian trade of England

was carried on in the great ships of the East India Company, sailing in fleets, and under convoy, the insincerity of this pretence is obvious; but it served as a convenient instrument of pillage, particularly in the case which I am about to relate.

' In the autumn of 1797 the Batavian Republic wished to import a year's supply of green tea. The attempt to send from Amsterdam to Canton ten millions of francs of Dutch property, and to bring it back in so peculiar a form, was very difficult and very perilous; on the one hand the seas of Africa and Asia were swarming with English cruisers, which respected no flag but the Danish, and on the other hand the seas of Europe were filled with the privateers of the dear ally of Holland, which respected no flag whatever.

' To delude the English cruisers, a ship which had belonged to the English East India Company, was purchased and sent to Copenhagen. There she was named the *Caninholm*, and fitted for her voyage; her captain was naturalized as a Dane; she had a whole set of Danish papers, and cleared for Tranquebar, a Danish settlement; taking in at Portsmouth her outward cargo in dollars. These precautions were supposed, and indeed proved, sufficient as regarded the cruisers of her enemy, England; the real danger was from those of her ally, France. To ward off this the Batavian government took into their confidence the French government, then consisting of the Directory, and obtained their sanction to the expedition, and a license or protection against all interference by French vessels. As a further precaution, a Dutch supercargo was taken in at Tranquebar, and the *Caninholm*, on her return voyage, cleared out at Canton for the *Texel*.

' The expedition lasted more than eighteen months. The *Caninholm* left Copenhagen in November 1797, and it was in June 1799 that she was captured as she entered the European seas by a French privateer, and carried into Bordeaux. The captain instantly went on shore to show his license to the Bordeaux authorities; but no justice was to be expected in a privateering town, when a prize of ten millions of francs was in dispute. The ship was of course condemned. The owners appealed, but before they could be heard, the revolution of 1799 had overthrown the Directory. The consular government refused to recognize the contracts of its predecessors or the rights of its ally, and the *Caninholm* was definitively condemned as English property. I ascertained afterwards that Bonnet and Co., the owners of the privateer, had been obliged to scatter a little of their rich prey in order to keep the remainder. Bills accepted by them suddenly appeared in the Paris market; I myself had to advise proceedings on more than half a million's worth of them.' *

Some branches of the legal profession may flourish under a despot; attorneys and chamber counsel do not excite his jealousy; and judges are the best instruments of his power. They enable him to express his will in the form of general principles, and thus

to regulate the actions of millions, of whose separate existence he is not even aware. They convert resistance to his power into a breach of law; and punish it without his apparent interference. An army or a mob may give power to its chief; but that power cannot be safe until it is supported by legal forms, enforced by legal authorities. But no arbitrary ruler looks favourably on advocates. The bar is essentially an aristocracy in the noblest sense of that term; the relative position of its members depends on their merit; the smiles of the crown cannot give reputation to mediocrity, its frowns cannot depress diligence and talent. The functions of the bar are still more offensive than its independence; its business is to discuss, and an absolute government hates discussion; its business is to enforce the observance of general rules, and adherence to precedents: such a government, though it requires them from others, refuses itself to be bound by either. 'Every day,' said Bonaparte, and he was then only Consul, 'one must break through positive laws; there is no other mode of proceeding. The action of the government must never be impeded—there must be no opposition.'*

Again, a bar, though it offers its services indifferently to the government and to its subjects, is really useful only to the latter. Such a government does not require the aid of an advocate to persuade judges to be subservient to a power which appoints, promotes, and removes them; but to those whom the government is attacking, his assistance is inestimable. He may sometimes be able to protect their lives or their fortunes, and he can almost always protect their reputation. All other appeals to public opinion may be tolerated up to a certain point, and silently prevented from passing the prescribed limit. A censorship may effectually chain the press without attracting attention to any given case of interference; but if an advocate is once allowed to speak, he cannot be stopped without an apparent denial of justice.

Bonaparte, who had all the jealousies and the instincts of ambition in their utmost intensity, must, under any circumstances, have hated the French bar; but he had also a personal quarrel with its members:—out of more than two hundred advocates, only three voted in favour of the Empire, and this was a subject on which he never forgave opposition. He restored indeed the order, but he deprived it of self-government, and laid it at the feet of the imperial authorities. The express permission of the chief judge was necessary before an advocate could plead in any court but his own; the attorney-general selected the members of the *Conseils*

* Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat*, p. 229, 231.

de discipline, which regulated the internal affairs of the order; and he also selected from them the *bâtonnier*, or president of the bar; and, finally, the chief judge had an arbitrary power of suspension, and even of expulsion.

M. Berryer himself incurred Bonaparte's especial displeasure. He had been counsel against Bourrienne before Bourrienne had lost his master's favour; he had defended Moreau and Dupont, and the family of Monnet, the unfortunate defender of Flushing. For these offences he was excluded from the Tribunate, and from the honours of the bar; but the contest which he appears to think the most dangerous was his defence of M. the Mayor of Antwerp, in 1812 and 1813.

The Mayor, an old man of high character and great wealth, and once in high favour with Bonaparte, was married to a young wife, who quarrelled with the wife of the commissioner of police about a box in the theatre. The commissioner revenged himself by accusing the Mayor, and three other municipal officers, of embezzling the proceeds of the *Octroi* of Antwerp; and, having Bonaparte's confidence, contrived to render him the determined enemy of the accused.

The indictment was an enormous instrument: the attorney-general of the imperial court of Brussels, which then included Antwerp in its jurisdiction, was said to have been killed by the labour of preparing it. The trial took place at Brussels, before a jury consisting of the principal persons of the country. After it had gone on for some days, it became clear that it would terminate by an acquittal. The law-officers who conducted the prosecution, therefore, interrupted its progress, by indicting for perjury two of the mayor's witnesses. As this matter was to be disposed of before the Mayor's trial could be concluded, the latter was thrown over to a subsequent session and a new jury. The indictment against the witnesses utterly failed, and the Mayor's trial was resumed. A new jury was selected solely from Frenchmen, most of them public functionaries, and all devoted to the Emperor, whose determination to destroy the Mayor was now notorious. We will pursue the narrative in M. Berryer's words:—

‘ On my second arrival at Brussels I had to unveil before the jury the complicated iniquity of the prosecution. I referred to the oppressive indictment of the witnesses for the defence, and showed it to have been a trick to get rid of the first jury. I dwelt on the absence of any documentary evidence against my clients, and refuted all the verbal testimony which had been procured. The trial, after several days of hearing, ended by a general acquittal. The whole population of Brussels surrounded the mayor, and drew his carriage in triumph to his hotel. Even when I left

the town late in the evening, on my return to Paris, the streets were still resounding with music and acclamations. The news reached Bonaparte at Dresden, and put him in a state of fury. He instantly sent a violent despatch to Paris, ordering the mayor and his co-defendants to be re-tried, and even the jury to be tried for having acquitted them. The minister of justice transmitted the order to M. Argenson, the prefect of Antwerp. M. Argenson replied that it was impossible to try men again on charges from which a jury had acquitted them. The Council of State was assembled, and decided that the imperial command must be obeyed. This decision was notified to M. Argenson. He merely repeated his refusal. Application was now made by the minister of justice to the Senate, as the highest body in the state. The Senate referred the matter to a committee. I flew to the Luxembourg, and obtained an interview with a member of the committee. He heard all I had to say, agreed with me that such a profanation of the forms and the substance of law would be disastrous, but ended by saying, "After all, what would you have us do?—do you not perceive that we should upset ourselves?" The committee accordingly reported as the Council of State had done before; and by virtue of a decree of the Senate, the mayor and his supposed accomplices were directed to be tried before the Court of Assizes of Douai. I heard of the decree before it was published, and had time to advise two of those who had been acquitted with the mayor, and some of the members of the jury who had fled to me in Paris for my aid in the extreme danger in which they were placed, to avoid the storm by concealing themselves. M. Argenson not only persisted in his refusal, but resigned. Other persons, however, less scrupulous were found, and the mayor was arrested and conveyed to the prison of Douai. Worn out, however, by oppression and anxiety, he died there, before the period of trial. Indeed, before that trial could have been terminated, the man who had been mad enough to order it had ceased to reign.*

Though a staunch royalist, M. Berryer does not appear to have been one of the enthusiastic welcomers of the Restoration. It was connected, indeed, with the loss of his fortune, the honourable accumulation of thirty-four years of labour. A manufacturer who had been the victim of the fraud and ingratitude of his partners, became his client. He obtained for him damages sufficient to form the nucleus of a capital, and, by becoming his guarantee to a banking company, enabled him to establish himself as a cotton-spinner at Rouen. M. Berryer's security for the sums advanced on his guarantee, was the deposit of twist of double the value. At the time of the Restoration, the amount for which M. Berryer was liable exceeded L.25,000, for which he held twist valued at L.50,000. The relaxation of prohibitory duties in the first effervescence of the Restoration, instantly

reduced the value of the twist to L.8000. The bankers required a further security. M. Berryer was forced to mortgage, and ultimately to sell all his own estates, and also all those of his wife, for she generously consented to surrender them.

Soon afterwards came the most important of M. Berryer's causes—a cause in which his exertions, though unproductive to his client, and injurious to his own interests, were honourable to his talents and to his courage. This was the trial of Marshal Ney. The twenty-seven years which have elapsed since that striking event, may have effaced its details from the memories of many of our readers. We will shortly recapitulate them:—

In the beginning of 1815, Marshal Ney was governor of Besançon, but residing on his estate near Châteaudun, a town between Chartres and Orleans, about eighty miles from Paris. On the 6th of March he received an order from Soult, then minister of war, to proceed to Besançon. News travels slowly in France: though Bonaparte had been five days in Provence, the fact was unknown at Châteaudun, and Ney, curious as to the motive of the order, took Paris in his road. He arrived on the 7th, and found M. Batardy, his attorney, at his house waiting for him.* They arranged some private business, and Batardy, surprised at Ney's making no allusion to what occupied every mind in Paris, ventured to remark, 'This is a strange event.' 'What event?' answered Ney. 'Don't you know,' replied Batardy, 'that Bonaparte has landed at Cannes—that Monsieur proceeded this morning to Lyons, and that you are ordered to your government?' At first Ney treated the news as incredible; but when he was told that it was officially stated in the *Moniteur*, he leant his head upon the mantelpiece and exclaimed, 'What a calamity!—what a horrible event! What can be done? —what is there to oppose such a man as that? Would he have ventured to return unless he had relied on finding here enemies to the government?'

Ney went immediately to the minister, and was told that he would find his instructions at Besançon. He then saw the King, made his memorable promise to bring back Bonaparte in a cage, left Paris for Besançon, and appears to have arrived there during the night between the 9th and 10th. The 10th he employed in directing the forces under his control to meet at Lons le Saulnier, a small town to the south of Besançon, and to the east of the high-road from Lyons to Paris. On the 11th

* See M. Batardy's deposition. *Procès du Maréchal Ney*, Michaud No. i. p. 51.

he set out himself for Lons le Saulnier. In the mean time, Grenoble had opened its gates to Bonaparte; he had rushed forward to Lyons, the second city in France, occupied by a considerable force under Monsieur and Marshal Macdonald. The city and the garrison had received him with enthusiasm; Monsieur and Macdonald had been forced to fly; the trifling band with which he had landed had been swelled by the garrisons of Grenoble and Lyons to more than 10,000 men, and was augmenting every day by the desertion from the royal forces of individuals, companies, and even regiments. On his road, Ney met M. de St Amour and M. de Soran returning from Lyons, who described to him the revolutionary madness which they had witnessed in the people, and the cries of *Vive l'Empereur* which they had heard from the troops whom they had met on their march. In the morning of the 12th he reached Lons le Saulnier. During the whole of that day, and until the night of the 13th, he appears to have been making active preparations to attack Bonaparte, or at least to resist him. The troops nominally under his order did not amount to 5000 men; they were deficient in ammunition, and scarcely provided with artillery—the artillery horses having been hired by the farmers, and not to be found when unexpectedly wanted. Bonaparte's proclamations were scattered round, and seemed every where to produce their intended effects. In the evening of the 13th, Ney's spies informed him that Bonaparte, preceding his own forces with an escort of only forty men, had entered Mâcon in triumph; that from Mâcon to Bourg (which is only seven posts from Lons le Saulnier) the whole country was in what the French call *exaltation*—that even the villagers, and the people in the fields, were crying *Vive l'Empereur*. Ney's last acts on the 13th were to make arrangements—the prudence and details of which raised the admiration of the peers at his trial,*—to write to Marshals Suchet and Oudinot, who were co-operating with him in support of the royal cause, to communicate his proceedings; and to require all the regimental and non-commissioned officers of his small force, separately, to swear before him to be faithful to the Bourbons. It is to be observed that on this very day, at a council held in the Tuileries, it was admitted that resistance was hopeless—that not a soldier would fire on his former Emperor—and that the only debatable question was, in what direction the King should fly.†

* See *Procès*, No. iv. p. 14.

† See the details in Bourrienne, vol. x. cap. 16. Bourrienne was present.

Late in the night between the 13th and 14th, Ney was guilty of his first breach of duty. He admitted messengers from Bonaparte: they brought him a letter from Bertrand, assuring him that Louis had been betrayed by his ministers; that troops devoted to Bonaparte had been posted along the road to Paris, so as to ensure his advance without opposition; and that the whole enterprise had been concerted with England and Austria. The folly of the last statements ought not to revolt us, when we remember that the successor to Napoleon was the grandson of Francis; and that M. Berryer, who has passed his life in estimating evidence, even now believes that we effected Bonaparte's escape! Absurd as they really were, they did not appear so to Ney. With Bertrand's letter came a proclamation ready prepared in the name of Ney, in which he was made to declare that the cause of the Bourbons was lost for ever, and that liberty and Napoleon were triumphant. And there came also orders from Bonaparte, expressed as if the old relations between himself and Ney had remained uninterrupted, and giving him instructions in the style which he had long been accustomed to obey.

Between three and four in the morning of the 14th, he was roused from his sleep by M. de Capelle, the prefect of Bourg, who had to tell him that one of his regiments, the 76th, stationed at Bourg, had proclaimed Bonaparte; that even the regiment at St Amour, which formed the advanced guard of the small force at Lons le Saulnier, was preparing to go over; and that throughout the country the higher classes were stupefied, and the lower mad with revolutionary excitement. This information appears to have convinced him of the impossibility of further opposition. 'Can I stop,' he said to M. de Capelle, 'with my hand the rising of the tide?' A few hours afterwards he ordered his troops to be called together; but before he took a decisive step, summoned the two generals next him in command, De Bourmont and Lecourbe, both of them supposed to be devoted to the King, showed them the proclamation, repeated the contents of Bertrand's letter, and asked their advice. No fourth person was present. De Bourmont and Lecourbe state that they urged him to remain faithful to the King; Ney maintains that they approved of his joining Bonaparte. It is in favour of Ney's statement, that they both accompanied him to the parade where the troops were formed in square, stood on each side of him while he read the proclamation, heard it without any expression of dissent, and dined with him the same evening. The dinner was silent and melancholy. We fully believe Ney's account of the effect produced on his own mind by the irrevocable step which he had taken. 'From the time of that unhappy pro-

‘clamoration life was a burden to me; I wished for nothing but death, and did all I could to find it at Waterloo. A hundred times I was on the point of blowing out my brains; all that restrained me was my wish to defend my character. I knew that all honourable men must blame me—I blamed myself. I did wrong, I admit it, but I was not a traitor; I was partly deceived, and partly carried away.’*

Ney proceeded to meet Bonaparte at Dijon, and a few days afterwards was ordered to visit the northern and eastern frontier, from Lille to Landau, to ascertain the state of the fortresses and hospitals; and to publish every where that Bonaparte had returned under a treaty between himself, England, and Austria—stipulating that he was never to carry on war beyond the frontier of France; that he was to give France a liberal constitution; and that his wife and child were to remain as hostages in Vienna until he had performed all the positive parts of his engagement.† Having executed his mission, he retired into the country, and took so little part in the transactions of April and May, that when, on the 1st of June, he appeared at the ceremony of the acceptance of the new constitution, Bonaparte told him that he thought he had emigrated. ‘I ought to have done so long ago,’ answered Ney; ‘now it is too late.’‡

He returned after the battle of Waterloo to Paris; and by his bold exposition in the Chamber of Peers, on the 22d of June, of the real facts and consequences of the battle, materially assisted in driving Bonaparte from power. In that speech, Ney maintained that the Allies would be before Paris in a week. His prediction was accomplished; and on the morning of the 3d of July it seemed probable that, before the evening, a battle would have been fought, more disastrous to France, and particularly to Paris, than any event in the history of the French nation. Davoust, who commanded the army defending the town, had a large body of infantry, (80,000 men, according to M. Berryer,§) 25,000 cavalry, and between four and five hundred pieces of field artillery— a force insufficient for victory, but sufficient to maintain a contest destructive of the city in which it was to take place. Already the firing had begun, when the Provisional Government and Davoust sent to propose a negotiation; of which the bases were to be, the entry of the allied forces on the one hand, and the preservation of Paris, and the security of all who inhabited it, on the other. On these terms the convention of the

* *Procès*, No. i. p. 12.

† *Ibid.* p. 27.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 12.

§ Vol. i. p. 374.

|| See the evidence, *Procès*, No. iv. p. 19.

3d of July 1815, was framed; and ratified by the Duke of Wellington and Blucher on the part of the Allies, and by Davoust on the part of the Provisional Government. The twelfth article provided that all the inhabitants, and generally all persons found in Paris, should continue to enjoy all their rights and liberty, and should not be liable to any molestation or enquiry whatsoever, with relation to their functions, to their conduct, or to their political opinions. It appears, from the evidence of General Guilleminot, one of the negotiators of the convention, that this was the clause to which the defenders of Paris attached the most importance. Had it been refused, he was to break off the discussion, and the battle would have commenced.*

Relying on the protection given to him by the convention, Ney remained in Paris till the 6th of July, and continued in France until the 3d of August; when he was arrested on a charge of treason, and ordered to be tried by a court-martial, comprising among its members four of the Marshals of France. Ney protested against the jurisdiction of such a tribunal, and the court, unfortunately, as M. Berryer thinks, for the prisoner, declared itself incompetent.

The cause, therefore, was transferred to the House of Peers; the court appointed by the Charter for the trial of treason. The object of Ney's counsel was to gain time. They knew, from the experience of thirty-five years of revolution, that political resentment is a passion as fleeting as it is fierce; and that, if a delay of a few months could be obtained, the Government would no longer have the courage to execute him, nor indeed the wish. For this purpose they endeavoured to show that, although the Charter rendered treason cognizable by the House of Peers, yet it laid down no rules by which the house was to be governed when sitting as a court of criminal justice; and they required that the trial should be suspended until a law regulating the procedure of the house should have been passed. M. Berryer's speech † is an admirable specimen of legal and constitutional reasoning; and indicates, with great sagacity, the errors into which such a tribunal, unless supported and directed by strict regulations, would be likely to fall. The house, however, after a secret deliberation of an hour and a half, decided that the trial should go on. Objections were then raised to the indictment, and, though they were overruled, so much time was gained, that the house, which had met for the trial on the 11th of November, did not really begin it till the 4th of December.

* *Procès*, No. iv. p. 20.

† *Ibid.* No. ii. p. 32.

In the mean time, Ney had applied to the ministers of the allied powers, and required them to interfere, and prevent the convention of the 3d of July from being violated in his person. Their answer, drawn up by the Duke of Wellington, and adopted by the ministers of Austria and Prussia, stated, that 'the object of the 12th article was to prevent the adoption of any measure of severity, under the military authority of those who made it, towards any persons in Paris, on account of the offices which they had filled, or their conduct, or their political opinions; but it was not intended, and could not be intended, to prevent either the existing French government, or any French government which should succeed to it, from acting in this respect as it might deem fit.'*

In this extremity Madame Ney sought the aid of Lord Holland, a name illustrious throughout Europe as the friend of the oppressed. She requested him to lay Ney's Memorial before the Prince Regent. It was done; but the only effect was a letter from Lord Liverpool, referring her to the communication already made to her husband by the Duke of Wellington.† Lord Holland, however, did not yet despair. He still thought that the Duke of Wellington's interference might be obtained, and must be decisive; and in that hope he addressed to their common friend, Lord Kinnaird, then at Paris, a letter which was to be shown to the Duke. What effect it might have had, cannot be told. It arrived the day after the sentence had been executed. As this admirable letter has never been published, we cannot resist the temptation of extracting some of its most material passages.

Middleton, Dec. 5, 1816.

DEAR KINNAIRD,

'What is passing at Paris annoys me more than I can describe. For La Valette, on the score of private acquaintance, though slight, I am much concerned; but from regard to the character of our country, and to that of the Duke of Wellington, (in whom, after the great things he has done, even as decided an opponent of the war as myself must feel a national interest,) I have conceived more horror at the trials and executions going on in the teeth of our capitulation than mere humanity could create.

'How can such a man as Wellington assert that the impunity for political conduct extends only to impunity from the Allies for offences

* British and Foreign State Papers, 1815, 1816, printed by the Foreign Office.—P. 262.

† *Ibid.*—P. 272.

committed against *them*? When ships, when garrisons surrender, do the captains or commanders stipulate that the foreign conqueror shall not molest them for their political exertions? With or without such stipulations, what shadow of right has a foreign enemy to punish individuals for opinions held, or conduct pursued in their own country? It is clear that the impunity promised was impunity for crimes, real or supposed, against a French government. If the French government was a party to that promise, by that promise it must abide. If not, the other Allies are bound in honour not to deliver over a town taken in virtue of it, without exacting the same terms from those to whom they deliver it. Such, perhaps, is the formal technical way of putting the argument. Practically and substantially, the case, if not more striking, is yet more conclusive to men of justice and honour. The Allies have virtually, I might say formally too, been masters of Paris, while the persons who delivered it to them on the faith of impunity for political offences, have for political offences been imprisoned, tried, condemned, and executed! Wellington has himself precluded all doubt on the question. He maintains, in his letter to Lord Castlereagh, that there is no article in the capitulation securing to the town of Paris the pictures and statues; and therefore he argues, and he acts on his argument, that the Allies may seize the pictures, &c., and seize them without any *fresh* or formal cession from Louis XVIII. Up to that time, then, the Allies, according to him, were in military possession of Paris, and up to that time therefore, even upon his own view of the subject, the inhabitants were entitled to claim impunity for all political opinions and conduct. Those who had the right and the power of taking forcibly from Paris, property not specified or disposed of in the capitulation, notwithstanding the nominal government of Louis XVIII., must surely have a right to enforce on any such nominal and dependent government the observance of promises, on the faith of which the inhabitants had surrendered the town.

‘Technical arguments may possibly be urged on both sides; and, though they appear to me all in favour of Ney’s claim, it is not on them I lay stress, but on the obvious and practical aspect of the transaction as it must strike impartial men and posterity. The plain relation of the events in history will be this. A promise of security was held out to the inhabitants of Paris—they surrendered the town, and while Wellington and the Allies were still really in possession of it, Labedoyere was executed, and Ney was tried for political opinions and conduct. Even of subsequent executions, and I fear there will be many, it will be said—The Allies delivered over their authority, in Paris, to a French government, without exacting an observance of the stipulations on which they had originally acquired it.

‘Had we taken Martinique in 1794, on a promise of not molesting individuals for political opinions or conduct, should we have been at liberty to cede it had Louis XVIII. been then restored, without insisting on the impunity of all political offenders; or, at the very least, on the right of leaving the country for all such as might have so offended? In Egypt the French stipulated that no natives should be molested for their con-

duct or opinions during the war. We took military possession of the country on these terms, and then delivered it over to the political authority of the Ottoman Porte. When, however, the Capitan Pasha, acting under that authority, began murdering the Beys, and proceeding against the adherents of the French, we not only remonstrated and threatened, but actually protected the persecuted men within our own lines. Yet, by reference to the history of those times, we find that many blamed Lord Hutchinson for not having recourse to yet more violent methods, to enforce on the legitimate political authority the observance of engagements entered into by our military power on taking military possession of the country.

‘What would Wellington himself have said, if the British troops had surrendered any town in Spain to the French with a similar stipulation, and if, on the flimsy and hypocritical subterfuge of a distinction between Joseph’s government and the French military authorities, all the Spaniards who had assisted us during the siege had been prosecuted for treason against Joseph? Yet, where is the distinction?’

‘The want of principle and consistency, and the disgusting changes of the Marshals, have, I know, steeled men’s minds to their sufferings. This is natural enough. But when the violence of the times is gone by, and, above all, when the tomb has closed on their offences, the transaction will be judged with reference to the nature of the promise, not to the conduct or misconduct of the sufferers. *Si ego digna in quam faceres, tu tamen indignus qui feceris, Pamphile.*’

‘Nor is this all. If we judge by former instances, even the crime itself will be regarded with more indulgence by posterity than any irregular mode of punishing it. Allowance for individuals is made in all great changes. It is difficult in sudden emergencies and great convulsions of state, especially for professional men whose lives have been passed in camps, to weigh maturely all the considerations by which their conduct should, in the strict line of duty, be regulated. Unforeseen cases occur, and men of good principles and understanding are hurried into acts of inconsistency and political immorality.

‘In this latter view of the subject, I know I am somewhat singular. Few at present make such allowances for the political tergiversations of the Marshals; and many, more indulgent than I am in their judgment of political apostasy in England, are quite outrageous with Frenchmen for not acting with inflexible principle in the most trying and difficult circumstances. Some, however, among the most indignant at their crimes, yet doubt the justice, policy, and safety of punishing them; and more, especially among the moderate of all parties, think the claim of the capitulation conclusive; or, if not quite so, of a nature questionable enough to induce Wellington, for the preservation of his own and the national character, to give it the construction most favourable to the weaker party.

‘My opinion is of no importance; but it is so strong that I could not resist expressing it to you, who have access to those whose character is most interested in forming a sound one on this important subject. I have not spoken of La Valette. All my arguments apply in his

favour as strongly as in Ney's; and surely he is not, as others may be, any object of a bystander's indignation. He seems an honourable man throughout.—Yours ever truly,

'VASSALL HOLLAND.'

The progress of the trial had been comparatively rapid. In two sittings, on the 5th and 6th of December, each party proved satisfactorily their principal points; the accusers, that the treason was legally completed—the defenders, that the crime had been unpremeditated. But when M. Berryer opened the real defence, the convention of the 3d of July, he was interrupted by the counsel for the Crown. M. Bellart, their leader, protested against any allusions to a convention, the conditions of which had been demanded by rebels, and had never been accepted by the King; and he presented to the house a requisition, by which he formally opposed the reading of the convention, and any allusion to it, and required the house, by the Chancellor, its president, to order Marshal Ney and his defenders to confine their defence to the mere facts of the indictment.

The Chancellor, speaking in the name of the house, answered that, foreseeing the line of defence that would be adopted, he had already taken the opinion of the house; and that the peers had decided, by a large majority, that it would be highly improper to rely in that house on a convention to which the King was no party, and by which it was obvious, from the mere fact of Ney's prosecution, that his Majesty did not consider himself bound. He therefore forbade the defenders to make any use of the convention. Ney's counsel replied, that they bowed to the will of the King, and to the decision which the court, without hearing them, had thought fit to adopt; but that they felt bound to offer a plea to the jurisdiction of the court—namely, that Sarre Louis, the birth-place of their client, having been ceded to Prussia, he was no longer a subject of France.

Here, however, the counsel were interrupted by Ney.

"No!" he exclaimed; "I was born a Frenchman—I will die a Frenchman. Up to this time my defence has been free, but I now see that it is to be fettered. I thank my generous defenders for the exertions which they have made, and which they are ready to make; but I had rather have no defence than the mere shadow of one. If, when I am accused in the teeth of a solemn treaty, I am not allowed to appeal to it, I must appeal to Europe and to posterity."

"Gentlemen, counsel for the prisoner," said the Chancellor, "continue your defence within the limits which I have prescribed."

"My lord," said Ney, "I forbid my counsel to say another word. Your excellency may give to the house what orders you think fit; but

as to my counsel, they may go on if they are free, but if they are to be restrained by your limits, I forbid them to speak. You see," he said, turning to M. Berryer, who was anxious to continue, "that it is a decided thing. I had rather have no defence than one chalked out by my accusers."

"Then," said M. Bellart, "we waive our right of reply; if the defence is at an end, so is the accusation. We have only to demand the judgment of the Court."

"Have you any thing to add?" said the chancellor, turning to the prisoner and his counsel.

"Nothing whatever," replied Ney, in rather an impatient tone.*

The Chamber was then cleared, and the peers alone remained in deliberation; the result of their deliberation, and of the attempts afterwards made to obtain a pardon, are too notorious to require repetition.

The execution of Ney was one of the grossest faults of the Restoration; his crime was great, but, as we have seen, it was not premeditated; only a few hours elapsed between his active fidelity and his treason; it was the effect of the pressure of circumstances of extraordinary difficulty and perplexity on a mind unaccustomed to balance conflicting motives. If Ney had been a man of higher education, he would have felt that no motive justifies a failure in honour. But he had been trained in revolutionary camps; the only fidelity to which he had been accustomed was fidelity to France, and fidelity to the Emperor. He was now required to become an emigrant from the one and an opponent to the other; he was required to do this, though he believed the cause of the Bourbons to be irretrievably lost, and the reign of Bonaparte an inevitable calamity. No one can doubt what his conduct ought to have been; but no one can wonder at what it actually was. It must be added, that his treason was really harmless; no opposition on his part could have retarded, by a single hour, the entry of Bonaparte into Paris. If he had followed the example of Macdonald, he must have shared his fate—have seen his troops join the usurper, and then have fled across the frontier; the only consequence would have been, that Bonaparte would have had one brave man less at Quatre-Bras and Waterloo. Under such circumstances, his execution, even if it had been legal, would have been impolitic. Public opinion would have sanctioned his degradation, perhaps his banishment, but not his death.

But the judgment under which he suffered was manifestly

* *Procès*, No. iv. p. 37, 38, 39. Berryer, vol. i. p. 376.

illegal. Royalist as he is, M. Berryer is so convinced of this, that he accounts for it by the irrational supposition, that it was extorted from the King by the allied powers for the mere purpose of degrading the French army. Ney was included in the words and in the spirit of the convention. To deny validity to the convention because it was entered into with rebels, was to affirm the execrable doctrine, that faith is not to be kept in civil war. To deny its validity because it was not formally accepted by the King, was to add fraud to oppression; for what can be a baser fraud than to accept the benefits of an agreement and to refuse its obligations? There was not a human being to whom that convention was so beneficial as Louis. If it had not been effected—if, after the slaughter of 25,000 of its defenders, Paris had had to endure the horrors of a town taken by assault, could Louis have retained a crown so recovered for a longer period than while English and Austrian troops occupied his capital and his country? Louis owed to that convention his throne as an independent monarch. When we recollect this, it is unnecessary to refer to the well-known fact alluded to by M. Berryer, that Louis *did* expressly recognize the convention, by appealing to it in order to prevent Blucher from destroying the Pont de Jena.

As is usually the case with political crimes, it received its retribution. The recollection of Ney's death was one of the principal causes of the unpopularity with the army which haunted the elder Bourbons; and fifteen years afterwards, when, in their utmost need, they had to rely on the army for support, that recollection precipitated their fall.

We have said that the trial of Ney exercised an unfavourable influence on the subsequent fortunes of M. Berryer. He had obtained from the King the fullest permission to act for the prisoner—a permission which might have been supposed to be unnecessary to an advocate filling no office under the crown; but, though the permission was granted, the act was registered as an offence. It was thought, too, that he had too much identified himself with his client. In his honest indignation against the restriction imposed on the defence, he had ventured to call it a denial of justice; and, what was worse, in consequence of the recollections which the term excited—a revolutionary proceeding: this seems never to have been forgiven. The result was, that he was excluded under the Restoration, as he had been under the Empire, from the *Conseil de Discipline* and the dignity of *Bâtonnier*, an exclusion to which he attaches what seems to us an undue importance.

The subsequent life of M. Berryer contains no facts sufficiently interesting to lead us to dwell on them. In 1825 he visited

London, on business connected with the administration of the estate of a French subject who died in England. He was charmed, as might have been expected, with his reception by 'Sir Coppley, (*aujourd'hui* Lord Linthurst,) *Attorney-Général,*' (we copy *litteratim*;) gratified by the respect paid to him when he appeared in court; and amused by finding there people 'en per-ruque à la Louis XIV.' He ascertained, he says, that his reception was meant as a return for that with which Lord Erskine had been honoured, at a sitting of the *Cour d'Appel* of Paris. This, however, we can assure him is a mistake. It was scarcely possible that any one of those who rose in Westminster Hall to welcome a distinguished stranger, could have heard how Lord Erskine had been treated twenty years before in Paris; and it must be added, that the mere announcement of M. Berryer's name was a sufficient passport to the attention of a British bar.

Soon after his return from London M. Berryer ceased to appear regularly in court; he was entering his 69th year, and began to feel daily contests oppressive. He found, too, his eldest son, by this time a distinguished advocate, often opposed to him; he thinks that this was done by the suitors intentionally, which is not very probable, since it diminished the efficiency of the son as much as that of the father. The result has been, that for some years he has nearly confined himself to chamber business and arbitrations. He continued, indeed, up to the time of the publication of his memoirs, to plead at the bar in causes in which he possessed peculiar information, and perhaps may continue to do so up to the present time. The last circumstance of this kind which he mentions, took place at Rouen in the end of the year 1837; and he tells with pleasure his reappearance, after an interval of sixty years, at the scene of one of his earliest triumphs.

M. Berryer dwells with just pride on the extent and long continuance of his labours. When we consider that his practice embraced every branch of jurisprudence, ecclesiastical, international, civil, and criminal; that he performed the duties of a solicitor as well as those of a barrister; and that he has been engaged in these duties, with scarcely any interruption, for more than sixty years; his readiness to undergo toil, and his power of enduring it, are perhaps unparalleled. He attributes his success to his domestic happiness, and to a natural gaiety of disposition, fostered by the amenity, and, to use his own expression, the joyousness, of the manners and habits which for the first thirty-four years of his life adorned his country. But now, he says, no one smiles in France; he finds himself, between eighty and ninety, too young for his associates, and is forced to repress a thousand sallies which the gravity of the times would not tolerate. He

tells us, that for the same reason he has suppressed the most amusing parts of his 'Recollections;' and defers his full revelations until a period when the public may be better prepared for them.

He has appended to the narrative portion of his work some propositions on Political Economy and Legislation, the results of his long experience and meditation. We cannot venture to call the attention of our readers to them on any other ground than as specimens of the degree of knowledge on these subjects which has been acquired by a French lawyer, far superior in intelligence to the bulk of his brethren.

He conceives it to be the duty of the government to regulate production, and promote an equivalent consumption. For the first purpose, he thinks that the minister of commerce ought to direct, by a perpetual course of regulations founded on accurate statistical facts, all the proceedings of agriculture and manufactures. For the second purpose, he proposes to check the tendency to systematic economy, which he thinks the great enemy of consumption, by a tax on accumulated capital;—the amount to be ascertained by requiring from every capitalist a declaration of his fortune, and any concealment to be punished by confiscation. Such a tax he thinks would prevent the parsimony which dries up the channels of circulation. He further proposes to establish in every department a bank, to be managed by landholders, of which the capital should consist of land, and which should issue notes to a corresponding amount; and also insurance companies, to secure the punctual payment of rents, and relieve landholders from the temptation to provide, by annual savings, against irregularity of income—such savings being, in M. Berryer's opinion, unfavourable to circulation. He thinks that eighty-three new peers ought to be created, one for each department; that their dignity should be hereditary, and that its transmission to an unfit person should be prevented by an examination, from time to time, into the moral and intellectual qualities of each successor. He thinks that the tendency in man to better his condition and to change his residence should be repressed. He proposes that no one should be allowed to exempt himself from military service (the great oppression of France) by finding a substitute, unless he can prove that he has always resided under his father's roof, and that it is probable that he will continue to do so; and that no one shall be allowed to serve as a substitute, unless he can show that he has always resided in the parish where he was born. Further, that those who have changed their residences shall be subjected to increased taxation, and that no one shall be eligible to any local office if he have quitted his birth-place,

He ventures to insinuate a regret at the complete abolition of *lettres de cachet*, and, as a substitute, proposes to give parents and guardians power over children and wards until the age of twenty-five.

He proposes to create courts of equity, with criminal and civil jurisdiction, for the purpose of punishing offences not cognizable by the existing law, and forcing people to be liberal and grateful. 'Since religion and morality,' says he, 'have lost their power, they must be supplied by legal coercion.'

Such views, in so eminent a member of the French bar, explain Bonaparte's contempt of advocates!

The work is written in an easy, but rather careless style; and, to the inconvenience of a foreign reader, is full of unexplained technical terms. The great fault of the short narratives of which it is composed, is a perplexed arrangement of facts. To make our extracts intelligible, we have often been forced to transpose them.

ART. V.—*The Laws relating to India, and the East India Company: with Notes and an Appendix.* Quarto. Third Edition, London: 1842.

IN treating, on several recent occasions, of the affairs of British India—of its system of land revenue, its political relations, its commercial wrongs and claims, and its judicial administration—we have studied to divest our statements of all oriental forms and colouring not absolutely essential to their fidelity; and to communicate the information which we desired to impart, in the shape most easily intelligible, and therefore most palatable, to the largest possible number of English readers. We have taken this course, though we knew that it would expose us to the charge of shallowness from those Anglo-Indians who could not see, or would not appreciate, our end; because we have proposed to ourselves, as the one great object of our endeavours, to open the eyes of the people of England to the great value of their much neglected possessions in the East; and to point out to them the means by which, in our judgment, that value may be most largely enhanced, and most beneficially realized. We have not, therefore, addressed ourselves primarily to persons already conversant with Indian affairs; but to that great body—the British public—whose enlightened convictions, and the consequent exertion of whose prevailing influ-

ence, must greatly contribute both to forward and to render effective the redress of the grievances, the improvement of the institutions, and the development of the resources, of our Indian Empire.

Still, though this has been our aim, and though we have already reaped the reward of our labours, by witnessing changes in our fiscal policy, both at home and in the colonies of the Crown, most beneficial to British India, we are not without misgivings that, in endeavouring to inform the people of England of the state and prospects of their fellow-subjects in the East, and of the ample means which each possesses of benefiting the other, we have not begun sufficiently at the beginning, but have assumed the existence of a greater degree of knowledge of the subject than actually obtains. "*Quas aures nostræ penitus reformidant,*" said Jerom, fourteen hundred years ago—speaking of the harsh sounds of the oriental dialects; and this horror of hearing appears to have extended itself, in modern times, from Indian words to Indian things. But we have seen, of late, quite enough of improvement in this respect to encourage us to pursue our task; being well assured that, in the present state of public intelligence, the mischievous prejudices to which we have alluded cannot survive the spread of sound information, still less any general conviction that the interests of Great Britain are deeply involved in the good government, and consequent prosperity, of our Asiatic possessions.

We propose to supply, in this paper, a primary part of the information which we believe to be wanting to the full understanding of the present state of British India; by explaining, in as popular a manner as the subject will permit, the constitution of the government, the organization of its several departments, and their respective bearings upon the condition of the people. These, we are quite sure, are matters as little known at present to the bulk even of intelligent Englishmen, as the corresponding concerns of "the central flowery Empire." There is not one well-informed man out of ten, who knows whether the right of nominating, and the option of accepting or rejecting, a Governor-General, be severally vested in the Court of Directors, or in her Majesty's ministers. Ignorance as to the respective powers of the Court and of the Board of Control, in the event of their differing as to the nature of the orders to be sent to India, upon any occasion, is still more common. But with regard to the organization of the governments abroad, to the general constitution of the civil service, to the courts of justice, with their distinctions of Queen's and Company's, to the agency by which the complicated affairs of the land revenue are administered, to the other great fiscal branches

of salt, opium, and customs, and to many subjects of importance only secondary to these, the ignorance is general and profound. Yet these are matters, which, on the score alike of interest and responsibility, it behoves Englishmen to understand; and we shall consider our labour well repaid, if we are able to place them in such a point of view as to render the principal features of the system by which British India is governed, familiar to the public mind. Distaste for the subject is fast wearing off; the mighty powers of steam are bringing the dominant and the subject people into comparatively close connexion; and knowledge alone is wanting to ensure the happiest issue from the union.

The last Charter act, passed in 1833, effected material changes in the instrumentality by which England rules the millions of Hindostan. The Company was not only deprived of the monopoly of the trade with China, but was absolutely debarred from engaging in any commercial transactions, and became, from the date of that act, a purely governing body; the directors of which have a strong interest, not merely on the score of reputation, but of a pecuniary nature also, in the wise and equitable administration of the affairs of a country, upon which they and their constituents have been rendered exclusively dependent for their dividends. The making India responsible for these payments, amounting to L.640,000 per annum, in return for which a considerable part of the commercial assets of the Company was applied to the liquidation of funded debts, has been strongly condemned by some,—fondly disposed to believe that it would have been right or practicable to settle all the difficult and delicate questions at issue between the Company and the Government, by rudely casting the sword of power into the scales in which it behoved the great council of the nation to weigh fairly and considerately the claims of the body, which, however anomalous its constitution, and whatever its sins of omission or commission, had unquestionably won and maintained for England a mighty empire; and was ruling it, at the period when the mode of its future management came under discussion, with great and increasing vigour and success. It is very questionable whether public opinion would have permitted, or the letter of the law would have sanctioned, a measure involving so much national ingratitude as the dissolution, in 1833, of all connexion between the East Indian Company and the wide regions which its military and civil servants had acquired for the Crown, and had governed so long and so ably. It is certain, in our judgment, that nothing would really have been gained by it, either for England or for India. There are obvious reasons of the highest

national importance, why the enormous patronage of India should not be conferred on the ministry for the time being; and ingenuity has not yet devised any plausible scheme by which the servants of the Crown could be debarred from the use and abuse of this superabundant supply of the richest materials for oiling the wheels of government, otherwise than by the interposition of such a body as the Company. As regards India, no one who knows how its affairs have been administered by the servants of the Company on the one hand, and how the comparatively petty business of governing the colonies of the Crown has been executed on the other, can doubt that it would have been a grievous sufferer from a change of agency. In the one case, there has been uninterrupted and signal success, achieved by a succession of able men, with scarcely an instance, in the long course of eighty years, of even partial failure at any important crisis; in the other, there has been almost constant weakness, inefficiency, and dissatisfaction, felt and expressed by all acquainted with the working of the system; and not seldom serious remissness or positive misrule, issuing in more or less disastrous results. Further, it is essential to the welfare of India, that the principles on which it is governed should be fixed on a more stable and enduring basis than the contingency of the maintenance of power by any ministry could afford; that the counsels of its rulers should be free, to the utmost possible extent, from the action of English politics; and that the singleness of their view to its interests should not be liable to be distorted by any temptation to make this or the other measure connected with its administration the means of upholding or distressing a parliamentary party. A board chosen in any imaginable manner by the Crown or the people, could not be expected to possess these aptitudes in so great a degree as the directors of the East India Company; and it is obvious that no mere segment of the ministry could so far abstract itself from the whirl and excitement of the home politics of the day, as to make the affairs of India its primary concern. But these affairs might most beneficially engross the attention of the ablest of our statesmen; they cannot, without grievous mischief, be regarded as objects of secondary consideration by any individual or body responsible for their administration. Yet it is certain that they would be postponed by mere politicians to a thousand matters of transitory, but nearer and more urgent interest. As to the outcry that the Charter of 1833 threw an increased charge upon the already overburdened people of India, the application of about twelve millions sterling of the Company's commercial assets to the extinction of territorial debt constitutes a very considerable offset to this liability.

And even had the difference been larger, thinking that the arrangement then made was the best suited, upon the whole, to further the true interests of our Indian fellow-subjects, and that it was especially desirable to disconnect the immediate rulers of India from all concern in trade, and to get rid at once and for ever of all the juggling, or alleged juggling, between commercial and territorial assets, we should not be disposed to stickle about any reasonable price for those objects. What India needs is not the mere saving of this or the other item of expenditure, but the blessing of an enlightened and vigorous government, able and willing to bestow upon her a wise and consistent system of laws; an efficient administration of civil and criminal justice; entire freedom, throughout the peninsula, from all restrictions or duties upon inland commerce; and measures—such as we have pointed out in former papers—necessary to raise all classes connected with the soil into their proper position, and to secure each against the other. Were these all-important matters sufficiently cared for, (it would not be just to say that they have been neglected of late years; but war and diplomacy on the one hand, and comparative trifles on the other, have engrossed a disproportionate share of the attention of the local authorities,) there would be no deficiency of means for every purpose of complete administrative efficiency. It is misgovernment, long centuries of temporal and spiritual tyranny—resulting, in the latter case, from the worst of false religions—which has made the people so wretchedly poor; and whilst we would by no means encourage or excuse extravagance, we are bound to say that it is miserable quackery to attempt to cure, or even to mitigate, such a disease by mere retrenchment of expenditure. An effectual remedy would be cheaply purchased, even in a pecuniary point of view alone, by an outlay of millions. It is in the power of the people of England to cause such a remedy to be applied; and they could not confer this mighty benefit upon their Indian fellow subjects without ensuring to themselves a large participation in it. Improvements of such magnitude cannot, of course, be effected in a day; but let India be only moderately well governed—let all persons and all property be efficiently protected—let fair and wholesome encouragement, chiefly by the dissemination of knowledge, be given to private enterprise, directed towards the development of her vast resources—and limits are scarcely assignable to the extent of the market that would be opened for British manufactures.

The Charter of 1833 did not alter very materially the practical relations of the Court of Directors to the India Board; but it

defined those relations more precisely, and laid down the course to be taken in the event of the controlling authority differing with that court, on any occasion, as to the orders proper to be sent to India. No orders 'relating to any public matter whatever,' can now be issued by the court without the previous sanction of the board: formerly the directors could correspond with any parties *in this country* without the intervention or knowledge of the controlling authority. Nor can the court now make any money grant without the permission of the board. The initiative in all cases is with the directors, except when they shall omit to prepare, and submit for the consideration of the board, orders or despatches upon any subject, within fourteen days after receiving a requisition to that effect. But the board is empowered to alter, at its discretion, the drafts of any despatches submitted by the court for its sanction; and the court are required to sign and forward the orders so remodelled by the board. The court may remonstrate against directions of this nature; but if they be reiterated, their only means of resistance are passive—namely, a refusal to sign the despatch as required; leaving the board to enforce its authority by the instrumentality of the Court of Queen's Bench. The issue of such a conflict must depend entirely upon the moral strength of the parties, as resulting from their being severally right or wrong upon some important point of principle, involving considerations higher than any of mere policy—of justice or good faith; for, of course, the court would not be justified in making a stand on any lower ground, against the power with which the Board of Control is unquestionably vested by the law. In one instance since 1833, the court did take up such a position of passive resistance, and maintained it with equal spirit and judgment; the board, which was grossly in the wrong, being obliged to recede from its requisition. Such collisions, happily, can seldom occur when both parties are ordinarily honest and sensible, and are not blinded—as can, indeed, under the existing system, rarely be the case in regard to Indian affairs—by any factious motives.

It is not surprising that there should be much misconception with respect to the right of nominating the Governor-General and the Governors of the subordinate Presidencies; for though it be vested by law, as heretofore, in the court of directors, yet the appointments being subject to the approbation of the Crown, they are virtually in its gift. Hence, whatever the politics of the majority of the court, the governor-general is always the friend and supporter of the ministers of the day; and the utmost extent of the power which the court really possess, is that of refusing to nominate an individual personally distasteful to them.

The constitution of the Court of Directors is this. The directors, thirty in number, are elected by the proprietors of East India stock, voting by ballot; L.1000 stock (worth at present about L.2500) entitling to one vote; L.10,000 stock to four votes. Six of the directors go out every year, and as regularly return to office at its close, never having to encounter even a show of opposition, except when one or more of the six happen to die, or choose to retire, during the period of exclusion. In that event only, established routine permits new candidates to offer themselves, together with the remainder of the ex-directors, who constitute what is technically called the *house list*; but though such circumstances frequently occur, only two instances have been known within the memory of man, in which an individual, out of office by rotation, has failed to recover his seat.

The directors annually choose a Chairman—or rather a Deputy-Chairman, who becomes chairman after the lapse of a year, as a matter of course—to preside over their deliberations. In the hands of these two functionaries resides the principal power of the court, deliberative as well as executive. They conduct, personally or by correspondence—official or private—all the negotiations of the Company with the Board of Control; and they, with or without one other director, constitute the ‘Secret Committee;’* to whose exclusive management, in concert with and subordination to the board, all matters ‘concerning the levying war or making peace, or treating or negotiating with any of the native princes or states in India, or with any other princes or states, or touching the policy to be observed with respect to such princes or states,’ which are conceived to be ‘of a nature to require secrecy,’ are entrusted. The late Charter increased the powers of this committee, by adding to the previous law (33 Geo. III. cap. 52, sect. xix.) the words printed in italics in the foregoing quotation; which, of course, embrace Persia and Russia, and all the states with which British India can possibly be brought into connexion or dispute. In all other respects, the law which regulates the relations of the Court of Directors to the Board of Control, and keeps the court in profound ignorance of the communications of that board with the secret committee, remains exactly as Mr Pitt made it nearly sixty years ago. Yet one would

* The chairman and deputy-chairman are not necessarily members of the secret committee, the court being authorized to appoint any directors, not exceeding three, to that committee; but we believe that, in practice, they always form a part, or the whole of it.

suppose, from the vehement denunciations of the Charter of 1833, and Sir John Hobhouse, both in and out of Parliament, that the functions of the secret committee were a hideous novelty of the iron age of Whig ascendancy. The truth is, that by the constitution, good or bad, of the Indian administration, as framed by Mr Pitt, the ordinary members of the Court of Directors know no more of the business which falls under the special cognizance of the secret committee than the public at large. All other affairs are conducted partly by the chairman and deputy-chairman, in what are called 'previous communications' (a device to obviate the publicity and inconvenience of collision) with the president of the India Board, and partly by the several committees—revenue, judicial, military, and the like—into which the court is divided. The system actually in operation is strange enough; seeing that every subject of any importance is considered, and, to some extent at least, decided upon by the controlling authority, before it comes even under the cognizance of the body by which, according to the theory of the constitution of the government of India, it ought to be digested and laid before the court; the results of whose deliberations thereon should then be moulded into a despatch, to be submitted, in due course, for the sanction of the board. The practice almost reverses this constitutional order of things, except in so far as the chairman and deputy-chairman, under whose immediate and exclusive orders the drafts of 'previous communications' are prepared, and who are members *ex-officio* of all committees, may be considered to represent the Court of Directors.

This arrangement, which was kept a profound secret until it was divulged on one occasion by Mr Canning in the House of Commons, produces a smoothness and apparent accordance of opinion in the working of the double government, at the heavy expense of relieving both the Court of Directors and the Board of Control from the responsibility which the law imposes upon those bodies respectively. It was manifestly intended that there should be entire freedom of sentiment and action on the part of the court, up to the period of their submitting the results of their deliberations to the judgment of the board; which ought then, in the unshackled exercise of its discretion, to approve, modify, or reject the proposed orders—stating openly, in either of the latter cases, the grounds of its dissent from the court. If this constitutional course of proceeding had not been departed from, the views of each authority, upon every question of importance, would be publicly known; each would be subject to the wholesome influence and control of enlightened public opinion, and each would enjoy the credit or bear the blame of the good or evil results of the measures which it recommended

or opposed. The existing plan is one of compromise and concession, resulting sometimes in middle courses, which neither party altogether approves; and, in the majority of cases, in the concoction of orders to the local governments, for which neither the court nor the board can feel themselves to be distinctly responsible. This is paying too dear for mere facility in the transaction of business; or for a fender to some little warmth of discussion between the authorities in Leadenhall Street and Cannon Row. As Englishmen, we must believe that such discussion, whatever its partial inconveniences, would lead to good upon the whole; there is nothing in the condition of India to render its case an exception to the received political axiom in its favour. Indeed, the unfitness of that country for popular institutions, renders it particularly desirable that the only tolerable substitute for free and responsible government—the open canvassing by its rulers of all public measures—should be studiously encouraged. This the law prescribes—this the practice evades; and though this practice may result in some economy of time, from obviating disputes, it is certain, if we are rightly informed, that it permits of delays such as could not take place if the law were properly acted up to. The Charter act requires that the board shall return, within two months, all orders, &c., submitted for its sanction by the court, approved or disapproved; under the system of ‘previous communications,’ the board enjoys the license of evading this wholesome rule, and can retain the papers which have not been formally laid before it for an indefinite period. This license, which is obviously capable of being very mischievously abused, is in itself a very strong argument against the practice which involves it:—coupled with the other considerations which we have adduced, it affords, in our judgment, abundant reason why the Court of Directors should return, without delay, to the system of official intercourse with the Board, laid down by the law.

We have drawn the best sketch which our present limits will permit, of the constitution of the East India Company as a governing body, and of the mode in which the representatives of its proprietors fulfil their functions. In both, there are palpable anomalies;—so great, indeed, looking only at the theory of the system, as would seem to render it, *a priori*, certain that an organ of government so constituted, and subject to such checks, could not possibly work to any good purpose. We will point out two or three of the most glaring defects—premising that this is a much easier task than the laying down of any scheme which, even in theory, should promise to work better.

In the first place, it appears to be passing strange, now espe-

cially that the commercial privileges of the Company have terminated, that the power of electing the rulers of British India should be vested in every person—man, maid, or widow—who attains by purchase, marriage, or inheritance, a certain amount of stock; which is just as much the subject of daily transfer from hand to hand, as any part of the funded debt of the government. By this scheme, an individual may have been an elector yesterday, may cease to be so to-day, and be reinstated in the privilege to-morrow, if the necessary share in the Company's stock be bequeathed to him: for in the case of purchase, the buyer cannot exercise his electoral functions for a year. No sort of qualification, beyond the possession of stock, is required. The peer of the realm, the intelligent merchant or tradesman, the retired Indian soldier or civil servant, and the man who has accumulated a fortune, in halfpence, by sweeping a crossing in the streets, are all upon a level as to eligibility and presumed competence. The sweeper—if he be rich enough—may have four votes; the member of the legislature, the director of the Bank of England, the ex-governor-general, or member of council, only one.

Again, custom has made a very laborious and irksome personal canvass an indispensable preliminary to attaining a seat in the direction; and the most highly qualified candidate for the office must be content to walk patiently behind several, if not most, of those who have preceded him in declaring their pretensions. There is no instance, we believe, of the post being taken by a *coup-de-main*, nor of a canvass being dispensed with in favour even of the most eligible individual that ever desired the office. There is a difference, indeed, as respects the ease with which the object is attained, in favour of those candidates whose fitness for the office is most generally recognised; but none are exempted from undergoing considerable labour, to say nothing more, in canvassing the electors; and, unless there be some very marked distinction in regard to qualification, the aspirant who is most earnest and constant in personal solicitation, generally outstrips his competitors. The consequences of this system are, first, that the most distinguished of the statesmen and soldiers who have served their country in India—such men as Elphinstone, Metcalfe, Malcolm—are deterred from coming forward as candidates; and secondly, that notwithstanding the great value of the prize, on account of the patronage that it confers, the instances are very rare in which any person possessed of a sufficient stock of patience and perseverance to bear up against a certain number of defeats, has not ultimately gained his end.

Thirdly, the rule that, after four years' tenure of office, each

director shall retire for one year, cannot fail to operate most injuriously on the general efficiency of the court. It often happens that a director's turn for vacating office occurs immediately after he has devoted two years, as deputy-chairman and chairman, to the almost exclusive management of the Company's affairs; and both as respects the ordinary functions of the court, and the special duties of the secret committee, is, *cæteris paribus*, more conversant with all the important subjects under discussion, or likely to present themselves, than any other member of the body. But the inexorable rule requires that all this knowledge and experience shall lie completely fallow for a year, until, perhaps, by ceasing to be recent, it has ceased to be practically useful; and the individual whose voice has been most potent in the government of an empire up to the second Wednesday in April, often ceases on that day to possess the smallest authority in its counsels.

Yet in spite of these and other anomalies, nothing is more certain than that, from the time of Warren Hastings to the present day, the administration of India has been eminently successful. We are no blind optimists. We know well, and we have not hesitated to show, that much that might have been done has been left undone; and that in too many instances the measures of the rulers of India have been unwise in principle. But, after allowing all due weight to those drawbacks and disparagements, the broad fact remains untouched, that an empire has been won and governed, which the whole civilized world regards with admiration and envy, and which none but unwise and ungrateful Englishmen are so blind as to undervalue. Such being the case, it were absurd to doubt that the system from which such results have sprung, must combine in its constitution the elements of the highest practical efficiency. But it were equally absurd to suppose that this vigour resides in such anomalies as we have exhibited, or that it is not grievously impaired by them. It is one thing to see and acknowledge that mighty progress has been made, notwithstanding hindrances:— it is quite another thing to mistake such hindrances for the propelling power. The very remarkable state of things which undeniably exists, has led two very different classes of observers into opposite errors. The one, looking at the marvellous general effects of the Company's administration, at the wide regions which its delegates govern, at the general order and peace which they maintain, and at the great and sustained efforts which they are capable of making, will not believe that there can be any thing essentially unwise or unfitted to the proposed ends, still less of a counteracting tendency, in the machinery by which such mighty results are brought to pass. The other class, of

sharper eyes to discern defects, but belonging to the school of the philosopher who 'travelled from Dan to Beersheba, and found 'all barren,' are so inflamed with indignation at this or the other anomaly in the constitution of the Company, or defect or shortcoming in the discharge of its obligations to the people of India, that they can see nothing but wrong and rapine, broken faith and denial of justice, in the whole government of our eastern empire. The truth, of course, lies between the two extremes—between the optimism that can perceive no evil in a system capable of vast improvement; and the prejudice which regards the rule of the Company as a curse to the natives of India, and looks back with fond regret to the good old times when they were robbed, tortured, and murdered by princes of their own race, or by their Mahomedan conquerors. That they were scandalously misgoverned then, does not affect, in the smallest degree, their right to the best government that we can give them now; but it is equally certain that, after the fullest admission of past errors and present imperfections, the rule of England is a mighty blessing to the people of India.

The Charter of 1833 effected great improvements in the Local administration of India. The greatest, perhaps, was the creation of a really supreme government,—in the governor-general and council of India,—vested with exclusive powers of legislation for the whole of the British dominions, and with effectual control over the public expenditure. By this wise measure, a single body was made responsible for the enactment of good laws; and the power of the purse was taken out of the hands of those who never—in the case of Bombay,—or not always—in the case of Madras,—having a local income equal to their local charges, had found it a mischievously easy process to supply the deficiency, by drawing upon the well-replenished treasury of Bengal. The power of legislation was extended with equal benefit. The royal courts of justice, established at each of the three Presidencies, had previously administered the law of England in entire independence—except when the judges thought fit to recognize and register a regulation—of the local legislature. The law of 1833 abated this gross absurdity—which had been productive of much practical mischief from the time of Warren Hastings down to recent times—of placing a court of justice, the interpreter of its own charter, and of the laws which it administered, at a distance of many thousand miles from the legislature which alone it was bound to obey; whilst the local government—to whose legislation its respect was entirely optional, and which it possessed innumerable means of thwarting, insulting, and degrading in the eyes of its subjects—was solely responsible for the peaceful and prosperous maintenance

of the wonderful sway exercised by a few thousands of Englishmen over subject millions. The relations of the royal courts to the Company's government are now very nearly what, in reason and prudence, they ought to be; supposing that it is necessary to keep up establishments so large and costly for the sake of the utterly disproportionate service which they render, directly or indirectly, to the people for whose ostensible benefit, and at whose certain expense, they are maintained. Whether there be such necessity, is quite another question.

The charge which the Queen's Courts at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, entail upon India, is very heavy; amounting, according to the latest returns, to L.96,253 per annum, exclusive of the salaries of the Company's law-officers and their establishments, and of the charges of the coroner's office and the police. The service rendered to the community, in return for this large outlay, is extremely small; partly because the territorial jurisdictions of the courts are very limited; but mainly, we fear, as regards the civil department, because the justice which they administer is so enormously high-priced, that none but the wealthy few possess the means of taking advantage of it. To the great bulk of the people, therefore, it is, and always has been, the same as if no such courts of justice existed; except in so far as the *prestige* that accompanies them may be presumed to protect from some of the grosser outrages or wrongs. To the wealthy, these courts have been the instruments of the most exhausting chicanery. It is said, that at Madras almost all the opulent native families have been reduced to poverty by litigation. The wealthy natives of Calcutta, after spending vast sums in the supreme court, have so far profited by experience as to decide most of their differences by private arbitration. From these concurrent causes, the time of the judges is very inadequately occupied; very little civil business is brought before them; and these highly paid functionaries are often engaged, day after day, in trying petty larcenies, compared with which the pilferings of the 'artful dodgers' of our metropolis are high crimes and misdemeanours.

If the few Englishmen settled in India are so much attached to the laws, and the mode of administering those laws, which obtain in their native country, as to require that justice should be dispensed to them in this particular manner, under circumstances which render it extremely expensive; or if their fear of the government under which they live induces them to demand special protection from it—it is surely reasonable that they, and not the people among whom they have voluntarily come to sojourn, should pay for the luxury in the one case, or for

the security in the other. As regards the natives, we affirm, that whether they be wronged by their rulers or by each other, they can, and do obtain at least as efficient redress—certainly much cheaper—in the courts of the Company as in those of the Queen. We may state as one proof of this position, that, as far as we have been able to watch the result, fewer decisions of the former than of the latter tribunals have been reversed upon appeal to the Privy Council. The leaning of the Company's courts is decidedly against the executive government in general, and the revenue department in particular. On the other hand, whilst many outrages upon natives have been committed by Englishmen residing in the interior of the country, there is scarcely an instance upon record in which such parties have been prosecuted to conviction in the supreme courts. Not unfrequently, English principals in such outrages have escaped with impunity, whilst their native instruments, subject to the jurisdiction of the Company's courts, have been convicted and punished. The Queen's courts are equally impotent for another principal object of their original constitution. We are not aware that any public servant—though many, in so long a course of years, have been dismissed from their employment with infamy—was ever prosecuted to conviction, in those courts, for embezzlement, corruption, or extortion. The causes of impunity are the same in both cases;—the absurd facilities which the English rules of evidence afford for the escape of the guilty; the partial favour too often shown by jurymen of British birth or blood to their own countrymen; and the little less than impossibility, that the most respectable native witness should pass satisfactorily the severe ordeal of a cross-examination by an acute English lawyer. There is no case so good and strong that a native does not think it capable of a little improvement by exaggeration, or positive invention; there is no action so open and unequivocal that a native eyewitness may not be driven to hesitate, prevaricate, or contradict himself concerning it.

As at present constituted, the Queen's Courts are comparatively useless, with the additional objection of being exceedingly expensive to a country which stands in the utmost need that every rupee should be applied, with the most careful judgment, to those purposes most essential to its well-being. They ought to be abolished altogether, and a far less costly machinery supplied, for the performance of those of their present functions which are really necessary; or they should be united with the supreme courts of the Company, already established at each of the three Presidencies, and at Allahabad; under a system providing for the administration of a uniform code of

laws, dealing the same measure by the same processes, and with the smallest possible number of exceptions, to men of every colour, religion, and blood throughout British India. The last course would certainly be the wisest; and we are happy to hear, upon good authority, that it has been contemplated by those who are best qualified to judge of the propriety of such a change. We should anticipate the happiest results to India from the association of enlightened and liberal English lawyers with the ablest judicial officers of the Company, in a newly constituted supreme court. Such a junction could not fail to result in the interchange of much useful knowledge, and in rubbing off many hurtful prejudices on both sides.

Considerable good of this sort has already been effected by the last Charter act. An English lawyer was attached to the council of India, and another to the law commission. It is partly owing to the unhappy circumstances of the times during the last three years, and partly to the vicious system which clogs the wheels of government with endless details of comparatively unimportant business, that this judicious infusion of new blood has not been followed by a larger measure of practically beneficial results. Yet, advantage there has unquestionably been;—not the least, that the ablest and most influential members of the civil service, many of whom have passed twenty or thirty years in uninterrupted exile, have been brought into intimate communication with minds formed and exercised in the highest schools of English legislation and jurisprudence. Had the upright and public-spirited philanthropist who has just retired, with the respect of all who have observed his conduct, from the chief seat in the bench of the Queen's Court of Calcutta, occupied a corresponding position in such a supreme court as we desire to see constituted, the opportunities of public usefulness which he had so sedulously endeavoured to improve to the uttermost, would have been increased an hundred-fold.

The miscellaneous character of this article, and the limits to which we must necessarily confine it, forbid us to enter 'on an enquiry whether the Law Commission, constituted by the Charter act, has or has not worked up to its intrinsic capabilities, or duly availed itself of the means at its command, in the fulfilment of its high functions. Certainly, its labours have hitherto met with but little encouragement from those whose duty it is to examine and give practical effect to their results. As far as our knowledge extends we must say, that the records of those labours have appeared to be regarded very much as the Carthaginian General, according to the Poet, regarded the victorious Consul,—

'Quem fallere et effugere est triumphus.'

The endeavour seemingly has been to suffocate them under a mass of commentary and criticism. In after years, it will cost some trouble to dig out what is really valuable from the surrounding heap of rubbish.

The constitution of the Civil Service—of the agency by which the affairs of this mighty empire are directed, superintended, and controlled—is the grand peculiarity of the system of our Indian Government. From the commencement of the Company's marvellous career—from the time when they held, by sufferance, a few petty factories on the coasts of that vast continent which they now rule as absolute sovereigns—they sent out a succession of youths, to perform in the first instance the drudgery of weighing muslin, measuring pepper, and engrossing accounts; with the privilege of rising, in an order of seniority rarely departed from, to the charge of the outposts of trade or manufacture, from which the warehouses at the ports of shipment were supplied, and eventually to the council and government; involving the sale of the goods sent out by the Company, and the preparation for the annual investment for the English market. To this class belonged Orme—whose elegant and animated, though somewhat diffuse work, narrating with remarkable fidelity the romantic progress of British ascendancy in the East, is much less known than its merits deserve; and Forbes, the amiable author of the 'Oriental Memoirs.' In this school also—apparently so ill-fitted to train the founders of empire, men greater far than these—Clive and Hastings, whose remarkable history we have lately surveyed, spent the years of their early manhood. In one respect, indeed, the service of the Company, in its subordinate stations, had at least a negative recommendation as a state of discipline and probation. It was not a service of ease and indulgence. 'At that time,' (1768,) says Mr Forbes, who was upon the Bombay establishment, 'I can safely affirm, I lived in the most sparing manner, a writer's income altogether not exceeding L.65 per annum.' Indeed, 'the generality' are stated to have had but L.36 or L.40. 'I never drank wine at my own table, and often went supperless to bed when the day closed, because I could not afford either supper or candles: as the dinner hour was one o'clock, and a writer's age generally between sixteen and twenty-one, the abstinence was not occasioned by a want of appetite.'

The effects of this parsimony in an unhealthy climate, requiring many comforts and conveniences to render it endurable by Europeans, fell only upon the servants who were thus underpaid, a very small proportion of whom lived to return to their native country;—as long as the Company was merely a commercial body, and those

who managed its affairs in India had no political power, and were kept in check by the parties who possessed it. But the result was very different when ambition, or the irresistible force of circumstances, had rendered the agents of this association of merchants the sovereigns, *de facto*, of extensive provinces teeming with population; and which, though poor in comparison with the wealthier countries of Europe, and utterly unable to render to England the regular annual tribute which sanguine politicians expected from them, were abundantly capable of compensating the actual rulers of the land for the inadequacy of their legal salaries. And no harm would have been done, if a sufficiency for this purpose had been regularly and avowedly raised and distributed: such a step, in fact, if taken immediately on the occurrence of the entire change of circumstances to which we have adverted, would have prevented that shameless corruption and rapine from which it was eventually found necessary to relieve the people, by measures of wise liberality to the functionaries placed over them. This being neglected in the first instance, it was too much to expect that those who negotiated concerning the fate of kingdoms—who presided, with almost absolute power, over great commercial marts—or who collected, on behalf of their distant masters, the revenues of fertile provinces, should rest satisfied with the scanty salaries which the Company had doled out to mere book-keepers and factors. The ‘supperless’ case of Mr Forbes and his contemporaries at Bombay, was no doubt an extreme one, though perfectly true; but it is certain that the ostensible allowances of the civil servants of the Company, for some time after that body became virtually the sovereigns of Bengal, Bahar, and the Carnatic, did not exceed, even if they amounted to, the necessary expense of the barest subsistence. Of course, under such circumstances, these functionaries did not scruple to help themselves copiously to what their inconsiderate masters withheld; and it is no marvel that they did not confine their appropriations, in all cases, within the limits of a handsome remuneration for their services. As an equally certain consequence, these illicit exactions robbed the people of ten times as much—with incalculable concomitant vexation and suffering—as found its way into the pockets of the European officers of the government. The clear intellect of Lord Clive saw this plainly, and he devised and executed—with characteristic boldness—a scheme for cutting off the sources of the unauthorized profits of the public servants, and for granting them adequate allowances, raised by a public monopoly. But the system was incomplete, and therefore the effect fell short of the object, until the time of Lord Cornwallis. That nobleman placed the

establishment upon such a footing, in respect to the salary allotted to each office of trust and responsibility, as left the public servant who should thenceforward grasp at gains beyond the handsome stipend issued to him from the treasury, utterly without excuse; and from that day, amidst great and daily temptations, and far removed, in that tainted atmosphere, from all purer example, the servants of the Company have preserved, as a body, the most unsullied reputation. It is right to add, that a share in the credit of a result so happy as well as honourable, is justly due to those who, exercising in this country supreme control over the administration of India, have firmly and invariably visited with the most severe punishment any offence on the part of public functionaries involving fraud, speculation, or corruption.

Notwithstanding, however, the entire change in the nature of the duties devolving on it, the constitution of the civil service remains exactly as it was in the days when the preparation and shipment of investments formed the highest functions of its highest members. Even the ancient names of its gradations were, till very recently, retained: up to August 1841, the youth who entered the service as a writer, rose successively to the ranks of factor, junior merchant, and senior merchant. In one point of view, this rigid adherence to the old order of things has been of signal benefit to India.

The mode of recruiting the public service has remained unchanged. A number of young men are annually sent out, not to particular appointments allotted to them severally in this country, but as probationers for office generally, and to be employed in this or the other department, at the discretion of the local government. There is, therefore, no possibility of entering upon public employment otherwise than at the lowest end of the scale; and as the emoluments attached to it are not, for some years, more than sufficient to maintain the servants of the government in comfort and respectability, such a line of life in a distant land, and an unhealthy climate, has no temptations to any one who does not intend to adhere to it as his profession, until the devotion of the best years of his manhood shall have been rewarded by the gradual accumulation of the means of returning to his native land. This system is, of course, open to obvious objections. General competition, from which the community reaps such great advantage in all lands governed by their own children, is altogether precluded. The number of those eligible for office is rigidly limited; and, practically, it often happens that the strictness with which the privileges of the body of public servants is upheld, debars the authorities from giving employ-

ment to men who have proceeded to that country upon some private adventure, and whom natural abilities, or intimate acquaintance with the people, have peculiarly qualified to render the most beneficial services to the community. Yet, after making the most ample allowance for these considerations, as well as for the mischiefs resulting from the passions and prejudices of *caste*, necessarily generated by the peculiar position of the civil service, we are decidedly of opinion that, due reference being had to the evils which it precludes, the benefits of the existing system greatly preponderate over its disadvantages. We are, therefore, decidedly of opinion, that to whomsoever the patronage may be entrusted, the present system of recruiting the public service in India should be jealously maintained. But it is quite another question whether that system is followed out as effectually as it might be—whether the most is made of the materials, which, upon the whole, appear to be the best suited to answer the important ends in view. This question, we fear, must be answered in the negative.

General competition is incompatible with the constitution of the public service. To this evil we must submit; that limitation of choice of agency which it involves, appearing to be the best, if not the only, means of warding off still greater evils. But it seems at least equally certain that the too great weight allowed to the claims of mere seniority, has weakened the spring of honourable emulation within the privileged body. Only a few appointments, and those almost exclusively in the higher grades of the service, are regarded as prizes for merit. These are exceptions to the general rule, and are not made upon any avowed principle; but apparently because, as in the case of the Secretaryships to government, their being filled by able men is essential to the creditable and easy working of the administrative machinery. But the great majority of situations, ninety-five at least out of every hundred, all of them in the present day highly responsible—and all of them, especially those in the judicial department, affecting most powerfully the condition of the people, are filled up with a paramount regard for seniority. No amount of superior fitness elevates an officer to a judgeship until his turn has come, or very nearly come; no mediocrity of ability or attainments, no degree of indolence or self-indulgence, or of engrossing devotion to other pursuits—nothing, in fact, which comes short of absolute incapacity—stands in the way of the operation of the rule of promotion to the judgment-seat by seniority. It is the same in every other department of the service; and in India, under every system of managing the land revenue, the people are liable to suffer

as grievously when the difficult and often discretionary duties which it involves are entrusted to incompetent hands, as when justice between man and man is denied, ill-administered, or bought and sold by underlings. There is no kind of wrong so dreadful to the natives of British India—now that the days of open pillage and bloodshed have passed away—as the nominal management of the land revenue, by officers whose inefficiency or sloth permits the abuse of their authority by a rapacious host of subordinate and irresponsible functionaries. Under the existing system, this, as well as the elevation of incompetent persons to the judicial bench, are circumstances of inevitably frequent occurrence.

Proof of the truth of these statements is to be found on the very surface of that aspect which the public service in India presents. In every walk of life, where matters are left to regulate themselves—where, consequently, high success is dependent upon eminent merit, and even moderate advancement upon competent fitness—some individuals will be found to have gained the goal in the prime of life; others will reach it with difficulty, or, perhaps, rest content with coming somewhat short of it, after a longer period of toil; whilst a third class, whom nature or their own misconduct have disqualified for the race, will occupy a place in their old age but little in advance of the starting-post. In England, this state of things is common in every profession and calling; and no one wonders, or thinks it a hardship, that those whom nature has not formed to excel, should hold situations subordinate to younger men on whom she has conferred the talent, the energy, and the perseverance which command success. In India, on the other hand, the advancement of the members of the body which administers or controls every branch of the government, is regulated by a diametrically opposite principle. The man who was never intended to rise is forced up; whilst the energies of the individual whom Providence designed to distinguish from the mass are cramped and crippled—if, indeed, their development is not altogether prevented—by the absurd rule which contravenes the general law of nature, and ordains that the active and vigorous shall not outstrip the apathetic and indifferent; and that, with the exception of a very few prizes, offices of the highest practical importance—such as the dispensation of civil and criminal justice, in a district as large as an English county, including the superintendence and control of twenty or thirty subordinate courts—shall be filled with an almost exclusive reference to the age and standing of individuals in the general muster-roll of a service which all have alike en-

tered as boys. That this is no exaggerated representation, a glance at the list of civil servants, under any one of the Presidencies, will demonstrate. Those lists will not show five instances where all the individuals of a certain standing are not judges or collectors at least; if not the supervisors and controllers of judges and collectors. They will not exhibit five cases in which the officer of fifteen or twenty years' standing is on a level, in respect to distinction and emolument, with the generality of those who have been five or six years in the service. Yet it is morally impossible that every person of a certain standing should be fit to be a judge or a collector—fitter than any one of the fifty who entered the service five or even ten years later: it is equally out of the question that of the fifty or hundred who are now placed in situations of high responsibility, merely because they have passed a given number of years in India, there should not be several, who, in any state of things where they were solely dependent upon their own exertions, would have remained till old age in offices of mere mechanical drudgery. The existing system picks two or three of the best out of every hundred, in order to place them in offices, the efficiency of which is essential to the ease or character of the government, and treats all the rest exactly alike.

The consequences are mischievous in the extreme. It is the old story in the main:—‘*Delirunt reges, plectuntur Achivi:*’ the people are the principal sufferers; but the British Government reaps directly and largely the fruit of its own absurdities. Emulation lives only in the hearts of the few competitors for the scanty prizes to which we have alluded. Beyond them, the great body of public servants, many of whom are, of course, possessed of abilities capable of being quickened into most useful activity, regard themselves as members of a sort of professional *tontine*; and repose in the comfortable assurance that, if they live long enough, and do not absolutely disgrace themselves, they shall grow up in the paradise of promotion, like the bean-stalk in the nursery tale, by the mere force of vegetation. This feeling, doubtless, is strongest in the least worthy; and doubtless, also—to their honour be it said—there are many in the ranks of the civil service who are stimulated to the energetic discharge of their public duties by higher and purer motives than any which mere emulation—having worldly advancement for its goal—can afford. But it is undeniably a grand political blunder, that this most cogent incentive is not systematically superadded to those which are derived from other sources.

In truth, it must, we think, be self-evident, that a rule of pro-

motion that might have been, and probably was, well enough suited to regulate the advancement of the clerks and factors of a company of merchants, is utterly inapplicable to the administrators of a vast empire. It is impossible to calculate the amount of public loss that results from it; because it is impossible to ascertain the quantum of useful ability which the absence of stimulus permits to lie dormant. That it is very heavy, no one will doubt who knows any thing of human nature, or of the difficulty of governing a hundred millions of men by the agency of a handful of foreigners; and, consequently, of the importance of eliciting from such instruments the largest possible amount of useful service.

There ought to be strong grounds for continuing a system so broadly at variance with all received principles. Yet we never heard any arguments urged in its favour, which do not appear to us absolutely futile when weighed against the opposing considerations. It is alleged that promotion by seniority is a necessary safeguard against favouritism. The answer is, that the exclusive nature of the service, the members of which are alone eligible for employment, is in itself a great protection against such abuse; and that the local governments, which are necessarily trusted so largely, may well be trusted further to select the best qualified member of that service for every appointment that falls vacant. They exercise that discretion already in regard to a few prizes—affording the greatest temptation to jobbing—and that, as all admit, with the best effect. Why should any thing but good result from extending the practice of selection according to merit to all offices of responsibility? As regards what has been said about jealousies and heartburnings, such feelings on the part of the less successful, because the less worthy, are very dearly bought off at the expense of the general abandonment of the master stimulus of emulation. Lastly, we have heard it urged, that promotion by seniority is a necessary concomitant of an exclusive service. But all schools, all colleges, all universities, all professions, are exclusive; yet in many of them emulation works with the best effect, and no one doubts that it might be beneficially introduced in all. And though it be true, as the late excellent Lord William Bentinck remarked, in a private note now before us, that in India the ordinary state of things is sometimes reversed—there being more difficulty to find men to fill places, than places to accommodate men—it is certain, that in no case could that difficulty be increased, whilst in many it would, doubtless, be altogether removed, by making the highest degree

of fitness, altogether irrespective of *standing* in the service, the strongest recommendation to a candidate for office.

We have dwelt upon this subject at considerable length, because we have long been sensible of its extreme importance to the interests of British India. The rigid single file in which the public servants are made to advance, has assuredly dwarfed their minds; except in those rare instances in which talent is accompanied by so much energy as to be altogether irrepressible. Every thing short of extraordinary qualification is levelled, by the absence of encouragement, to the low standard of passable fitness. We know but of one reason—and that one which no honest mind, once awakened to reflect on the subject, would allow to sway it—why the system should be clung to. It *enhances the value of patronage*, as regards the least worthy recipients of it, by rendering the public service of India a *lottery without blanks*, except in cases of scandalous misbehaviour. But the opportunity of entering the lists of competition in such a service is, or ought to be, a sufficient boon to any young man; it would be amply sufficient to tempt the *élite* of the rising generation to engage in it with hopefulness and energy; and it is too much to add a virtual guarantee, at the expense of the people of India, that unless there be misconduct of the grossest description, there shall be regular advancement, as a matter of course, to offices which can hardly be designated as otherwise than of the highest trust and responsibility. The existence of such a guarantee reduces all but the few salient minds to the dead level of mediocrity; whilst those whom nature, sloth, or bad habits have marked out as drudges, have a claim of right to receive, and do actually receive—if their demerits fall short of absolute incapacity—the general average of promotion.

The Charter Act made a considerable change, or rather a considerable opening for change, at the discretion of the Court of Directors, in the constitution of the Indian governments. It enacted that the executive government of each of the Presidencies shall be administered by a governor and three councillors; but, at the same time, it empowered the Directors to revoke and suspend the appointment of councils. It also made the Governor-General of India for the time being, Governor of Bengal. Under the license given to the court, the Governor of Bengal has hitherto exercised the functions of that office without the aid of a council; as did also the governor of Agra, as long as that office existed.

This autocracy has been objected to by some, principally, we believe, on account of the additional power which the absence of

councils is supposed to throw into the irresponsible hands of secretaries; who, it is thought, are more likely to lead or mislead one than many masters. For our part, we have always, even irrespective of the saving of expenditure, thought the change an improvement. The subordinate governments have now no powers of legislation, and very little latitude in expenditure; their functions may, generally speaking, be better, because more promptly, performed by one mind than by many; the governor acts alone, under individual, and therefore more stringent, responsibility; and as to the dangerous influence of secretaries, those functionaries, though younger men—a circumstance which is not always, by any means, an objection in India—are, commonly, at least as well selected as the members of council. It would not be difficult to devise a plan which would give them all needful and wholesome responsibility.

The Local Governments transact their business in four departments:—the political, which includes the secret, and is limited to what in England we term diplomacy; the judicial; the revenue; and the general, to which all the financial business appertains. A fifth—the legislative department—is peculiar to the supreme government. At the several Presidencies, and at the same Presidencies under changes of circumstances, these departments are variously arranged as regards the manner in which they are worked. Thus the supreme government has but two secretaries, one of whom undertakes the political, legislative, judicial, and revenue departments, and the other the general department; whilst the subordinate government of Bengal, having a vast deal more of detail on its hands—much more, indeed, than it ought, in wisdom, to meddle with—has a separate secretary for the important departments of revenue and justice. The arrangements of departments, and of the business attached to them, are generally wise and efficient—the several governments taking care not to choose secretaries for themselves, as they do judges for the people, according to *seniority* in the service;—but the division of duties is not altogether free from anomalies. In Bengal, for instance, the superintendence and control of the customs, and of the salt and opium monopolies, belong not to the revenue, but to the general, department; which manages, besides the finance, all the miscellaneous business which does not come under one or other of the more specific heads. Ecclesiastical affairs, steam-boats for sea and river navigation, the post-office, and public instruction, are only a part of its multifarious cares. The government and the people would be far better served, if separate secretaries were appointed to the revenue and judicial departments; the former relieving the secretary in the general

department from the charge of the customs, the two monopolies, and post-office; and the latter conducting all correspondence connected with the education of the natives. The secretary in the general department might then discharge all the important duties of the Accountant-General. Under the existing arrangements, the Admirable Crichton himself could not fulfil efficiently all the functions of the general department.

The secretary in the political department conducts all the correspondence with the numerous officers, who, under the title of Residents at the native courts, or of Agents to the governor-general, discharge, in some cases, purely diplomatic functions; and exercise, in other instances, an ambiguous sway—alternating between command and counsel—over princes and chiefs partially independent, but looking up to the British Government, not only for protection against all external danger, but for the mediation of all matters in dispute among themselves, or with powerful tributaries, or with their subjects. The residents and agents do not submit reports merely upon all important matters, but diaries of their ordinary proceedings, showing with whom they have communicated, and the nature of the conference. Those who hold the more important trusts—and some, as the agent for Rajpootana, have many officers, each residing at the court of a petty prince, subordinate to them—correspond directly with the supreme government; the others are subject to the orders of the governor, to whose jurisdiction their respective offices are attached. The subordinate governments, again, report all matters of moment to the supreme government; so that a complete chain of communication is maintained from the lowest functionary engaged in any business of diplomacy—one of whom is stationed at every spot where his services can be useful—to the Governor-General in council. In this department, the state is, and always has been, admirably served. The chief reason is easily told. In the political line, the claims of *seniority* are far less attended to than in other departments. The Company's army contends with the civil service in furnishing the requisite amount of ability; and, what is still more important—the diplomatists of British India are not, generally speaking, so hopelessly overlaid with business as the officers, who perform their duties with equal zeal and energy, though with less brilliant results, in other branches of the service. They enjoy, personally, another signal advantage. They do not labour exclusively for the good of others, and for the rewards of their own conscience—though they may well promote the one and earn the other—as those who discharge important duties on the judicial bench, or in the revenue department. The nature of

their functions brings them, in frequent instances, to the notice of their countrymen at home; and they reap, though not a fair share, yet a far larger share than their brethren, of those distinctions which the grace of the Crown, or public opinion, confer on those who are felt to have rendered good service to their country. To all merit displayed on the distant and disregarded theatre of India, such rewards have been dealt with niggard hand. They have been almost absolutely denied to those whose talents and devotion have been displayed in the less shining walks of the public service. In no instance, as far as we are aware, has the highest judicial merit, manifested in the Company's Courts, received any honorary acknowledgment in this country; whilst comparatively petty services, performed in the colonies of the Crown, have been abundantly rewarded! Is this generous—is it wise? The Crown should not look coldly on the distinguished men who serve their country in India, because England chooses to rule that splendid empire through the instrumentality of the Company. It would cost her nothing, it would stimulate to still greater exertions, it would be a graceful compensation for the wealth which the improved state of public morals and feeling forbids the servants of the Government to accumulate in India, if suitable honours, such as would confer rank and distinction upon those servants in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen, were bestowed with judicious liberality upon those best deserving them.

The superintendence and control of the judicial department are exercised principally by the instrumentality of the Sudder Courts—the supreme judicatories of the Company's territories, beyond the narrow precincts of the jurisdiction of the three courts chartered by the Crown. The executive government holds little direct correspondence—and that little only on trivial subjects—with any subordinate judicial functionaries; excepting only, in the case of the government of Bengal, the superintendent of police, whose office does not exist elsewhere. Throughout Bengal, including the lieutenant-governorship of Agra, the provincial courts of appeal and circuit, which formed a material part of the scheme of judicial administration devised by Lord Cornwallis, have been abolished; the Sudder Courts now preside immediately over the civil and sessions judges of the several districts into which the provinces are divided; each of whom, again, supervises the proceedings, and hears appeals from the decisions, of many judges of inferior jurisdiction, proportioned in number to the amount of local business, and ranked in three gradations with respect to their powers and to their official emoluments. The judges of the several districts are invariably civil

servants : the officers who preside in the subordinate courts are principally natives of India, though all properly qualified persons are eligible. Those of the highest rank are competent to decide all suits, whatever the value of property at issue ; and it has been, of late years, the wise object of the government to relieve as much as possible the highly-remunerated district judges from all primary jurisdiction, and to employ them, almost exclusively, in the far more extensively useful work of superintending the proceedings of the numerous subordinate courts, and of hearing appeals from their orders and judgments. Upon the promptitude and efficiency with which these duties are executed, the character of the administration of civil justice absolutely depends. The government has most wisely abandoned the attempt commenced by Lord Cornwallis, to administer justice to millions by the almost unassisted agency of a small body of English judges, whose necessarily high remuneration rendered it impossible to increase their numbers. Of the utter inadequacy of the salaries assigned to the lowest and most numerous class of native judges, (*moonsifs*,) by whom the great majority of causes are decided, we have already spoken ; but the miserable economy of dispensing justice to the bulk of the people by the agency of underpaid functionaries, cannot be too often or too strongly denounced. With a proper addition to their allowances, they might most beneficially be made the effective instruments of improving the administration of criminal, as well as of civil, justice.

The existing system has one glaring and most prejudicial defect. It is lamentably wanting in the vigour of an active and watchful executive superintendence and direction. Those functions are ostensibly performed—as we have stated—by the Sudder Courts ; the judges of which have, therefore, double and discordant responsibilities. Besides exercising the highest appellate jurisdiction, and hearing judicially, in the last resort, all complaints against the proceedings of all subordinate courts, they ought to maintain a jealous supervision over the official conduct of every functionary attached to the judicial department ; availing themselves of every legitimate means of obtaining information with respect to the efficiency of each tribunal, and to the estimation in which the several judges are held by the people. It is the more necessary that this duty should be well performed by the high officers to whom it is assigned ; because, in India, there is no public to discharge it on its own behalf. The people are sunk, to a degree of which home-bred Englishmen can form no adequate conception, in sloth, apathy, and moral cowardice. They regard even the grossest judicial venality as a

very light offence. No extent of fraud or wrong, committed under the shelter of the forms of justice, appears—when they are not personally the victims of it—to excite in their breasts any emotions of abhorrence or indignation. Their ignorant apprehensions often deter them from complaining of the grossest injustice. There is manifestly the greater need that they should be well protected by those whose especial duty it is to watch the working of the judicial administration. This vastly important duty the Sudder Courts are, in our judgment, from the nature of their constitution, and of their other functions and responsibilities, altogether unqualified to perform. Their obligations are almost absolutely *antagonistic*. They are judges of the last resort; they are a board of justice; they are, or ought to be, keen and jealous inspectors of the proceedings of a host of subordinate judges, scattered through a vast extent of country, and dispensing justice to millions. Being always stationary, they can superintend the proceedings and estimate the character of the many officers dependent on each district court, only through the intermediate agency of the judge of that court. Their knowledge of all those subordinate to him must be coloured, at least, by his opinions regarding them. If he be blind, it is next to impossible that they should be able to see to any good purpose; but if he be dishonest or corrupt, and in league with inferiors of a like character, they must be absolutely helpless. This last consummation of iniquity is not probable; but, under such a system of promotion of judicial office as we have already described, instances must, in the nature of things, frequently occur, where, from one cause or another, the district judge is a very bad medium of supervision. We could mention an instance in which, within a few months after an English judge, personally above all suspicion, and of considerable merit, had left a district in which he had presided for some years, two of the principal subordinate judges of that district—to whom on retiring he had given certificates of high character—were dismissed from office with infamy, on proof that they had been selling justice for years. It was proved that one of them had been pulled out of his palanquin in the public bazar, and flogged by a man to whom he had denied redress, after he had been paid for it. In another case, a board of revenue was compelled to denounce to the Government the open and shameless iniquities prevalent in one of the late provincial courts, situated within two miles of the Sudder Court, of which that court had taken, and appeared disposed to take, no notice.

We have specified these two instances, because they illustrate the two distinct causes of the inefficiency which characterizes

the superintendence of the Sudder Court. The first shows—if it needs showing—that a stationary body, operating through local instruments of very unequal fitness—some of whom must be expected to be unsuspecting, some indolent, some inaccessible to the people, some disposed to favour and shield parasites and flatterers—must be very ill qualified to watch with sufficient acuteness and steadiness the proceedings of inferior courts situated at distances of from seventy to four or five hundred miles. The second exemplifies the mistake involved in entrusting the most important judicial and executive functions to the same hands; and those hands trained principally to the patient and deliberate dispensation of justice. It is next to impossible that the same man should be at once a calm and dispassionate judge, and a keen and jealous supervisor. All the qualities indispensable for the first office, are little less than disqualifications for the other. The judge is bound to keep his eyes, ears, and mind closed to all that he might see or hear out of court. The superintendent, to be efficient under the extremely difficult circumstances of the case, as respects the absence of public spirit, ought to be in a constant state of enquiry—accessible to information from every quarter, listening to and investigating every rumour which bears with it a plausible appearance of truth; and prompt to pursue any clue that may enable him to test the efficiency and soundness of the system which it is his duty to watch over. The judge should assume every one to be innocent till he is proved guilty: the superintendent, whilst he judges no one, should make it his business to possess himself of the fullest information regarding the proceedings of all.

Just in proportion as the officers who preside in the Sudder Courts with so much ability, and with so much honour to the British character, are excellent judges, they are bad superintendents of civil and criminal justice. It is unfair to impose duties so incompatible upon any men:—it is vain to expect that they should both be efficiently performed.

The remedy is obvious. The Sudder Courts should be divided, and the discordant functions imposed upon them allotted to different individuals. Such an arrangement would occasion no increase of expense, since there need be no augmentation of the number of officers. It would permit the adaptation of individual qualifications to that department of duty best suited for their useful exertion. It would result in economy of time, much of which is now wasted in passing backwards and forwards from one sort of business to another totally dissimilar. The judges would be only judges: the superintendence of the administration of civil and criminal justice

would be in distinct hands; either of an individual, which we think decidedly the better plan, or of a board. The efficiency of both departments would thus be much increased. The Government would learn from the court how the judges of the various grades performed those parts of their duties, the fulfilment of which could be tried by their decisions—the grounds of which are always fully recorded in India; whilst the superintendents of justice would watch and report upon all matters of an executive nature—the relations between the institution and the decision of suits, the execution of decrees, the disposal or accumulation of interlocutory and other miscellaneous business; and, pre-eminently, upon the general efficiency and purity of the courts, and the estimation in which they are held by the people. It is not sufficient in any land, but especially not in India, that the fountains of justice should be free from actual pollution; it is essential that there should be an absolute and universal conviction that they *are* pure. This double obligation has not, hitherto, been sufficiently attended to in British India. The government has not unfrequently stopped short, after satisfying itself by an investigation into alleged misfeasance; leaving the minds of the people as full of distrust as before, with the additional suspicion of their rulers being cognizant of, and conniving at the iniquity.

The department of the land revenue is well attended to throughout British India, owing probably—we must confess our persuasion—to the strong and direct interest which the government has in the efficiency of the instrument by which its treasury is principally replenished. In former times, for some years following the formation of the permanent settlement of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Benares, and, probably, in those districts also of the Madras Presidency into which a corresponding measure was subsequently introduced, it was thought that a scheme so simple might be left to execute itself; and that those public servants who were unfit for more important and difficult employment, might be well able to act as mere receivers of the dues of the state from a body of thriving and grateful landholders. How entirely, and with what a penalty for the mistake, these expectations have been frustrated, we have before had occasion to show on more than one occasion, especially in urging the necessity of an immediate survey of the whole area of the permanently settled provinces:—but much of the mischief of past mismanagement is now irreparable. In the districts subject to periodical assessments throughout the Presidencies, we have profited by experience; and whatever other errors have been committed, the state has been effectually protected from the loss of that revenue, upon the integrity and judicious dispensation of which all reasonable hopes of

the improvement of British India must be built. The people are not in a state to advance their own condition. The landholders of the provinces, to whom the permanent settlement has insured so large a proportion of the rental, have done little or nothing, in the long course of fifty years, even to benefit themselves—not one in a thousand pretends to feel any care for the interests of his country: on the other hand, the government can do nothing for the people if it have not sufficient pecuniary means for their defence, against external and internal enemies, and for complete administrative efficiency. The case is essentially different from that of a country where the people are on a level with, if not in advance of, their rulers, in respect to the knowledge of their own wants, and of the best manner of supplying them—‘where private intelligence always outstrips and prevents public wisdom.’ Yet there are some sincere—but deluded—philanthropists, whose single idea of benefiting British India is centred in the abandonment of the system of land revenue;—as if sufficient means for any, the most economical, government of that country could be obtained from all other sources put together; as if some of those sources were not far worse in principle than that from which the land revenue is derived; and as if it would be practicable to make any sacrifice of revenue in favour of the landholders, without mulcting somebody else to a corresponding amount.

The land revenue is managed by the collectors and deputy collectors of the numerous districts into which the provinces of British India are divided; subject to the authority of boards of revenue stationed at Calcutta, Allahabad, and Madras, and of a revenue commission at Bombay. Throughout Bengal, Behar, Benares, and the north-western provinces, commissioners of revenue, each presiding over four or five districts, were interposed, under Lord William Bentinck’s administration, between the boards and the collectors; and the powers of the boards were increased, the commissioners being invested with the authority of the former boards. This measure tended most beneficially to relieve the government from the details of the revenue administration; but it still interferes much too often and too minutely, instead of confining itself to general superintendence and control, holding the boards responsible for the efficiency of the system. But this, as we have stated, is the general vice of the Indian governments, equally prevalent, and equally mischievous in all departments, both at home and abroad. It would be easy to make out a list of matters in which the Governor-General in council, the Court of Directors, and the Board of Control, busy themselves, or profess to busy themselves, in any given month of

any year, which, to use the words of Junius, 'the gravest of chaplains would not be able to read without laughing.'

Our limits compel us to state briefly, that the other great departments of the revenue of Bengal, the richest by far of the Company's possessions, are managed by the Board of Customs, salt and opium, fixed in Calcutta; by the instrumentality, in the two latter branches, of agents, members of the civil service, stationed at the principal places of manufacture or store. We cannot discuss, at the close of a long article, the principles of the great monopolies of salt and opium. As monopolies they are, of course, essentially vicious; that of salt operating as a poll-tax, almost absolutely irrespective of the means, and consequently of the obligations to the state, of the person paying it; that of opium mixing up the Christian rulers of India, in a manner the most discreditable, with the demoralizing traffic by which British merchants poison the minds and bodies of the Chinese and Malays. It is clear to us that the government should abandon all concern in the manufacture of this drug, and content itself with levying such an export duty at the port of shipment as would not afford too tempting a premium to the smuggler. There would be loss of revenue in this, no doubt; but there would be great gain of character. Were it not for the unfortunate permanent settlement of the land revenue, which so many extol as the perfection both of justice and of financial wisdom, (as if there could have been no middle course between annual assessments at rack-rents, and the limitation for ever of the supply to be derived from the best possible source of national expenditure,) both these monopolies, objectionable from different but equally cogent reasons, might be altogether abandoned; and the transit duties at Madras might, at the same time, be abolished, and all the ports of India be declared absolutely free. Let those who know any thing of the condition of India, and of the effects of a bad system of taxation in any land, weigh these advantages against those which the community derive from the immunities enjoyed by the Zemindars in the permanently settled provinces; for no one pretends that any other class, even of those directly connected with the soil, is a whit the better off in consequence of the limitation of the public demand. Bitter cause have the people of India to rue Lord Cornwallis' mistaken benevolence, which, whilst it shackles the hands of the government, fixes, hopelessly, unequal and mischievous taxes upon the shoulders of the people.

ART. VI.—*Madame de Sévigné and her Contemporaries.*

Two vols. 8vo. London: 1842.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, in her combined and inseparable character as writer and woman, enjoys the singular and delightful reputation of having united, beyond all others of her class, the rare with the familiar, and the lively with the correct. The moment her name is mentioned, we think of the mother who loved her daughter; of the most charming of letter-writers; of the ornament of an age of license, who incurred none of its ill-repute; of the female who has become one of the classics of her language, without effort and without intention.

The sight of a name so attractive, in the title-page of the volumes before us, has made us renew an intercourse, never entirely broken, with her own. We have lived over again with her and her friends from her first letter to her last, including the new matter in the latest Paris editions. We have seen her writing in her cabinet, dancing at court, being the life of the company in her parlour, nursing her old uncle the Abbé; bantering Mademoiselle du Plessis; lecturing and then jesting with her son; devouring the romances of Calprenede, and responding to the wit of Pascal and La Fontaine; walking in her own green alleys by moonlight, enchanting cardinals, politicians, philosophers, beauties, poets, devotees, haymakers; ready to 'die with laughter' fifty times a-day; and idolizing her daughter for ever.

It is somewhat extraordinary, that of all the admirers of a woman so interesting, not one has yet been found in these islands to give any reasonably good account of her—any regular and comprehensive information respecting her life and writings. The notices in the biographical dictionaries are meagre to the last degree; and 'sketches' of greater pretension have seldom consisted of more than loose and brief memorandums, picked out of others, their predecessors. The name which report has assigned to the compiler of the volumes before us, induced us to entertain sanguine hopes that something more satisfactory was about to be done for the queen of letter-writing; and undoubtedly the portrait which has been given of her, is, on the whole, the best hitherto to be met with. But still it is a limited, hasty, and unfinished portrait, forming but one in a gallery of others; many of which have little to do with her, and some, scarcely any connexion even with her times. Now, in a work entitled '*Madame de Sévigné and her Contemporaries*,' we had a right to expect a picture with the foreground occupied by herself and her friends,

and the rest of the group at greater or less distances, in proportion to their reference to the main figure; something analogous to an interesting French print, which exhibits Molière reading one of his plays to an assembly of wits, at the house of Ninon de l'Enclos. The great comic writer is on his legs—the prominent object—acting as well as reading his play, in a lively and salient attitude, full of French expression; near him sits the lady of the house, as the gatherer together of the party; and round both, in characteristic postures, but all listening to the reader, sit Rochefoucauld, La Fontaine, Corneille, and one or two more. But in a picture of Madame de Sévigné, and those whom an association of ideas would draw round her, what have we to do with Cardinal Richelieu, and Père Joseph, and Boisrobert? What with the man in the 'Iron Mask,' with Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the Earls of Holland and Ossory, the Dukes of Buckingham, Shrewsbury, and St Simon, and others who flourished before and after her day? There is, it is true, a sprinkling of extracts from Madame de Sévigné's letters through the greater part of the volumes; but even these naturally fail us in many of the sketches, and of whole letters we have but two or three; whereas, what the public looked for, was a regular and satisfactory account both of her writings and her life, a selection of specimens of her letters, and some talk about her friends; in short, about all of whom she talks herself; not excepting Ninon, of whom there is here scarcely a word; and assuredly not omitting such a friend as Corbignelli, whose name we do not remember seeing in the book. There is very little even about her son the Marquis, and not a syllable respecting her startling 'contemporaries,' Brinvilliers and La Voisin; while, on the other hand, we have a long account of the King and Queen of Spain, and a history of the very foreign transactions of Stradella the musician. It is much as if, in the print above mentioned, Molière and his friends had been thrust into the background, and the chief part of the composition given up to a view of the courts of France and England. We need not dwell upon the contradictions between the 'advertisement' and the 'introduction' respecting the chief authorities consulted; or such as those in the opinions expressed about Louis the Fourteenth, who is at one time represented as 'the greatest monarch that had appeared in France 'previous to the times of Napoleon and Louis-Philippe,' and at another as a man whose talents were 'below mediocrity.' The work, in a word, is one of the jobbing, book-making expedients of the day, with a dishonest title-page; and yet there are sketches and passages in it so good, and indicative of a power to

do so much better, that we speak of it thus with regret. It should have been called by some other name. At present it reminds us too much of the famous ode on Doctor Poccoke, in which there was something about 'one Poccoke' towards the middle of the composition.

Proceeding to sketch out, from our own acquaintance with her, what we conceive to be a better mode of supplying some account of Madame de Sévigné and her writings, we shall, in the order of time, speak of her ancestors and other kindred, her friends and her daily habits, and give a few specimens of the best of her letters; and we shall do all this with as hearty a relish of her genius as the warmest of her admirers, without thinking it necessary to blind ourselves to any weaknesses that may have accompanied it. With all her good-nature, the 'charming woman' had a sharp eye to a defect herself; and we have too great a respect for the truth that was in her, not to let her honestly suffer in its behalf, whenever that first cause of all that is great and good demands it.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Baroness de Chantal and Bourbilly, afterwards Marchioness de Sévigné, was born, in all probability, in Burgundy, in the old ancestral *château* of Bourbilly, between Semur and Epoisses, on the 5th of February 1627. Her father, Celse Benigne de Rabutin, Baron as above mentioned, was of the elder branch of his name, and cousin to the famous Count Bussy-Rabutin; her mother, Marie de Coulanges, daughter of a secretary-of-state, was also of a family whose name afterwards became celebrated for wit; and her paternal grandmother, Jeanne Françoise Fremyot, afterwards known by the title of the Blessed Mother of Chantal, was a *saint*. The nuns of the Order of the Visitation, which she founded by the help of Saint Francis de Sales, beatified her, with the subsequent approbation of Benedict XIV.; and she was canonized by Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) in 1767. There was a relationship between the families of Rabutin and De Sales;—names which it would be still stranger than it is to see in conjunction, had not the good St Francis been the liveliest and most tolerant of his class. We notice these matters, because it is interesting to discover links between people of celebrity; and because it would be but a sorry philosophy which should deny the probable effects produced in the minds and dispositions of a distinguished race by intermixtures of blood and associations of ideas. Madame de Sévigné's father, for instance, gave a rough foretaste of her wit and sincerity, by a raillery amounting to the *brusque*, sometimes to the insolent. He wrote the following congratulatory epistle to a minister of

finance, whom the King (Louis XIII.) had transformed into a marshal :—

‘ My Lord,

‘ Birth ; black beard ; intimacy.

‘ CHANTAL.’

Meaning that his new fortune had been owing to his quality, to his position near the royal person, and to his having a black beard like his master. Both the Chantals and the Fremyots, a race remarkable for their integrity, had been amongst the warmest adherents of Henry IV.; and, indeed, the whole united stock may be said to have been distinguished equally for worth, spirit, and ability, till it took a twist of intrigue and worldliness in the solitary instance of the scapegrace Bussy. We may discern, in the wit and integrity of Madame de Sévigné—in her natural piety, in her cordial partizanship, and at the same time in that tact for universality which distinguished her in spite of it—a portion of what was best in all her kindred, not excepting a spice of the satire, but without the malignity, of her supercilious cousin. She was truly the flower of the family tree ; and laughed at the top of it with a brilliancy as well as a softness, compared with which Bussy was but a thorn.

The little heiress was only a few months old when the Baron de Chantal died, bravely fighting against the English in their descent on the Isle of Rhé. It was one of the figments of Gregorio Leti, that he received his death-wound from the hand of Cromwell. The Baron’s widow survived her husband only five years ; and it seems to have been expected that the devout grandmother, Madame de Chantal the elder, would have been anxious to take the orphan under her care. But whether it was that the mother had chosen to keep the child too exclusively under her own, or that the future saint was too much occupied in the concerns of the other world and the formation of religious houses, (of which she founded no less than eighty-seven ;) the old lady contented herself with recommending her to the consideration of an Archbishop, and left her in the hands of her maternal relations. They did their part nobly by her. She was brought up with her fellow-wit and correspondent, Philippe-Emmanuel de Coulanges ; and her uncle Christophe, Abbé de Livry, became her second father, in the strictest and most enduring sense of the word. He took care that she should acquire graces at court, as well as encouragements to learning from his friends ; saw her married, and helped to settle her children ; extricated her affairs from disorder, and taught her to surpass him-

self in knowledge of business ; in fine, spent a good remainder of his life with her, sometimes at his own house and sometimes at hers ; and when he died, repaid the tenderness with which she had rewarded his care, by leaving her all his property. The Abbé, with some little irritable particularities, and a love of extra-comfort and his bottle, appears to have been, as she was fond of calling him, *bien bon*, a right good creature ; and posterity is to be congratulated, that her faculties were allowed to expand under his honest and reasonable indulgence, instead of being cramped, and formalized, and made insincere, by the half-witted training of the convent.

Young ladies at that time were taught little more than to read, write, dance, and embroider, with greater or less attention to books of religion. If the training was conventual, religion was predominant, (unless it was rivalled by comfit and flower making, great pastimes of the good nuns ;) and in the devout case, the danger was, either that the pupil would be frightened into bigotry, or, what happened oftener, would be tired into a passion for pleasure and the world, and only stocked with a sufficient portion of fear and superstition to return to the bigotry in old age, when the passion was burnt out. When the education was more domestic, profane literature had its turn—the poetry of Maynard and Malherbe, and the absurd but exalting romances of Gomberville, Scudery, and Calprenede. Sometimes a little Latin was added ; and other tendencies to literature were caught from abbés and confessors. In all cases, somebody was in the habit of reading aloud while the ladies worked ; and a turn for politics and court-gossip was given by the wars of the *Fronde*, and by the allusions to the heroes and heroines of the reigning gallantries, in the ideal personages of the romances. The particulars of Madame de Sévigné's education have not transpired ; but as she was brought up at home, and we hear something of her male teachers, and nothing of her female, (whom, nevertheless, she could not have been without,) the probability is that she tasted something of all the different kinds of nurture, and helped herself with her own cleverness to the rest. She would hear of the example and reputation of her saintly grandmother, if she was not much with her ; her other religious acquaintances rendered her an admirer of the worth and talents of the devotees of Port-Royal ; her political ones interested her in behalf of the *Frondeurs* ; but, above all, she had the wholesome run of her good uncle's books, and the society of his friends Chapelain, Menage, and other professors of polite literature ; the effect of which is to fuse particular knowledge into general, and to distil from it the spirit of a wise humanity. She seems to have been

not unacquainted with Latin and Spanish; and both Chapelain and Menage were great lovers of Italian, which became part of her favourite reading.

To these fortunate accidents of birth and breeding were joined health, animal spirits, a natural flow of wit, and a face and shape which, if not perfectly handsome, were allowed by every body to produce a most agreeable impression. Her cousin Bussy Rabutin has drawn a portrait of her when a young woman; and though he did it half in malice and resentment, like the half-vagabond he was, he could not but make the same concession. He afterwards withdrew the worst part of his words, and heaped her with panegyric; and from a comparison of his different accounts we probably obtain a truer idea of her manners and personal appearance, than has been furnished either by the wholesale eulogist or the artist. It is, indeed, corroborated by herself in her letters. She was somewhat tall for a woman; had a good shape, a pleasing voice, a fine complexion, brilliant eyes, and a profusion of light hair; but her eyes, though brilliant, were small, and, together with the eyelashes, were of different tints; her lips, though well-coloured, were too flat; and the end of her nose too 'square.' The jawbone, according to Bussy, had the same fault. He says that she had more shape than grace, yet danced well; and she had a taste for singing. He makes the coxcombical objection to her at that time of life, that she was too playful 'for a woman of quality;' as if the liveliest genius and the staidest conventionalities could be reasonably expected to go together; or as if she could have written her unique letters, had she resembled every body else. Let us call to mind the playfulness of those letters, which have charmed all the world;—let us add the most cordial manners, a face full of expression, in which the blood came and went, and a general sensibility, which, if too quick perhaps to shed tears, was no less ready to 'die with laughter' at every sally of pleasantry—and we shall see before us the not beautiful but still engaging and ever-lively creature, in whose countenance, if it contained nothing else, the power to write those letters must have been visible; for, though people do not always seem what they are, it is seldom they do not look what they can do.

The good uncle, the Abbé de Coulanges, doubtless thought he had made a happy match of it, and joined like with like, when, at the age of eighteen, his charming niece married a man of as joyous a character as herself, and of one of the first houses in Brittany. The Marquis de Sévigné, or Sevigny, (the old spelling,) was related to the Duguesclins and the Rohans, and also to Cardinal de Retz. But joyousness, unfortunately, was

the sum-total of his character. He had none of the reflection of his bride. He was a mere laugh and jester, fond of expense and gallantry; and, though he became the father of two children, seems to have given his wife but little of his attention. He fell in a duel about some female, seven years after his marriage. The poor man was a braggart in his amours. Bussy says, that he boasted to him of the approbation of Ninon de l'Enclos; a circumstance which, like a great number of others told in connexion with the 'modern Leontium,' is by no means to be taken for granted. Ninon was a person of a singular repute, owing to as singular an education; and while, in consequence of that education, a license was given her, which, to say the truth, most people secretly took, the graces and good qualities which she retained in spite of it, ultimately rendered her house a sort of academy of good breeding, which it was thought not incompatible with sober views in life to countenance. Now, it is probable, from the great reputation which she had for good sense, that she always possessed discernment enough to see through such a character as that of Monsieur de Sévigné. The wife, it is true, many years afterwards, accused her, to the young Marquis, of having 'spoilt (or hurt) his father,' (*gâté*;) and it may have been true to a certain extent; for a false theory of love would leave a nature like his nothing to fall back upon in regard to right feeling; but people of the Marquis's sort generally come ready spoilt into society, and it is only an indulgent motive that would palm off their faults upon the acquaintances they make there. Be this as it may, Bussy-Rabutin, who had always made love to his cousin after his fashion, and who had found it met with as constant rejection, though not perhaps till he had been imprudently suffered to go the whole length of his talk about it, avows that he took occasion, from the Marquis's boast about Ninon, to make her the gross and insulting proposal, that she should take her 'revenge.' Again she repulsed him. A letter of Bussy's fell into her husband's hands, who forbade her to see him more; a prohibition, of which she doubtless gladly availed herself. The Marquis perished shortly afterwards; and again her cousin made his coxcombical and unsuccessful love, which, however, he accuses her of receiving with so much pleasure as to show herself jealous when he transferred it to another; a weakness, alas! not impossible to very respectable representatives of poor human nature. But all which he says to her disadvantage must be received with caution; for, besides his having no right to say any thing, he had the mean and uncandid effrontery to pretend that he was angry with her solely because she was not generous in money matters. He tells us, that

after all he had done for her and her friends, (what his favours were, God knows,) she refused him the assistance of her purse at a moment when his whole prospects in life were in danger. The real amount of this charge appears to have been that Bussy, who, besides being a man of pleasure and expense, was a distinguished cavalry officer, once needed money for a campaign; and that, applying to his cousin to help him, her uncle the Abbé, who had the charge of her affairs, thought proper to ask him for securities. The cynical and disgusting, though well-written book, in which the Count libelled his cousin, (for, as somebody said of Petronius, he was an author *purissimæ impuritatis*,) brought him afterwards into such trouble at court, that it cost him many years of exile to his estates, and a world of servile trouble and adulation to get back to the presence of Louis the Fourteenth, who could never heartily like him. He had ridiculed, among others, the kind-hearted La Vallière. Madame de Sévigné, in consequence of these troubles, forgave him; and their correspondence, both personally and by letter, was renewed, pleasantly enough on his part, and in a constant strain of regard and admiration. He tells her, among other pretty speeches, that she would certainly have been 'goddess of something or other,' had she lived in ancient times. But Madame de Sévigné writes to him with evident constraint, as to a sort of evil genius who is to be propitiated; and the least handsome incident in her life was the apparently warm interest she took in a scandalous process instituted by him against a gentleman whom his daughter had married, and whose crime consisted in being of inferior birth; for Count Bussy-Rabutin was as proud as he was profligate.* Bussy tried to sustain his cause by forged letters, and had the felicity of losing it by their assistance. It is to be hoped that his cousin had been the dupe of the forgeries; but we have no doubt that she was somewhat afraid of him. She dreaded his writing another book.

We know not whether it was during her married life, or afterwards, that Bussy relates a little incident of her behaviour at court, to which his malignity gives one of its most ingenious turns. They were both there together at a ball, and the King took her out to dance. On returning to her seat, according to the Count's narrative,—'It must be owned,' said she, 'that the King possesses great qualities: he will certainly obscure the lustre of all his predecessors.—I could not help laughing in

* See a strange, painful, and vehement letter, written by her on the subject, to the Count de Guitaut. Vol. xiii. of the duodecimo Paris edition of 1823-4, p. 103.

'her face,' observes Bussy, 'seeing what had produced this panegyric.' I replied, 'There can be no doubt of it, madam, after what he has done for yourself.' 'I really thought she was going to testify her gratitude by crying *Vive le Roi*.'*

This is amusing enough; but the spirit which induces a man to make charges of this nature, is apt to be the one most liable to them itself. Men at the court of Louis used to weep, if he turned his face from them. The bravest behaved like little boys before him, vying for his favour as children might do for an apple. Racine is said to have died of the fear of having offended him; and Bussy, as we have before intimated, was not a whit behind the most pathetic of the servile, when he was again permitted to prostrate himself in the court circle. Madame de Sévigné probably felt on this occasion as every other woman would have felt, and was candid enough not to hide her emotion; but whether, instead of pretending to feel less, she might not have pleasantly affected still more, in order to regain her self-possession, and so carry it off with a grace, Bussy was not the man to tell us, even if his wit had had good-nature enough to discern it.

The young widow devoted herself to her children, and would never again hear of marriage. She had already become celebrated for her letters; continued to go occasionally to court; and frequented the reigning literary circles, then famous for their pedantry, without being carried away by it. Several wits and men of fashion made love to her, besides Bussy. Among them were the learned Menage, who courted her in madrigals compiled from the Italian; the superintendent of the finances, Fouquet, who, except in her instance and that of La Vallière, is said to have made Danaës wherever he chose to shower his gold; and the Prince of Conti, brother of the great Condé, who, with the self-sufficient airs of a royal lover, declared that he found her charming, and that he had 'a word or two to say to her next winter.' Even the great Turenne is said to have loved her. On none of them did she take pity but the superintendent; and not on his heart, poor man! but on his neck; when it was threatened with the axe for doing as his predecessors had done, and squandering the public money. Fouquet was magnificent and popular in his dishonesty, and hence the envious conspired to pull him down. Some of the earliest letters of Madame de Sévigné are on the subject of his trial, and show an interest in it so genuine, that fault has been found with them for not being so witty as the rest!

* *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules.* Tom. i. p. 158. Cologne, 1709.

It was probably from this time that she began to visit the court less frequently, and to confine herself to those domestic and accomplished circles, in which, without suspecting it, she cultivated an immortal reputation for letter-writing. Her political and religious friends, the De Retzes and the Jansenists, grew out of favour, or rather into dislike, and she perhaps suffered herself to grow out of favour with them. She always manifested, however, great respect for the King; and Louis was a man of too genuine a gallantry not to be courteous to the lady whenever they met, and address to her a few gracious words. On one occasion she gazed upon the magnificent gaming-tables at court, and curtsied to his Majesty, 'after the fashion which her daughter,' she says, 'had taught her;' upon which the monarch was pleased to bow, and look very acknowledging. And, another time, when Madame de Maintenon, the Pamela of royalty, then queen in secret, presided over the religious amusements of the King, she went to see Racine's play of *Esther* performed by the young ladies of St Cyr; when Louis politely expressed his hope that she was satisfied, and interchanged a word with her in honour of the poet and the performers. She was not indeed at any time an uninterested observer of what took place in the world. She has other piquant, though not always very lucid notices of the court—was deeply interested in the death of Turenne—listens with emotion to the eloquence of the favourite preachers—records the atrocities of the poisoners, and is compelled by her good sense to leave off wasting her pity on the devout dulness of King James II. But the proper idea of her, for the greater part of her life, is that of a sequestered domestic woman, the delight of her friends, the constant reader, talker, laughers, and writer, and the passionate admirer of the daughter to whom she addressed the chief part of her correspondence. Sometimes she resided in Brittany, at an estate on the sea-coast, called the Rocks, which had belonged to her husband; sometimes she was at Livry, near Paris, where the good uncle possessed his abbey; sometimes at her own estate of Bourbilly, in Burgundy; and at others in her house in town, where the Hôtel Carnavalet (now a school) has become celebrated as her latest and best-known residence. In all these abodes, not excepting the town-house, she made a point of having the enjoyment of a garden, delighting to be as much in the open air as possible, haunting her green alleys and her orangeries with a book in her hand, or a song upon her lips, (for she sung as she went about, like a child,) and walking out late by moonlight in all seasons, to the hazard of colds and rheumatisms, from which she ultimately suffered severely. She was a most kind

mistress to her tenants. She planted trees, made labyrinths, built chapels, (inscribing them 'to God,') watched the peasants dancing, sometimes played at chess, (she did not like cards;) and at almost all other times, when not talking with her friends, she was reading or hearing others read, or writing letters. The chief books and authors we hear of are 'Tasso,' 'Ariosto,' 'La Fontaine,' 'Pascal,' 'Nicole,' 'Tacitus,' the huge old romances, 'Rabelais,' 'Rochefoucauld,' the novels of her friend Madame de la Fayette, Corneille, Bourdaloue and Bossuet, Montaigne, Lucian, Don Quixote, and Saint Augustin; a goodly collection surely, a 'circle of humanity.' She reads the romances three times over; and when she is not sure that her correspondent will approve a book, says that her son has 'brought her into it,' or that he reads out 'passages.' Sometimes her household get up a little surprise or masquerade; at others, her cousin Coulanges brings his 'song-book,' and they are 'the happiest people in the world;' that is to say, provided her daughter is with her. Otherwise, the tears rush into her eyes at the thought of her absence, and she is always making 'dragons' or 'cooking,'—viz. having the blue-devils and fretting. But, when they all are comfortable, what they are most addicted to is 'dying with laughter.' They die with laughter if seeing a grimace; if told a bon-mot; if witnessing a rustic dance; if listening to Monsieur de Pomenars, who has always 'some criminal affair on his hands;' if getting drenched with rain; if having a sore finger pinched instead of relieved. Here lounges the young Marquis on the sofa with his book; there sits the old Abbé in his arm-chair, fed with something nice; the ladies chat, and embroider, and banter Mademoiselle du Plessis; in comes Monsieur de Pomenars, with the news of some forgery that is charged against him, or livelier offence, but always so perilous to his neck that he and they 'die with laughter.' Enter, with her friend Madame de la Fayette, the celebrated Duke de la Rochefoucauld, gouty, but still graceful, and he and the lady 'die with laughter;' enter the learned Corbinelli, and he dies; enter Madame de Coulanges, the sprightly mixture of airiness and witty malice, and she dies of course; and the happy mortality is completed by her husband, the singing cousin aforesaid—'a little round fat oily man,' who was always 'in' with some duke or cardinal, admiring his fine house and feasting at his table. These were among the most prominent friends or associates of Madame de Sévigné; but there were also great lords and ladies, and neighbours in abundance, sometimes coming in when they were not wanted, but always welcomed with true French politeness, except when they had been heard to say

any thing against the 'daughter;' and then Madame told them roundly to their faces that she was 'not at home.' There was Segrais, and Saint Pavin, and Corneille, and Bossuet, and Treville, who talked like a book; and the great Turenne; and the Duke de Vivonne, (brother of Montespau,) who called her 'darling mamma;' and Madame Scarron, till she was Maintenon; and Madame de Fiesque, who did not know how to be afflicted; and D'Hacqueville, whose good offices it was impossible to tire; and fat Barillon, who said good things though he was a bad ambassador; and the Abbé Têtu, thin and lively; and Benserade, who was the life of the company wherever he went; and Brancas, who liked to choose his own rivals; and Cardinal de Retz, in retirement feeding his trout, and talking metaphysics. She had known the Cardinal for thirty years; and, during his last illness, used to get Corneille, Boileau, and Molière to come and read to him their new pieces. Perhaps there is no man of whom she speaks with such undeviating respect and regard as this once turbulent statesman, unless it be Rochefoucauld, who, to judge from most of her accounts of him, was a pattern of all that was the reverse of his 'Maxims.'

With her son the Marquis, who was 'a man of wit and pleasure about town,' till he settled into sobriety with a wife who is said to have made him devout, Madame de Sévigné lived in a state of confidence and unreserve, to an excess that would not be deemed very delicate in these days, and of which, indeed, she herself sometimes expresses her dislike. There is a well-known collection of letters, professing to have passed between him and Ninon de l'Enclos, which is spurious; but we gather some remarkable particulars of their intimacy from the letters of the mother to her daughter; and, among others, Ninon's sayings of him, that he had 'a soul of pap,' and the 'heart of a cucumber fried in snow.'

The little Marquis's friends (for he was small in his person) did not think him a man of very impassioned temperament. He was, however, very pleasant and kind, and an attentive son. He had a strong contempt, too, for 'the character of Æneas,' and the merit of never having treated Bussy Rabutin with any great civility. Rochefoucauld said of him, that his greatest ambition would have been to die for a love which he did not feel. He was at first in the army, but not being on the favourite side either in politics or religion, nor probably very active, could get no preferment worth having; so he ended in living unambitiously in a devout corner of Paris, and cultivating his taste for literature. He maintained a contest of some repute with Dacier, on the disputable meaning of the famous passage in Horace, *Diffi-*

cile est propriè communia dicere. His treatise on the subject may be found in the later Paris editions of his mother's letters; but the juxtaposition is not favourable to its perusal.

But sons, dukes, cardinals, friends, the whole universe, come to nothing in these famous letters, compared with the daughter to whom they owe their existence. She had not the good spirits of her mother, but she had wit and observation; and appears to have been so liberally brought up, that she sometimes startled her more acquiescent teacher with the hardihood of her speculations. It is supposed to have been owing to a scruple of conscience in her descendants, that her part of the correspondence was destroyed. She professed herself, partly in jest and partly in earnest, a zealous follower of Descartes. It is curious that the circumstance which gave rise to the letters, was the very one to which Madame de Sévigné had looked for saving her the necessity of correspondence. The young lady became the wife of a great lord, the Count de Grignan, who, being a man of the court, was expected to continue to reside in Paris; so that the mother trusted she should always have her daughter at hand. The Count, however, who was lieutenant-governor of Provence, received orders, shortly afterwards, to betake himself to that distant region: the continued non-residence of the Duke de Vendôme, the governor, conspired to keep him there, on and off, for the remainder of the mother's existence—a space of six-and-twenty years; and though she contrived to visit and be visited by Madame de Grignan so often that they spent nearly half the time with each other, yet the remaining years were a torment to Madame de Sévigné, which nothing could assuage but an almost incessant correspondence. One letter was no sooner received than another was anxiously desired; and the daughter echoed the anxiety. Hours were counted, post-boys watched for, obstacles imagined; all the torments experienced, and not seldom manifested, of the most jealous and exacting passion, and at the same time all the delights and ecstasies vented of one the most confiding. But what we have to say of this excess of maternal love will be better kept for our concluding remarks. Suffice it to observe, in hastening to give our specimens of the letters, that these graver points of the correspondence, though numerous, occupy but a small portion of it; that the letters, generally speaking, consist of the amusing gossip and conversation which the mother *would have had* with the daughter, had the latter remained near her; and that Madame de Sévigné, after living, as it were, for no other purpose than to write them, and to straiten herself in her circumstances for both her children, died at her daughter's

house in Provence, of an illness caused by the fatigue of nursing her through one of her own. Her decease took place in April 1696, in the seventieth year of her age. Her body, it is said, long after, was found dressed in ribbons, after a Provençal fashion, at which she had expressed great disgust. Madame de Grignan did not survive many years. She died in the summer of 1705, of grief, it has been thought, for the loss of her only child the Marquis de Grignan, in whom the male descendants of the family became extinct. It is a somewhat unpleasant evidence of the triumph of Ninon de l'Enclos over the mortality of her contemporaries, that, in one of the letters of the correspondence, this youth, the grandson of Madame de Sévigné's husband, and nephew of her son, is found studying good breeding at the table of that 'grandmother of the Loves.' The Count de Grignan, his father, does not appear to have been a very agreeable personage. Mademoiselle de Sévigné was his third wife. He was, therefore, not very young; he was pompous and fond of expense, and brought duns about her; and his face was plain, and it is said that he did not make up for his ill looks by the virtue of constancy. Madame de Sévigné seems to have been laudably anxious to make the best of her son-in-law. She accordingly compliments him on his 'fine tenor voice;' and, because he has an uncomely face, is always admiring his 'figure.' One cannot help suspecting sometimes that there is a little malice in her intimations of the contrast, and that she admires his figure most when he will not let her daughter come to see her. The Count's only surviving child, Pauline, became the wife of Louis de Simiane, Marquis d'Esparron, who seems to have been connected on the mother's side with our family of the Hays, and was lieutenant of the Scottish horse-guards in the service of the French king. Madame de Simiane inherited a portion both of the look and wit of her grandmother; but more resembled her mother in gravity of disposition. A daughter of hers married the Marquis de Vence; and of this family there are descendants now living; but the names of Grignan, Rabutin, and Sévigné, have long been extinct—in the body. In spirit they are now before us, more real than myriads of existing families; and we proceed to enjoy their deathless company.

We shall not waste the reader's time with the history of editions, and telling how the collection first partially transpired 'against the consent of friends.' Friends or families are too often afraid, or ashamed, or jealous, of what afterwards constitutes their renown; and we can only rejoice that the sweet 'winged words' of the most flowing of pens, escaped, in this instance, out of their grudging boxes. We give the letters in

English instead of French, not being by any means of opinion that 'all who read and appreciate Madame de Sévigné, may be supposed to understand that language nearly as well as their own.' Undoubtedly, people of the best natural understandings are glad, when, in addition to what nature has given them, they possess, in the knowledge of a foreign language, the best means of appreciating the wit that has adorned it. But it is not impossible that some such people, nay many, in this age of 'diffusion of knowledge,' may have missed the advantages of a good education, and yet be able to appreciate the imperfectly conveyed wit of another, better than some who are acquainted with its own vehicle. Besides, we have known very distinguished people confess, that all who read, or even speak French, do not always read it with the same ready result and comfort to the eyes of their understandings as they do their own language; and as to the 'impossibility' of translating such letters as those of Madame de Sévigné, though the specimens hitherto published have not been very successful, we do not believe it. Phrases here and there may be so; difference of manners may render some few untranslatable in so many words, or even unintelligible; but for the most part the sentences will find their equivalents, if the translator is not destitute of the spirits that suggested them. We have been often given to understand, that we have been, by translation, too much in the habit, on our own part, of assuming that French, however widely known, was still more known than it is; and we shall endeavour, on the present occasion, to make an attempt to include the whole of our readers in the participation of a great intellectual pleasure.

The first letter in the Collection, written when Madame de Sévigné was a young and happy mother, gives a delightful foretaste of what its readers have to expect. She was then in her twentieth year, with a baby in her arms, and nothing but brightness in her eyes.

To the Count de Bussy-Rabutin.

*'March 15th, (1647).**

'You are a pretty fellow, are you not? to have written me nothing for these two months. Have you forgotten who I am, and the rank I hold in the family? Faith, little cadet, I will make you remember it. If you put me out of sorts, I will reduce you to the ranks. You knew I was about to be confined, and yet took no more trouble to ask after my health than if I had remained a spinster. Very well:—be informed

* Madame de Sévigné never, in dating her letters, gave the years. They were added by one of her editors.

to your confusion that I have got a boy, who shall suck hatred of you into his veins with his mother's milk, and that I mean to have a great many more, purely to supply you with enemies. You have not the wit to do as much, you with your feminine productions.

'After all, my dear cousin, my regard for you is not to be concealed. Nature will proclaim it in spite of art. I thought to scold you for your laziness through the whole of this letter; but I do my heart too great a violence, and must conclude with telling you that M. de Sévigné and myself love you very much, and often talk of the pleasure we should have in your company.'

Bussy writes very pleasantly in return; but it will be so impossible to make half the extracts we desire from Madame de Sévigné's own letters, that we must not be tempted to look again into those of others. The next that we shall give is the famous one on the Duke de Lauzun's intended marriage with the Princess Henrietta of Bourbon; one of the most striking, though not the most engaging, in the collection. We might have kept it for a climax, were it not desirable to preserve a chronological order. It was written nearly four-and-twenty years after the letter we have just given; which we mention to show how she had retained her animal spirits. The person to whom it is addressed is her jovial cousin De Coulanges. The apparent tautologies in the exordium are not really such. They only represent a continued astonishment, wanting words to express itself, and fetching its breath at every comma.

To Mons. de Coulanges.

'Paris, Monday, 15th December, (1670.)

'I am going to tell you a thing, which of all things in the world is the most astonishing, the most surprising, the most marvellous, the most miraculous, the most triumphant, the most bewildering, the most unheard-of, the most singular, the most extraordinary, the most incredible, the most unexpected, the most exalting, the most humbling, the most rare, the most common, the most public, the most private (till this moment,) the most brilliant, the most enviable—in short, a thing of which no example is to be found in past times; at least, nothing quite like it;—a thing which we know not how to believe in Paris; how then are you to believe it at Lyons? a thing which makes all the world cry out, "Lord have mercy on us!" a thing which has transported Madame de Rohan and Madame d'Hauterive; a thing which is to be done on Sunday, when those who see it will not believe their own eyes; a thing which is to be done on Sunday, and yet perhaps will not be finished till Monday. I cannot expect you to guess it at once. I give you a trial of three times; *do you give it up?* Well, then, I must tell you. M. de Lauzun is to marry, next Sunday, at the Louvre, guess whom? I give you four times to guess it in: I give you six: I give you a hundred. "Truly," cries Madame de Coulanges, "it must be a very difficult thing to guess; 'tis Madame de la Vallière." No, it isn't, Madam. "'Tis

Mademoiselle de Retz then?" No, it isn't, Madam; you are terribly provincial, "Oh, we are very stupid, no doubt!" say you; "'tis Mademoiselle Colbert." Further off than ever. "Well then, it must be Mademoiselle de Créqui?" You are not a bit nearer. Come, I see I must tell you at last. Well, M. de Lauzun marries, next Sunday, at the Louvre, with the king's permission, Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle de — Mademoiselle — guess the name;—he marries "MADEMOISELLE"—the *great* Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle, the daughter of the late MONSIEUR; Mademoiselle, grand-daughter of Henry the Fourth; Mademoiselle d'Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle d'Orleans, Mademoiselle, cousin-german of the King, Mademoiselle destined to the throne, Mademoiselle, the only woman in France fit to marry Monsieur. Here's pretty news for your coteries! Exclaim about it as much as you will;—let it turn your heads;—say we "lie," if you please; that it's a pretty joke; that it's "tiresome;" that we are a "parcel of pinnies." We give you leave: we have done just the same to others. Adieu! The letters that come by the post, will show whether we have been speaking truth or not.'

Never was French vivacity more gay, more spirited, more triumphant, than in this letter. There is a regular siege laid to the reader's astonishment; and the titles of the bride come like the pomp of victory. Or, to use a humbler image, the reader is thrown into the state of a child, who is told to open his mouth and shut his eyes, and wait for what God will send him. The holder of the secret hovers in front of the expectant, touching his lips and giving him nothing; and all is a merry flutter of laughter, guessing, and final transport. And yet this will not suit the charming misgiving that follows. Alas, for the poor subject of the wonder! The marriage was stopped; it was supposed to have taken place secretly; and Mademoiselle, who was then forty-five years of age, and had rejected kings, is said to have found her husband so brutal, that he one day called to her, 'Henrietta of Bourbon, pull off my boots.' The boots were left on, and the savage discarded.

The letter we give next—or rather, of which we give passages—is a good specimen of the way in which the writer goes from subject to subject;—from church to the fair, and from the fair to court, and mad dogs, and Ninon de l'Enclos, and sermons on death, and so round again to royalty and 'a scene.' It is addressed to her daughter.

To Madame de Grignan.

'Paris, Friday, March 13, (1671.)

'Behold me, to the delight of my heart, all alone in my chamber, writing to you in tranquillity. Nothing gives me comfort like being seated thus. I dined to-day at Madame de Lavardin's, after having been to hear Bourdaloue, where I saw the Mothers of the Church; for

so I call the Princesses de Conti and Longueville.* All the world was at the sermon, and the sermon was worthy of all that heard it. I thought of you twenty times, and wished you as often beside me. You would have been enchanted to be a listener, and I should have been ten-fold enchanted to see you listen. * * * * We have been to the fair, to see a great fright of a woman, bigger than Riberpré by a whole head. She lay-in the other day of two vast infants, who came into the world abreast, with their arms a-kimbo. You never beheld such a *tout-ensemble!* * * * * And now, if you fancy all the maids of honour run mad, you will not fancy amiss. Eight days ago, Madame de Ludre, Coëtlogon, and little De Rouvroi were bitten by a puppy belonging to Théobon, and the puppy has died mad; so Ludre, Coëtlogon, and De Rouvroi set off this morning for the coast, to be dipped three times in the sea. 'Tis a dismal journey: Benserade is in despair about it. Théobon does not choose to go, though she had a little bite too. The Queen, however, objects to her being in waiting till the issue of the adventure is known. Don't you think Ludre resembles Andromache? For my part, I see her fastened to the rock, and Treville coming, on a winged horse, to deliver her from the monster. "*Ah, Zeeusus! Madame de Grignan, vat a sing to pe trown, all naket, into te sea!*" †

* * * * Your brother is under the jurisdiction of Ninon. I cannot think it will do him much good. There are people to whom it does no good at all. She hurt his father. Heaven help him, say I! It is impossible for Christian people, or at least for such as would fain be Christian, to look on such disorders without concern. Ah, Bourdaloue! what divine truths you told us to-day about death! Madame de la Fayette heard him for the first time in her life, and was transported with admiration. She is enchanted with your remembrances. * * * * A scene took place yesterday at Mademoiselle's, which I enjoyed extremely. In comes Madame de Gèvres, full of her airs and graces. She looked as if she expected I should give her my post; but, 'faith, I owed her an affront for her behaviour the other day, so I didn't budge. Mademoiselle was in bed: Madame de Gèvres was therefore obliged to go lower down: no very pleasant thing, that! Mademoiselle calls for drink; somebody must present the napkin; Madame de Gèvres begins to draw off the glove from her skinny hand; I give a nudge to Madame d'Arpajon, who was above me; she understands me, draws off her own glove, and advancing a step with a very good grace, cuts short the Duchess, and takes and presents the napkin. The Duchess was quite confounded: she had made her way up, and got off her gloves, and all

* Great sinners, who had become great saints.

† '*Ah, Zesu! Madame de Grignan, l'étrange sose l'être zettée toute nue tans la mer.*' Madame de Ludre, by her pronunciation, was either a very affected speaker, or seems to have come from 'the borders.' Madame de Sévigné, by the tone of her narration, could hardly have believed there was any thing serious in the accident.

to see the napkin presented before her by Madame d'Arpajon. My dear, I'm a wicked creature; I was in a state of delight; and indeed what could have been better done? Would any one but Madame de Gèvres have thought of depriving Madame d'Arpajon of an honour which fell so naturally to her share, standing as she did by the bedside? It was as good as a cordial to Madame de Puisieux. Mademoiselle did not dare to lift up her eyes; and, as for myself, I had the most good-for-nothing face!

Had Madame de Gèvres seen the following passage in a letter of the 10th of June, in the same year, it might have tempted her to exclaim, 'Ah, you see what sort of people it is that treat me with malice!'—It must have found an echo in thousands of bosoms; and the conclusion of the extract is charming.

* * * 'My dear, I wish very much I could be religious. I plague La Mousse about it every day. I belong at present neither to God nor devil; and I find this condition very uncomfortable; though, between you and me, I think it the most natural in the world. One does not belong to the devil, because one fears God, and has at bottom a principle of religion; but then, on the other hand, one does not belong to God, because his laws appear hard, and self-denial is not pleasant. Hence the great number of the lukewarm, which does not surprise me at all; I enter perfectly into their reasons; only God, you know, hates them, and that must not be. But there lies the difficulty. Why must I torment you, however, with these endless rhapsodies? My dear child, *I ask your pardon*, as they say in these parts. I rattle on in your company, and forget every thing else in the pleasure of it. Don't make me any answer. Send me only news of your health, with a spice of what you feel at Grignan, that I may know you are happy; that is all. Love me. We have turned the phrase into ridicule; but it is natural, it is good.'

The Abbé de la Mousse here mentioned was a connexion of the Coulangeses, and was on a visit to Madame de Sévigné at her house in Brittany, reading poetry and romance. The weather was so rainy and cold, that we of this island are pleased to see one of her letters dated from her 'fireside' on the 24th of June. Pomenars, the criminal gentleman who was always afraid of losing his head, was one of her neighbours; and another was the before-mentioned Mademoiselle du Plessis, whom the daughter's aversion and her own absurdities conspired to render the butt of the mother. It is said of Pomenars, who was a marquis, that having been tried for uttering false money, and cleared of the charge, he paid the expenses of the action in the same coin. It must have been some very counteracting good quality, however, in addition to his animal spirits, that kept his friends in good heart with him; for Madame de Sévigné never mentions him,

but with an air of delight. He was, at this moment, under a charge of abduction; not, apparently, to any very great horror on the part of the ladies. Madame de Sévigné, however, tells her daughter that she talked to him about it very seriously, adding the jest, nevertheless, that the state of the dispute between him and his accuser was, that the latter wanted to 'have his head,' and Pomenars would not let him take it. 'The Marquis,' she says, in another letter, 'declined shaving till he knew to whom his head was to belong.' The last thing we remember of him is his undergoing a painful surgical operation; after which he rattled on as if nothing had happened. But then he had been the day before to Bourdaloue, to confess, for the first time during eight years. Here is the beginning of a letter, in which he and Du Plessis are brought delightfully together.

To Madame de Grignani.

'The Rocks, Sunday, 26th July, (1671.)

'You must know, that as I was sitting all alone in my chamber yesterday, intent upon a book, I saw the door opened by a tall lady-like woman, who was ready to choke herself with laughing. Behind her came a man, who laughed louder still, and the man was followed by a very well-shaped woman, who laughed also. As for me, I began to laugh before I knew who they were, or what had set them a-laughing; and though I was expecting Madame de Chaulnes to spend a day or two with me here, I looked a long time before I could think it was she. She it was, however; and with her she had brought Pomenars, who had put it in her head to surprise me. The fair *MurINETTE** was of the party; and Pomenars was in such excessive spirits that he would have gladdened melancholy itself. They fell to playing battledoor and shuttlecock—Madame de Chaulnes plays it like you; and then came a lunch, and then we took one of our nice little walks, and the talk was of you throughout. I told Pomenars how you took all his affairs to heart, and what relief you would experience had he nothing to answer to but the matter in hand; but that such repeated attacks on his innocence quite overwhelmed you. We kept up this joke till the long walk reminded us of the fall you got there one day, the thought of which made me as red as fire. We talked a long time of that, and then of the dialogue with the gypsies, and at last of Mademoiselle du Plessis, and the nonsensical stuff she uttered; and how, one day, having treated you with some of it, and her ugly face being close to yours, you made no more ado, but gave her such a box on the ear as staggered her; upon which I, to soften matters, exclaimed, "How rudely these young people do play!" and then turning to her mother, said, "Madam, do you know they were so wild this morning, they absolutely fought! Made-

* Mademoiselle de Murinais.

moiselle du Plessis provoked my daughter, and my daughter beat her: it was one of the merriest scenes in the world;" and with this turn Madame du Plessis was so delighted, that she expressed her satisfaction at seeing the young ladies so happy together. This trait of good-fellowship between you and Mademoiselle du Plessis, whom I lumped together to make the box on the ear go down, made my visitors die with laughter. Mademoiselle de Murinais, in particular, approved your proceeding mightily, and vows that the first time Du Plessis thrusts her nose in her face, as she always does when she speaks to any body, she will follow your example, and give her a good slap on the chaps. I expect them all to meet before long; Pomenars is to set the matter on foot; Mademoiselle is sure to fall in with it; a letter from Paris is to be produced, showing how the ladies there give boxes on the ears to one another, and this will sanction the custom in the provinces, and even make us desire them, in order to be in the fashion. In short, I never saw a man so mad as Pomenars: his spirits increase in the ratio of his criminalities; and, if he is charged with another, he will certainly die for joy.

These practical mystifications of poor Mademoiselle du Plessis are a little strong. They would assuredly not take place now-a-days in society equal to that of Madame de Sévigné; but ages profit by their predecessors, and the highest breeding of one often becomes but second-rate in the next. If any thing, however, could warrant such rough admission to the freedom of a superior circle, it was the coarse *platitudes* and affectations of an uncouth neighbour like this; probably of a family as vulgar as it was rich, and which had made its way into a society unfit for it. Mademoiselle du Plessis seems to have assumed all characters in turn, and to have suited none, except that of an avowed, yet incorrigible teller of fibs. Madame de Sévigné spoke to her plainly one day about these peccadilloes, and Mademoiselle cast down her eyes and said with an air of penitence, 'Ah, yes, Madam, it is very true; I am indeed the greatest liar in the world: I am very much obliged to you for telling me of it!' 'It was exactly,' says her reprover, 'like Tartuffe—quite in his tone; yes, brother, I am a miserable sinner, a vessel of iniquity.' Yet a week or two afterwards, giving an account of a family wedding-dinner, she said that the first course, for one day, included twelve hundred dishes. 'We all sate petrified,' says Madame de Sévigné. 'At length I took courage and said, "Consider a little, Mademoiselle, you must mean twelve, not twelve hundred. One sometimes has slips of the tongue." "Oh, no, Madam! it was twelve hundred, or eleven hundred, I am quite sure; I cannot say which, for fear of telling a falsehood, but one or the other I know it was;" and she repeated it twenty times, and would not bate us a single chicken. We found, upon calcula-

‘tion, that there must have been at least three hundred people to lard the fowls; that the dinner must have been served up in a great meadow, in tents pitched for the occasion; and that, supposing them only fifty, preparations must have been made a month beforehand.’

It is pleasant to bid adieu to Mademoiselle du Plessis, and breathe the air of truth, wit, and nature, in what has been justly called by the compiler of the work at the head of this article, one of ‘Madame de Sévigné’s most charming letters.* The crime of the fine gentleman servant who would not make hay, is set forth with admirable calmness and astonishment; and never before was the art of haymaking taught, or rather exemplified, in words so simple and so few. It is as if the pen itself had become a hay-fork, and tossed up a sample of the sweet grass. The pretended self-banter also, at the close, respecting long-winded narrations, is exquisite.

To M. de Coulanges.

‘*The Rocks, 22d July, (1671.)*

‘I write, my dear cousin, over and above the stipulated fortnight communications, to advertise you that you will soon have the honour of seeing Picard; and, as he is brother to the lacquey of Madame de Coulanges, I must tell you the reason why. You know that Madame the Duchess de Chaulnes is at Vitré: she expects the duke there, in ten or twelve days, with the States of Brittany.† Well, and what then? say you. I say, that the duchess is expecting the duke with all the states, and that meanwhile she is at Vitré all alone, dying with ennui. And what, return you, has this to do with Picard? Why, look;—she is dying with ennui, and I am her only consolation, and so you may readily conceive that I carry it with a high hand over Mademoiselles de Kerborgne and de Kerqueoisson. A pretty roundabout way of telling my story, I must confess; but it will bring us to the point. Well then, as I am her only consolation, it follows that, after I have been to see her, she will come to see me, when of course I shall wish her to find my garden in good order, and my walks in good order—those fine walks, of which you are so fond. Still you are at a loss to conceive whither they are leading you now. Attend then, if you please, to a little suggestion by the way. You are aware that haymaking is going forward? Well, I have no haymakers: I send into the neighbouring fields to press them into my service; there are none to be found; and so all my own people are summoned to make hay instead. But do you know what haymaking is? I will tell you. Haymaking is the prettiest thing in the world. You play at turning the grass over in a meadow; and as ‘soon as you know how to do that, you

* The original appears in the ‘*Lettres Choisies*,’ edited by Girault.

† He was Governor of the province.

know how to make hay. The whole house went merrily to the task, all but Picard: he said he would not go; that he was not engaged for such work; that it was none of his business; and that he would sooner betake himself to Paris. 'Faith! didn't I get angry? It was the hundredth disservice the silly fellow had done me: I saw he had neither heart nor zeal; in short, the measure of his offence was full. I took him at his word; was deaf as a rock to all entreaties in his behalf; and he has set off. It is fit that people should be treated as they deserve. If you see him, don't welcome him; don't protect him; and don't blame me. Only look upon him as, of all servants in the world, the one the least addicted to hay-making, and therefore the most unworthy of good treatment. This is the sum-total of the affair. As for me, I am fond of straight-forward histories, that contain not a word too much; that never go wandering about, and beginning again from remote points; and accordingly, I think I may say, without vanity, that I hereby present you with the model of an agreeable narration.'

In the course of the winter following this haymaking, Madame de Sévigné goes to Paris; and with the exception of an occasional visit to the house at Livry, to refresh herself with the spring-blossoms and the nightingales, remains there till July, when she visits her daughter in Provence, where she stayed upwards of a year, and then returned to the metropolis. It is not our intention to notice these particulars in future; but we mention them in passing, to give the reader an idea of the round of her life between her town and country houses, and the visits to Madame de Grignan, who sometimes came from Provence to her. In the country, she does nothing but read, write, and walk, and occasionally see her neighbours. In town, she visits friends, theatres, churches, nunneries, and the court; is now at the Coulangeses, now dining with Rochefoucauld, now paying her respects to some branch of royalty; and is delighted and delighting wherever she goes, except when she is weeping for her daughter's absence, or condoling with the family disasters resulting from campaigns. In the summer of 1672 was the famous passage of the Rhine, at which Rochefoucauld lost a son, whose death he bore with affecting patience. The once intriguing but now devout princess, the Duchess de Longueville, had the like misfortune, which she could not endure so well. Her grief nevertheless was very affecting too, and Madame de Sévigné's plain and passionate account of it has been justly admired. In general, at the court of Louis XIV. all was apparently ease, luxury, and delight, (with the exception of the jealousies of the courtiers and the squabbles of the mistresses;) but every now and then there is a campaign—and then all is glory, and finery, and lover's tears, when the warriors are setting out; and fright, and trepidation, and distracting suspense, when the news arrives of a bloody battle. The suspense is removed by

undoubted intelligence; and then, while some are in paroxysms of pride and rapture at escapes, and exploits, and lucky wounds, others are plunged into misery by deaths.

Extract from a letter to Madame de Grignan.

' You never saw Paris in such a state as it is now; every body is in tears, or fears to be so: poor Madame de Nogent is beside herself; Madame de Longueville, with her lamentations, cuts people to the heart. I have not seen her; but you may rely on what follows. * * * They sent to Port-Royal for M. Arnauld and Mademoiselle Vertus to break the news to her. The sight of the latter was sufficient. As soon as the Duchesse saw her—" Ah! Mademoiselle, how is my brother?" (the great Condé.) She did not dare to ask further. " Madame, his wound is going on well; there has been a battle." " And my son?" No answer. " Ah! Mademoiselle, my son, my dear child—answer me—is he dead?" " Madame, I have not words to answer you." " Ah! my dear son; did he die instantly? had he not one little moment? Oh! great God, what a sacrifice!" And with that she fell upon her bed; and all which could express the most terrible anguish, convulsions, and faintings, *and a mortal silence*, and stifled cries, and the bitterest tears, and hands clasped towards heaven, and complaints the most tender and heart-rending—all this did she go through. She sees a few friends, and keeps herself barely alive, in submission to God's will; but has no rest; and her health, which was bad already, is visibly worse. For my part, I cannot help wishing her dead outright, not conceiving it possible that she can survive such a loss.'

We have taken no notice of the strange death of Vatel, steward to the Prince de Condé, who killed himself out of a point of honour, because a dinner had not been served up to his satisfaction. It is a very curious relation, but more characteristic of the poor man than of the writer. For a like reason, we omit the interesting though horrible accounts of Brinvilliers and La Voisin, the poisoners. But we cannot help giving a tragedy told in a few words, both because Madame de Sévigné was herself highly struck with it, and for another reason which will appear in a note.

' The other day, on his coming into a ball-room, a gentleman of Brittany was assassinated by two men in women's clothes. One held him while the other deliberately struck a poniard to his heart. Little Harouïs, who was there, was shocked at beholding this person, whom he knew well, stretched out upon the ground, *full-dressed, bloody, and dead*. His account (adds Madame de Sévigné) forcibly struck my imagination.*'

* We have taken the words in Italics from the version of the letters published in 1765, often a very meritorious one, probably ' by various

The following letter contains a most graphic description of the French court, in all its voluptuous gaiety; and the glimpses which it furnishes of the actors on the brilliant scene, from the king and the favourite to Dangeau, the skilful gamester—cool, collected, and calculating—amidst the gallant prattle around him, give to its details a degree of life and animation not to be surpassed:—

To Madame de Grignan.

' Paris, Wednesday, 29th July, (1676.)

' We have a change of the scene here, which will gratify you as much as it does all the world. I was at Versailles last Saturday with the Villarses. You know the Queen's toilet, the mass, and the dinner? Well, there is no need any longer of suffocating ourselves in the crowd to get a glimpse of their majesties at table. At three the King, the Queen, Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle, and every thing else which is royal, together with Madame de Montespan and train, and all the courtiers, and all the ladies—all, in short, which constitutes the court of France—is assembled in that beautiful apartment of the king's, which you remember. All is furnished divinely, all is magnificent. Such a thing as heat is unknown; you pass from one place to another without the slightest pressure. A game at *reversis* gives the company a form and a settlement. The King and Madame de Montespan keep a bank together: different tables are occupied by Monsieur, the Queen, and Madame de Soubise, Dangeau* and party, Langlée and party:—every where you see heaps of *louis d'ors*; they have no other counters. I saw Dangeau play, and thought what fools we all were beside him. He dreams of nothing but what concerns the game; he wins where others lose; he neglects nothing, profits by every thing, never has his attention diverted; in short, his science bids defiance to chance. Two hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand crowns in a month—these are the pretty

hands,' some passages exhibiting an ignorance of the commonest terms hardly possible to be reconciled with a knowledge of the rest. The three special words above quoted are admirable, and convey a truer sense of the original than would have been attained by one more literal. The passage in Madame de Sévigné is *tout étendu, tout chaud, tout sanglant, tout habillé, tout mort*. We take the opportunity of observing that some of the directly comic as well as tragic relations in this version are rendered with great gusto; though it could not save us the necessity of attempting a new one—owing to the want of a certain life in the general tone, as well as an occasional obsolescence of phraseology, somewhat startling to observe in so short a lapse of time as seventy-seven years. There is another version of a later date, and containing more letters; but though not destitute of pretensions of its own, it is upon the whole much inferior to the older one, of which it mainly appears to be a copy.

* The writer of the well-known Court-Diary.

memorandums he puts down in his pocket-book. He was kind enough to say that I was partners with him, so that I got an excellent seat. I made my obeisance to the King, as you told me; and he returned it, as if I had been young and handsome. The Queen talked as long to me about my illness, as if it had been a lying-in. The Duke said a thousand kind things without minding a word he uttered. Marshal de Logres attacked me in the name of the Chevalier de Grignan; in short, *tutti quanti* (the whole company). You know what it is to get a word from every body you meet. Madame de Montespan talked to me of Bourbon, and asked me how I liked Vichi, and whether the place did me good. She said that Bourbon, instead of curing a pain in one of her knees, did mischief to both. Her size is reduced by a good half, and yet her complexion, her eyes, and her lips, are as fine as ever. She was dressed all in French point, her hair in a thousand ringlets, the two side ones hanging low on her cheeks, black ribbons on her head, pearls (the same that belonged to Madame de l'Hôpital), the loveliest diamond earrings, three or four bodkins—nothing else on the head; in short, a triumphant beauty, worthy the admiration of all the foreign ambassadors. She was accused of preventing the whole French nation from seeing the King; she has restored him, you see, to their eyes; and you cannot conceive the joy it has given all the world, and the splendour it has thrown upon the court. This charming confusion, without confusion, of all which is the most select, continues from three till six. If couriers arrive, the King retires a moment to read the despatches, and returns. There is always some music going on to which he listens, and which has an excellent effect. He talks with such of the ladies as are accustomed to enjoy that honour. In short, they leave play at six; there is no trouble of counting, for there is no sort of counters; the pools consist of at least five, perhaps six or seven hundred louis; the bigger ones of a thousand or twelve hundred. At first each person pools twenty, which is a hundred; and the dealer afterwards pools ten. The person who holds the knave is entitled to four louis; they pass; and when they play before the pool is taken, they forfeit sixteen, which teaches them not to play out of turn. Talking is incessantly going on, and there is no end of *hearts*. How many hearts have you? I have two, I have three, I have one, I have four; he has only three then, he has only four;—and Dangeau is delighted with all this chatter: he sees through the game—he draws his conclusions—he discovers which is the person he wants; truly he is your only man for holding the cards. At six, the carriages are at the door. The King is in one of them with Madame de Montespan, Monsieur and Madame de Thianges, and honest d'Heudicourt in a fool's paradise on the stool. You know how these open carriages are made; they do not sit face to face, but all looking the same way. The Queen occupies another with the Princess; and the rest come flocking after as it may happen. There are then gondolas on the canal, and music; and at ten they come back, and then there is a play; and twelve strikes, and they go to supper; and thus rolls round the Saturday. If I were to tell you how often you were asked after—how many questions were put to me without waiting for answers—how often I neglected to answer—how little they cared, and how much less I did—you would

see the *iniqua corte* (wicked court) before you in all its perfection. However, it never was so pleasant before, and every body wishes it may last.'

Not a word of the *morale* of the spectacle! Madame de Sévigné, who had one of the correctest reputations in France, wishes even it may last. *Iniqua corte* is a mere jesting phrase, applied to any court. Montespan was a friend of the family, though it knew Maintenon also, who was then preparing the downfall of the favourite. The latter, meantime, was a sort of vice-queen, reigning over the real one. When she journeyed, it was with a train of forty people; governors of provinces offered to meet her with addresses; and intendants presented her with boats like those of Cleopatra, painted and gilt, luxurious with crimson damask, and streaming with the colours of France and Navarre. Louis was such a god at that time—he shook his 'ambrosial curls' over so veritable an Olympus, where his praises were hymned by loving goddesses, consenting heroes, and incense-bearing priests—that if marriage had been a less consecrated institution in the Catholic Church, and the Jesuits with their accommodating philosophy would have stood by him, one is almost tempted to believe he might have crowned half-a-dozen queens at a time, and made the French pulpits hold forth with Milton on the merits of the patriarchal polygamies.

But, to say the truth, except when she chose to be in the humour for it, great part of Madame de Sévigné's enjoyment, wherever she was, looked as little to the *morale* of the thing as need be. It arose from her powers of discernment and description. No matter what kind of scene she beheld, whether exalted or humble, brilliant or gloomy, crowded or solitary, her sensibility turned all to account. She saw well for herself; and she knew, that what she saw she should enjoy over again, in telling it to her daughter. In the autumn of next year she is in the country, and pays a visit to an iron-foundery, where they made anchors. The scene is equally well felt with that at court. It is as good, in its way, as the blacksmith's in Spenser's 'House of Care,' where the sound was heard

" Of many iron hammers, beating rank,
And answering their weary turns around ;"

and where the visiter is so glad to get away from the giant and his 'strong grooms,' all over smoke and horror.

Extract of a Letter to Madame de Grignan.

'Friday, 1st October, (1677.)

* * * * Yesterday evening at Cone, we descended into a veritable hell, the true forges of Vulcan. Eight or ten cyclopes were at work, forging,

not arms for Æneas, but anchors for ships. You never saw strokes redoubled so justly, nor with so admirable a cadence. We stood in the middle of four furnaces, and the demons came passing about us, all melting in sweat, with pale faces, wild-staring eyes, savage mustaches, and hair long and black; a sight enough to frighten less well-bred folks than ourselves. As to me, I could not comprehend the possibility of refusing any thing which these gentlemen, in their hell, might have chosen to exact. We got out at last, by the help of a shower of silver, with which we took care to refresh their souls and facilitate our exit.'

This description is immediately followed by one as lively, of another sort.

'We had a taste, the evening before, at Nevers, of the most daring race you ever beheld. Four fair ladies, in a carriage, having seen us pass them in ours, had such a desire to behold our faces a second time, that they must needs get before us again, on a causeway made only for one coach. My dear, their coachman brushed our very whiskers; it is a mercy they were not pitched into the river; we all cried out 'for God's sake;' they, for their parts, were dying with laughter; and they kept galloping on *above* us and before us, in so tremendous and unaccountable a manner, that we have not got rid of the fright to this moment.'

There is a little repetition in the following, because truth required it; otherwise it is all as good as new, fresh from the same mint that throws forth every thing at a heat—whether anchors, or diamond ear-rings, or a coach in a gallop.

'Paris, 29th November, (1679.)

* * * 'I have been to this wedding of Madame de Louvois. How shall I describe it? Magnificence, illuminations, all France, dresses all gold and brocade, jewels, braziers full of fire, and stands full of flowers, confusions of carriages, cries out of doors, flambeaus, pushings back, people knocked up;—in short, a whirlwind, a distraction; questions without answers, compliments without knowing what is said, civilities without knowing who is spoken to, feet entangled in trains. From the middle of all this, issue enquiries after your health; which, not being answered as quick as lightning, the enquirers pass on, contented to remain in the state of ignorance and indifference in which they were made. *O vanity of vanities!* Pretty little De Mouchy has had the small-pox. *O vanity, et cetera!*'

In Boswell's 'Life of Johnson' is a reference by the great and gloomy moralist to a passage in Madame de Sévigné, in which she speaks of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent; but the conclusion he draws from it as to her opinion of life in general, is worthy of the critic who 'never read books 'through.' The momentary effusion of spleen is contradicted by the whole correspondence. She occasionally vents her dissatisfaction at a rainy day, or the perplexity produced in her

mind by a sermon; and when her tears begin flowing for a pain in her daughter's little finger, it is certainly no easy matter to stop them; but there was a luxury at the heart of this woe. Her ordinary notions of life were no more like Johnson's, than rose-colour is like black, or health like disease. She repeatedly proclaims, and almost always shows, her delight in existence; and has disputes with her daughter, in which she laments that she does not possess the same turn of mind. There is a passage, we grant, on the subject of old age, which contains a reflection similar to the one alluded to by Johnson, and which has been deservedly admired for its force and honesty. But even in this passage, the germ of the thought was suggested by the melancholy of another person, not by her own. Madame de la Fayette had written her a letter urging her to retrieve her affairs, and secure her health, by accepting some money from her friends, and quitting the Rocks for Paris;—offers which, however handsomely meant, she declined with many thanks, and not a little secret indignation; for she was very jealous of her independence. In the course of this letter, Madame de la Fayette, who herself was irritable with disease, and who did not write it in a style much calculated to prevent the uneasiness it caused, made abrupt use of the words, 'You are old.' The little hard sentence came like a blow upon the lively, elderly lady. She did not like it at all; and thus wrote of it to her daughter:—

'So you were struck with the expression of Madame de la Fayette, blended with so much friendship. 'Twas a truth, I own, which I ought to have borne in mind; and yet I must confess it astonished me, for I do not yet perceive in myself any such decay. Nevertheless I cannot help making many reflections and calculations, and I find the conditions of life hard enough. It seems to me that I have been dragged, against my will, to the fatal period when old age must be endured; I see it; I have come to it; and I would fain, if I could help it, not go any further; not advance a step more in the road of infirmities, of pains, of losses of memory, of *disfigurements* ready to do me outrage; and I hear a voice which says, You must go on in spite of yourself; or, if you will not go on, you must die;—and this is another extremity, from which nature revolts. Such is the lot, however, of all who advance beyond middle life. What is their resource? To think of the will of God and of the universal law; and so restore reason to its place, and be patient. Be you then patient, accordingly, my dear child, and let not your affections often into such tears as reason must condemn.'

The whole heart and good sense of humanity seem to speak in passages like these, equally removed from the frights of the superstitious, and the flimsiness or falsehood of levity. The ordinary comfort and good prospects of Madame de Sévigné's existence, made her write with double force on these graver sub-

jects, when they presented themselves to her mind. So, in her famous notice of the death of Louvois the minister—never, in a few words, were past ascendancy and sudden nothingness more impressively contrasted.

‘ I am so astonished at the news of the sudden death of M. de Louvois, that I am at a loss how to speak of it. Dead, however, he is, this great minister, this potent being, who occupied so great a place; whose *me*, (*le moi*), as M. Nicole says, had so wide a dominion; who was the centre of so many orbs. What affairs had he not to manage! what designs, what projects, what secrets! what interests to unravel, what wars to undertake, what intrigues, what noble games at chess to play and to direct! Ah! my God, give me a little time: I want to give check to the Duke of Savoy—checkmate to the Prince of Orange. No, no, you shall not have a moment—not a single moment. Are events like these to be talked of? Not they. We must reflect upon them in our closets.’

This is part of a letter to her cousin Coulanges, written in the year 1691. Five years afterwards she died.

The two English writers who have shown the greatest admiration of Madame de Sévigné, are Horace Walpole and Sir James Mackintosh. The enthusiasm of Walpole, who was himself a distinguished letter-writer and wit, is mixed up with a good deal of self-love. He bows to his own image in the mirror beside her: During one of his excursions to Paris, he visits the Hôtel de Carnavalet and the house at Livry; and has thus described his impressions, after his half-good half-affected fashion:—

‘ Madame de Chabot I called on last night. She was not at home, but the Hôtel de Carnavalet was; and I stopped on purpose to say an Ave-Maria before it.’ (This pun is suggested by one in Busy-Rabutin.) ‘ It is a very singular building, not at all in the French style, and looks like an *ex voto*, raised to her honour by some of her foreign votaries. I don’t think her half-honoured enough in her own country.’*

His visit to Livry is recorded in a letter to his friend Montague:—

‘ One must be just to all the world. Madame Roland, I find, has been in the country, and at Versailles, and was so obliging as to call on me this morning; but I was so disobliging as not to be awake. I was dreaming dreams; in short, I had dined at Livry; yes, yes, at Livry, with a Langlade and De la Rochefoucauld. The abbey is now possessed by an Abbé de Malherbe, with whom I am acquainted, and who had given me a general invitation. I put it off to the last moment, that the *bois* and *allées* might set off the scene a little, and contribute to the vision; but it did not want it. Livry is situate in the Forêt de Bondi,

* *Letters, &c.* Vol. V., p. 74, Edit. 1840.

very agreeably on a flat, but with hills near it, and in prospect. There is a great air of simplicity and *rural* about it, more regular than our taste, but with an old-fashioned tranquillity, and nothing of *colifichet*, (frippery.) Not a tree exists that remembers the charming woman, because in this country an old tree is a traitor, and forfeits his head to the crown; but the plantations are not young, and might very well be as they were in her time. The Abbé's house is decent and snug; a few paces from it is the sacred pavilion built for Madame de Sévigné by her uncle, and much as it was in her day; a small saloon below for dinner, then an arcade, but the niches now closed, and painted in fresco with medallions of her, the Grignan, the Fayette, and the Rochefoucauld. Above, a handsome large room, with a chimney-piece in the best taste of Louis the Fourteenth's time; a Holy Family in good relief over it, and the cipher of her uncle Coulanges; a neat little bedchamber within, and two or three clean little chambers over them. On one side of the garden, leading to the great road, is a little bridge of wood, on which the dear woman used to wait for the courier that brought her daughter's letters. Judge with what veneration and satisfaction I set my foot upon it! If you will come to France with me next year, we will go and sacrifice on that sacred spot together.—(Id. p. 142.)

Sir James Mackintosh became intimate with the letters of Madame de Sévigné during his voyage from India, and has left some remarks upon them in the Diary published in his Life.

'The great charm,' he says, 'of her character seems to me a *natural* virtue. In what she does, as well as in what she says, she is unforced and unstudied; nobody, I think, had so much morality without constraint, and played so much with amiable feelings without falling into vice. Her ingenious, lively, social disposition, gave the direction to her mental power. She has so filled my heart with affectionate interest in her as a living friend, that I can scarcely bring myself to think of her as a writer, or as having a style; but she has become a celebrated, perhaps an immortal writer, without expecting it: she is the only classical writer who never conceived the possibility of acquiring fame. Without a great force of style, she could not have communicated those feelings. In what does that talent consist? It seems mainly to consist in the power of working bold metaphors, and unexpected turns of expression, out of the most familiar part of conversational language.*'

Sir James proceeds to give an interesting analysis of this kind of style, and the way in which it obtains ascendancy in the most polished circles; and all that he says of it is very true. But it seems to us, that the main secret of the '*charm*' of Madame de Sévigné is to be found neither in her '*natural* '*virtue*,' nor in the style in which it expressed itself, but in something which interests us still more for our own sakes than the

* *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon. Sir James Mackintosh.* Sec. Edit., Vol. II., p. 217.

writer's, and which instinctively compelled her to adopt that style as its natural language. We doubt extremely, in the first place, whether any great 'charm' is ever felt in her virtue, natural or otherwise, however it may be respected. Readers are glad, certainly, that the correctness of her reputation enabled her to write with so much gaiety and boldness; and perhaps (without at all taking for granted what Bussy-Rabutin intimates about secret lovers) it gives a zest to certain freedoms in her conversation, which are by no means rare; for she was any thing but a prude. We are not sure that her character for personal correctness does not sometimes produce even an awkward impression, in connexion with her relations to the court and the mistresses; though the manners of the day, and her superiority to sermonizing and hypocrisy, relieve it from one of a more painful nature. Certain we are, however, that we should have liked her still better, had she manifested a power to love somebody else besides her children; had she married again, for instance, instead of passing a long widowhood from her five-and-twentieth year, not, assuredly, out of devotion to her husband's memory. Such a marriage, we think, would have been quite as natural as any virtue she possessed. The only mention of her husband that we recollect in all her correspondence, with the exception of the allusion to Ninon, is in the following date of a letter:—

'Paris, Friday Feb. 5, 1672. This day thousand years I was married.'

We do not accuse her of heartlessness. We believe she had a very good heart. Probably, she liked to be her own mistress; but this does not quite explain the matter in so loving a person. There were people in her own time who doubted the love for her daughter—surely with great want of justice. But natural as that virtue was, and delightful as it is to see it, was the *excess* of it quite so natural? or does a thorough intimacy with the letters confirm our belief in that excess? It does not. The love was real and great; but the secret of what appears to be its extravagance is, perhaps, to be found in the love of power; or, not to speak harshly, in the inability of a fond mother to leave off her habits of guidance and dictation, and the sense of her importance to her child. Hence a fidgetiness on one side, which was too much allied to exaction and self-will, and a proportionate tendency to ill-concealed, and at last open impatience on the other. The demand for letters was not only incessant and avowed; it was to be met with as zealous a desire, on the daughter's part, to supply them. If little is written, pray write more: if much, don't write so much for fear of headaches. If the headaches are complained of, what misery! if not complained of, something worse and more cruel has taken place—it is a con-

cealment. Friends must take care how they speak of the daughter as too well and happy. The mother then brings to our mind the Falkland of Sheridan, and expresses her disgust at these 'perfect-health folks.' Even lovers tire under such *surveillance*; and as affections between mother and child, however beautiful, are not, in the nature of things, of a like measure of reciprocity, a similar result would have been looked for by the discerning eyes of Madame de Sévigné, had the case been any other than her own. But the tears of self-love mingle with those of love, and blind the kindest natures to the difference. It is too certain, or rather it is a fact which reduces the love to a good honest natural size, and therefore ought not, so far, to be lamented, that this fond mother and daughter, fond though they were, jangled sometimes, like their inferiors, both when absent and present, leaving nevertheless a large measure of affection to diffuse itself in joy and comfort over the rest of their intercourse. It is a common case, and we like neither of them a jot the less for it. We may only be allowed to repeat our wish (as Madame de Grignan must often have done) that the 'dear Marie de Rabutin,' as Sir James Mackintosh calls her, had had a second husband, to divert some of the responsibilities of affection from her daughter's head. Let us recollect, after all, that we should not have heard of the distress but for the affection; that millions who might think fit to throw stones at it, would in reality have no right to throw a pebble; and that the wit which has rendered it immortal, is beautiful for every species of truth, but this single deficiency in self-knowledge.

That is the great charm of Madame de Sévigné—*truth*. Truth, wit, and animal spirits compose the secret of her delightfulness; but truth above all, for it is that which shows all the rest to be true. If she had not more natural virtues than most other good people, she had more natural *manners*; and the universality of her taste, and the vivacity of her spirits, giving her the widest range of enjoyment, she expressed herself naturally on all subjects, and did not disdain the simplest and most familiar phraseology, when the truth required it. Familiarities of style, taken by themselves, have been common more or less to all wits, from the days of Aristophanes to those of Byron; and, in general, so have animal spirits. Rabelais was full of both. The followers of Pulci and Berni, in Italy, abound in them. What distinguishes Madame de Sévigné is, first, that she was a woman so writing, which till her time had been a thing unknown, and has not been since witnessed in any such charming degree; and second, and above all, that she writes 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;' never giving us falsehood of any kind, not even a single false metaphor, or only half-

true simile or description; nor writing for any purpose on earth, but to say what she felt, and please those who could feel with her. If we consider how few writers there are, even among the best, to whom this praise, in its integrity, can apply, we shall be struck, perhaps, with a little surprise and sorrow for the craft of authors in general; but certainly with double admiration for Madame de Sévigné. We do not mean to say that she is always right in opinion, or that she had no party or conventional feelings. She entertained, for many years, some strong prejudices. She was bred up in so exclusive an admiration for the poetry of Corneille, that she thought Racine would go out of fashion. Her loyalty made her astonished to find that Louis was not invincible; and her connexion with the Count de Grignan, who was employed in the *dragonades* against the Huguenots, led her but negatively to disapprove those inhuman absurdities. But these were accidents of friendship or education: her understanding outlived them; nor did they hinder her, meantime, from describing truthfully what she felt, and from being right as well as true in nine-tenths of it all. Her sincerity made even her errors a part of her truth. She never pretended to be above what she felt; never assumed a profound knowledge; never disguised an ignorance. Her mirth, and her descriptions, may sometimes appear exaggerated; but the spirit of truth, not of contradiction, is in them; and excess in such cases is not falsehood, but enjoyment—not the wine adulterated, but the cup running over. All her wit is healthy; all its images entire and applicable throughout—not palsy-stricken with irrelevance; not forced in, and then found wanting, like Walpole's conceit about the trees, in the passage above quoted. Madame de Sévigné never wrote such a passage in her life. All her lightest and most fanciful images, all her most daring expressions, have the strictest propriety, the most genuine feeling, a home in the heart of truth;—as when, for example, she says, amidst continual feasting, that she is 'fished for want of hunger;' that there were no 'interlineations' in the conversation of a lady who spoke from the heart; that she went to vespers one evening out of pure opposition, which taught her to comprehend the 'sacred obstinacy of martyrdom;' that she did not keep a 'philosopher's shop;' that it is difficult for people in trouble to 'bear thunder-claps of bliss in others.' It is the same from the first letter we have quoted to the last; from the proud and merry boasting of the young mother with a boy, to the candid shudder about the approach of old age, and the refusal of death to grant a moment to the dying statesman—'no, not a single moment.' She loved nature and truth without misgiving; and nature and truth loved her in return, and have crowned her with glory and honour.

ART. VII.—*The Biographical Dictionary of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.* 8vo. Vol. I. Part I. London: 1842.

ALTHOUGH it is not our habit to notice any part of a new publication until the undertaking, if it consist of successive volumes, is completed, we think it a duty not to pass unnoticed the first step which the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* has taken towards adequately supplying the want long felt in English literature, of a carefully prepared Universal Biography; because we consider this to be a work of paramount usefulness, and such as, in all probability, only an extensive Association could undertake. The design reflects the highest credit upon those who direct the concerns of the Body; and if it is honestly completed, and in a style corresponding to the sample before us, it will carry the name of the undertakers with merited honour to every quarter of the lettered world. That it will, at any rate, be *completed*, the fact of its being set on foot by such a Society, may be taken as a sufficient guarantee; and this is a circumstance of the utmost importance to the public, as it does away all the unpleasant apprehensions that must attend so extensive a publication, if commenced by one or a few individuals. It is on this account particularly that we now notice it, in order that it may have all the publicity, and, in as far as the design is concerned, all the recommendation that this Journal can afford it.

Down to the latter part of the seventeenth century, biographical works were confined to particular classes; the most elaborate of them relating to Ecclesiastics. Thus the *Acta Sanctorum Omnium*, written by Flemish Jesuits, and of which the first part appeared at Antwerp in 1643, extends to no less than fifty-three folio volumes; and Tillemont's *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire Ecclesiastique des six premiers Siècles de l'Eglise*, published at Paris in 1693, to sixteen quarto volumes.

Nor has English literature been altogether deficient in biographical works, limited to particular objects. Of these, the widest in its range is the *Biographia Britannica*, or the lives of 'the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland from the earliest ages to the present time.' The first edition was completed in five volumes folio, in 1766; and about twelve years afterwards, Dr Andrew Kippis, with the aid of Lord Hardwicke, (the author of the *Athenian Letters*,) Lord Hailes, Dr Percy, Bishop of Dromore, Dr Douglas, Bishop of

Salisbury, Sir William Blackstone, and other eminent persons, undertook a new edition, which was carried down to the letter F, but no further. The loss to our historical literature, by the failure of this greatly improved and extended edition, was considerable.

It was in the year 1673 that Moréri's *Grand Dictionnaire, Historique et Critique*, a work mainly biographical, appeared; and it was extended in twenty subsequent editions during the succeeding eighty years to ten times its original bulk. Bayle's *Dictionnaire, Historique et Critique*, so justly celebrated, was at first intended only as a supplement to Moréri: it is almost entirely biographical, and the last edition of it extends to seventeen octavo volumes. Of both Moréri and Bayle, translations or abridgements had been published in England before the middle of the last century; and both were incorporated, with many additions, in the well-known 'General Historical Dictionary,' compiled by Dr Birch and others, and published in ten volumes folio.

At length there appeared in France, under the title of *Biographie Universelle*, a biographical dictionary aiming at universality, and aided by the literary contributions of the most distinguished writers in France, in fifty-two octavo volumes, completed in 1828. Since that time a supplement has been begun, of which twenty volumes have already appeared. Although unequal in the merit of its articles—an evil unavoidable in works of great extent by various authors—and although deficient in information concerning the obscurer persons whose lives one especially desires to find treated in a biographical dictionary, on account of the difficulty of finding elsewhere information concerning them, the *Biographie Universelle* is a work of which France has just reason to be proud—whether on account of the greatness of the undertaking, or the manner in which it has been executed.

We are reluctant to turn from this monument of the learning, talents, and assiduity of our neighbours, to the only corresponding publication which we can mention in our own language—namely, 'Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary,' completed in 1817, after a hurried publication of only five years, in thirty-two octavo volumes—a bulk into which it had grown from its original size in 1761-7, when, under the name of the 'English General Biographical Dictionary,' it was published in twelve volumes.

Chalmers's compilation contains many lives valuable for their accuracy and their learning; but these were chiefly transferred from other works, particularly that on which his own was built; for the new contributions, though not invariably bad, are not such

as can satisfy either the learned or the general reader. They often evince a narrow and intolerant spirit, and have, in a word, no authority.

Far superior, in point of ability and execution, was a work which, though by a few years earlier, we mention after that of Chalmers, because not in its plan *universal*. We here refer to the work conducted by Dr John Aikin, and published under the title of 'General Biography, or Lives, critical and historical, of the most eminent persons of all ages, countries, conditions, and professions, arranged according to alphabetical order.' The Rev. Dr William Enfield, the learned and skilful abridger of Brucker's 'History of Philosophy,' had been originally associated in the editorship, but he died at an early period of the progress of the work; and most and the best of the lives were written by the surviving editor. But a great many, of very considerable ability, though perhaps of less elegance, were contributed by various other writers; particularly the Rev. Thomas Morgan, Mr Nicolson, and Mr William Johnston. This work, which is by some thought to be a little tinged by sectarian prejudices, extended to eight quarto volumes; but these unfortunately did not complete it, by exhausting the alphabet, as the volume last published closes with the life of Samuel, the Hebrew judge and prophet. The first of these volumes appeared in the year 1799, the eighth in 1813.

These meagre notices are not introduced certainly as a completed piece of literary history, but merely as helping to show the magnitude of that *desideratum* in our literature which the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (never perhaps so well deserving the title) has undertaken to supply. It may now be expected that we should say a word or two in regard to that commencing portion of the undertaking here presented to us.

It is, notwithstanding, scarcely possible, and it would, in fact, be extremely unsatisfactory, to select, in this half volume, any particular lives calculated to serve as samples of the whole. The space occupied by any one memoir, in a Biographical Dictionary which aims at universality and completeness, ought to be so small as to admit little of that discursiveness and dissertation which often destroys all proportion among the articles of the *Biographie Universelle*; and if we here found long and elaborate lives, we should fear that they must extend the dictionary to an inconvenient bulk, or that to them must be sacrificed lives, without which it would have no claim to completeness. The lives, however, of Abelard, Pope Adrian, Sir Ralph Abercromby, the late Mr Abernethy, and President Adams, may be mentioned, among many others, as equally interesting by their fulness and

instructive by their accuracy. Among other peculiar recommendations which the practised enquirer will discover, may be mentioned the introduction of many lives on which little or no information is to be obtained elsewhere—as the oriental, and particularly the Arabic articles, the Hebrew and the Scriptural articles. The freedom from all party and sectarian bias, is a merit of a far higher order, here easily to be discerned; thus furnishing a reasonable and strong presumption that the work will, throughout, possess this grand historical requisite.

One part of the Society's plan deserves peculiar commendation, on account both of its usefulness to the student, and of the security which it affords, that the authors have resorted to the best sources for their information—we mean the ample and exact list of authorities at the foot of each article. Although the name of the writer of a life is annexed to it, nothing can be less satisfactory to the reader than to find a number of facts related, without any means of ascertaining the truth within the author's reach; and without any indication of the sources to which an inquisitive reader may wish to resort for further knowledge. The want of this is a cardinal defect in the *Biographie Universelle*, as well as in Chalmers. Some of that extensive selection of lives contained in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, furnish highly commendable examples of this great recommendation; whilst others, particularly those contributed to that work by the late Dr Thomas Young—illustrious both as a man of Science and of Letters—may help to point out another most useful requisite, that of carefully indicating every acknowledged piece of an author, *however small*, and whether published separately, or in Transactions and Journals.

The greatest difficulty which the learned editor of this Dictionary (Professor Long) will have to encounter, is perhaps the acquiring of accurate and impartial information concerning persons who have lived in, or near our own times. In the lives of such persons, there will, too, be a perpetual tendency to give an undue extension, besides the greater danger of running into unfair censure or panegyric. On these tendencies, the eye of the Editor must be vigilantly fixed, and his authority to repress vigorously exercised. The lives of Lord Chief-Justice Abbot, of his namesake the Speaker, of the ingenious and accomplished architects Robert and James Adam, and of their amiable and venerable kinsman the Lord Chief Commissioner of the Scottish Jury Court, may be pointed out as laudably avoiding these faults.

The great importance of this undertaking we have already adverted to; and it is one which in a peculiar manner recom-

mends it to this Society; as there can be no more effectual means devised of diffusing knowledge, in an agreeable form, in every department of human exertion.

The expediency of a numerous Association undertaking such a work has also been already stated. Not only must it occasion a heavy temporary loss, of which no individual can be expected to run the risk; but the powers of inspection, and of correction, possessed by fifty or sixty persons, of various habits of thinking and kinds of information, give the public the best chance of truth being pursued and error avoided. Having thus hailed, with a hearty welcome, the appearance of a work which we had long wished, rather than hoped to see commenced by competent undertakers, we shall not fail to keep an eye upon its progress; and to point out any failures or backslidings that may appear to be departures from its design and spirit, and likely to interfere with the objects of its enlightened promoters.

ART. VIII.—1. *Financial Statement of Sir Robert Peel, made 11th March 1842.* London, 1842.

2. *Speech of Charles Wood, Esq., M.P., on the Duty on Foreign Wool.* 1842.

3. *Speeches of Viscount Palmerston on Wednesday 10th May, and 21st July 1842.* Ridgways, 1842.

POLITICAL and party triumphs differ as much in principle as in degree. By some, the mere possession of office, and the personal advantages either enjoyed or expected, are considered a party triumph. This is but low selfishness, however it may assume the disguise of public spirit. To others, party success is understood to represent the overthrow of a political opponent, and the acquisition of power by a friend. This, although raised above selfishness, is yet below true patriotism. It is the glory of the strife, and the exultation of victory:—*la gloria maggior dopo il periglio*. It resembles rather the reward ‘reaped in the iron harvests of the field,’ than the nobler crown which bears the inscription *ob cives servatos*. A higher and a nobler triumph is that, of which the accession of Lord Grey to power, in November 1830, affords the most brilliant example. On that occasion the change of the government was secondary to the alteration of policy; and the success of the Whigs was forgotten in the success of that cause which adopted as its principles Reform, Peace, and Retrenchment;—principles carried into effect by Lord Grey in every act of his administration. In a case like this, party

triumph is exalted, yet the feelings it excites are not unmixed. It is impossible to forget, that the power which is used for the benefit of others is yet possessed by ourselves. Pre-eminence, admitted superiority over the fallen enemy, are all claimed by the victorious party; and the success of a good measure is not the less felt, when it is announced amidst the exulting cheers following a triumphant division. In each of the cases we have described, selfish feeling and personal motives may, and at times must enter; and these, like the alloy spoken of by Lord Bacon, though making the metal of party work better, yet debase it.

To render party triumph pure, it should be separated from all these grosser substances. If reduced to a triumph of principle only—if the success attained is that of sound opinion, if the benefits we receive are gained by us as members of the community and not as members of a party, if they are shared with all our fellow-citizens, if their ultimate tendency is to benefit all our fellow-men, and if freed from all the biases of gratified ambition—it appears to us, that in this case political success partakes of the nature of a moral triumph; and that it is of all triumphs the most exalted and the most enduring. Nor is it true that, in assigning this superiority to the success of party principles, as distinguished from the possession of political power, there is any over-refinement of doctrine. Our political affection is not a mere Platonism. In reality, we shall embrace the Juno, and not the cloud; for we confidently believe that a party giving those generous impulses to their country, which practically advance the cause of liberty, knowledge, civilization, and truth, will receive, as they deserve, from their contemporaries, and still more certainly from posterity, the reward of fame and gratitude; whilst those who become the passive and frequently the reluctant slaves of circumstances—men who change their course while they adhere to their opinions—may, by dexterous shiftings of the sail and trimming of the ballast, keep a crazy boat afloat, or preserve a discontented crew from open mutiny; but must lessen, if they do not forfeit, their claim on the respect and confidence of those fellow-men in whose sight they are acting, and for whose benefit they are bound to act.

The general observations we have made, apply in a most remarkable degree to the events of the Last Session. We know not whether the great victory of the Reform Bill, the success of the Municipal Act, the repeal of all laws imposing civil disqualifications for religious opinions, have been triumphs practically greater than those which may be claimed on behalf of Liberal opinions during the session of 1842. We are quite prepared for the scoffing reply of our political opponents. They will tell us, that it is to them, and to them only, that is justly due all

that has been achieved. They will tell us, that as their leaders carried Catholic emancipation in 1829, so they have laid the foundation of commercial freedom in 1842. We thank them for their illustration, and we most fully admit its analogy. One which more entirely confirms our argument could not well be found. In that glorious procession which ushered in eight millions of our countrymen within the pale of the constitution, it is true that the Tory leaders were most prominent figures. But let the impartial historian decide in what character they appeared. On the car of triumph were raised the images of Fox and of Grattan, surrounded by those living statesmen who justly claimed an identity of principle, and who personified the victory which had been won. Their opponents seemed less the conquerors, than the slaves who had surrendered to force; or they could be considered but as mercenary troops at the best, who, deserting their ancient standards, had passed over to the enemy's ranks, at the dictation of their *Condottieri*. Nor was this change of position effected without the curses loud and deep, and the bitter scoff, and the contemptuous ridicule of their former and more consistent comrades. The disgrace and ignominy were somewhat mitigated by the generous forbearance of those to whom the triumph was in reality due. Those who had made every sacrifice but that of principle for the Catholic cause, might well afford to pass over in silence the conduct of those who in 1829 were willing to sacrifice their former principle and their friends, but who declined making any other sacrifice. If the Catholic question is the precedent relied on in justification of the events of 1842, on the grounds we have stated we fully admit its force and its applicability.

Do we then blame Sir Robert Peel's government in 1842, any more than the Duke of Wellington's cabinet of 1829? We do not blame; but neither can we commend. In both cases, the men have been compelled to yield to events. In the history of states, there are periods in which words when spoken cannot be recalled; there are measures which, however stigmatized, none but the most frantic partisans can dream of repealing. Further, these measures and declarations, if founded on just principles, become the abundant source of measures of the same character. The seed is cast into the earth—it must and will germinate—the harvest may be more or less delayed—it may be reaped by other, and by unfriendly hands; but the harvest-time will surely come, and in its abundance the labours of those who broke up what seemed, for the time, an ungrateful soil—the skill of the husbandman who first guided the plough, he who sowed the good seed, which God has blessed with the increase—will not

be forgotten in acknowledgments offered to the better-paid labourer, who has gathered the sheaves into his barn, and who enjoys the produce. It is on these grounds that we thank Fox and Grattan for the Bill of 1829; and Lord J. Russell and Mr Baring for all that is good in Sir R. Peel's Budget.

So far from exaggerating, we have greatly under-rated the events of 1842 in comparing them with the act of 1829. The last case was infinitely stronger than the former. A truer analogy would have been found if Mr Percival, after the overthrow of the ministry of Lord Grenville, and a general election made triumphant by the cry of No Popery, had himself proposed and carried the repeal of the Catholic disqualifications. The opposing principles of party were never so distinctly marked as at the last election. Party symbols were never so ostentatiously displayed. Elections were never made the scenes of more unscrupulous tactics, or of more deadly struggles. The last session of the last parliament had proclaimed to the world the charges brought against the Whig government, as well as their measures; these charges, collected from the debates, furnished unailing themes at every Conservative dinner, and at the hustings of every county and borough throughout the empire. At the close of every session Toryism was made easy, and was adapted to all capacities in speeches of great point, and signal disingenuousness. The astute orator, to whom the robes of the advocate are better adapted than the ermine of an impartial judge, whilst affecting to hold the balance even, never employed any other than false weights. His sarcastic and sententious accusations were repeated and multiplied by a thousand echoes. The agriculturists were taught to consider their interests to be endangered by the measures of the Whig government; they were taught to consider their existence as a class, to be identified with the corn-laws of 1828. The new poor-law was described as being equally contrary to humanity and to religion; and the union work-houses were designated Whig Bastiles. Foreign competition, and freedom of commercial intercourse, were held up to odium, as the antagonist principles to British prosperity, and as the dreams of that reviled class, the political economists. The animosity of the manufacturing labourers was excited against their employers, by the encouragement given to the idle cry for a ten hours' bill; and by the propagation of the delusion, that the same rate of wages could be paid for a reduced period of labour. Wherever any attempt was made to introduce a police force, better adapted for the repression and punishment of crime than the inefficient Constabulary of former times, this was denounced as an invasion of the liberty of the subjects. The democratic views of the Chartist

were all forgotten, and pardoned, wherever the Chartists could be used as effective adversaries to the Whig party. The plan of the government for extending education among the poorer classes, was described as being an insult to the Church, and as leading to latitudinarianism and irreligion. Every measure of legal reform, whether it applied to the correction of that monster abuse the Court of Chancery, or to the grand plan of Local Courts, was held up to suspicion; and opposed on the ground that it was bottomed on a love of patronage, and a desire to promote political influence and political corruption. The Irish policy of the government was denounced as being cramped and restrained by the supposed coercion exercised over the Lord-Lieutenant by Mr O'Connell and his associates. A battery was fixed and pointed against the Irish Courts of Justice, and the guns were worked by the most violent partisans of the Orange party in parliament. The defects of the Irish acts for registering voters were exaggerated as well as exposed—the most vigorous and brilliant of the Tory debaters, taking the lead in the attack, proclaiming loudly the duty and the urgent necessity of an instant remedy, and committing himself, with characteristic impetuosity and indiscretion, to the special remedy which he and his party considered needful. Our foreign policy was made the topic of the most virulent, but, at the same time, the most contradictory attacks. The foreign secretary was alternately charged with having made this country the subservient and submissive agent of France; and with having rudely and mischievously abandoned the French alliance. At one moment was Mehemet Ali held up as the originator of all Eastern civilization; and at another the Porte was described as the most precious and valuable of our allies. The Shah of Persia, for some short time was made the idol of the Tory skirmishers, who, however, soon transferred their allegiance to the captive courier of Sir John M'Neill. Shah Sooja, Dost Mahomed, and the Emperor of China, found their appropriate champions, who united in condemning all things done, and all persons employed by the Whig government. No passion or prejudice was neglected that could be excited for the purpose of recruiting the Tory ranks. Some of the more violent of the anti-slavery committees were induced to raise their voices even against the party which, having first abolished the slave trade, had finally blotted out from our statute-book the name of slavery. Even the advocates of temperance were pressed into the service, and were taught to consider hostilities in China as a war intended to compel a moral and self-denying race to consume opium against their will. It is true that the too eager hounds were now and then checked at the cover side, or stopped when in full cry, by an authoritative

voice which they did not presume to disobey. And from the authority of the Duke of Wellington, as well as from the discretion and good feeling of the nobleman now at the head of the foreign office, the violence and unfairness of party attack, in the House of Lords, was mitigated, where it could not be repressed. The attacks on Lord Palmerston's measures, in the House of Lords, were generally made and supported by men who certainly did not add much of weight, either moral or intellectual, to the vehemence of assault—as ineffective as they were daring and unscrupulous. The government were also charged with weakness in being occasionally constrained, by the press of public business or by the unfair opposition they encountered, to postpone measures which had been promised and announced. Amongst these cases, the postponement of the bill for reforming the ecclesiastical courts was frequently referred to as a proof of a good measure lost, or suspended, by the incapacity or carelessness of Lord Melbourne's government. The same charges of weakness and incompetence were made whenever any government measures were curtailed or modified in deference to the judgment of their political opponents. But the best simulated indignation was reserved for the alleged neglect of the financial interests of the country by the Whigs; for the reluctance shown by them to keep up a surplus income; for the desire practically manifested to repeal taxation; and for the augmentation, assumed to have been made, to the funded and unfunded debt. In the same category of complaint, was placed their delay in introducing measures for the regulation of banking, and of our currency. Such were a few of the grievous charges brought against Lord Melbourne's government, and its supporters; and the disunion of the liberal ranks, and the violence of many of the newspapers, were referred to as unanswerable evidence of the universal condemnation of the Whig party.

Results of the most opposite description were promised, as the immediate and inevitable consequences of a Tory advent to power. Under their Saturnian reign, all that was dark and unpropitious was to become bright and genial. Power was to be substituted for weakness; financial property for financial discredit; the influence of Britain with foreign powers was to be restored to its palmy state, as at the Congress of Vienna:—we were told that no sovereign would hereafter dare to hesitate in fulfilling his engagements; commerce was again to crowd our ports with her ships and valuable cargoes. The manufacturing population, protected from foreign competition, and from the supposed cruelty of their masters, were promised an increase in wealth, under the blessings of a ten-hours' bill.

Chartism and Socialism were to be extinguished; and tranquillity was to be the result of obedience to laws administered under trustworthy Tory authorities. The new poor-law bill was to be repealed, or, at least, the despots of Somerset House were to be dethroned. Ireland was to be governed on what were called Protestant principles; the personal animosity and unmitigated railings heretofore directed against Mr O'Connell, were to assume the shape of practical measures of repression; and, above all, the general policy of the government was neither to be checked nor controlled by any fear of the ultra-popular party, nor interrupted or influenced from apprehensions of the Roman Catholics. The cry for repeal was to be met by unmeasured scorn and uncompromising defiance. The education of the people was to be placed in the hands of the clergy of the Established Church. The mutilated versions of the Scriptures were to be banished from the Irish national schools. Archbishop Whately and his excellent colleague, Archbishop Murray, were to be removed from their sphere of useful and honourable labour in Ireland; and in England, a lay and political committee of the Privy Council, usurping the functions of a minister of public instruction, was to be replaced by a syndicate of bishops, assisted by the learned members for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. But we need not proceed with this enumeration. It is sufficient to say, that in all points whatsoever, the conduct of the promised Tory ministers was described as likely to form a contrast to that pursued by their too long successful opponents; and on every one of the questions to which we have adverted, the strongest expectations of a practical change of policy were either held out directly, or were encouraged by silent but expressive acquiescence, as the immediate results of a change in the Councils of her Majesty.

It was under the influence of these expectations that the General Election of 1842 took place. An appeal was made to the strongest and the most widely-spread prejudices. But we doubt whether this appeal would have been successful, had it not been for other contemporaneous circumstances. Unreasonable alarms had induced many very respectable but timid friends of liberal opinions to withdraw, or at least to modify, the support which they gave to the Whig government. England is never without a numerous class who are prone to be influenced by apprehension and timidity; and in this instance the ranks of the Alarmists received many recruits. The political fallacies which have been exposed with so much humour by Bentham, were all brought into play. These who did not, and could not, object to Lord Melbourne and his colleagues, expressed the

most unbounded and unconquerable dislike to some of the members of Parliament by whom the Cabinet was supported. Where no valid argument could be urged against the measures which the government had actually proposed, it was suggested, without a shadow of evidence, that other measures, intended to be proposed thereafter, were dangerous and revolutionary. On the other hand, while the defection took place of men over-scrupulous and apprehensive, the demands of the more eager politicians increased in number and in degree. They considered the loss of the former class of adherents, to impose upon the Government a necessity of going much beyond all their previously declared opinions. They considered the Government bound to adopt the doctrines of the Radical School, and to surrender at discretion. Nor were the attempts to accomplish this object confined to that gentle violence, which has sometimes been resorted to, even in cases of the most sincere and respectful political attachment. Threats of hostility, expressions of mistrust, and of want of confidence, were unscrupulously used in debate. The Government were called upon to confess themselves as formed of 'squeezable materials,' and as devoid of fixed opinions, and of courage to maintain them; or they were held up to the hostility of the ultra-liberal party, as Tories in disguise. Perhaps these most unjust and impolitic attacks, which were not participated in by any great portion of the people of England, or of the liberal party in parliament, were somewhat too contumeliously repelled. But this, if it were an error, was generous and sincere; for undoubtedly any course is more noble in public life than that of obtaining support under false pretences, or by disguising opinions—thus lowering the moral character of a statesman, in the vain expectation of increasing his political strength. We believe that it is now demonstrated that the government of Lord Melbourne did not lag behind the expectation of the great bulk of the people of England, but was rather in advance of the spirit of the times. An additional cause of weakness may be traced to the long duration of the Whig Administration itself. It had existed since November 1830. During that period, though we are satisfied that more was done for the cause of good government, and for the liberties of mankind, than had been achieved in the whole of the preceding century, still there were men, and classes of men, whose hopes had been disappointed, and whose expectations had been frustrated. The period of ten years is a severe trial to the popularity of any party, and after so long a tenure of office, a change is sometimes sought, or submitted to, for the sake of change alone. The Roman historian, in allusion to the political claims of rival candidates for the Consulship, gives the following

as a reason why one should be preferred to his competitors:—
 ‘*Accedebat quod alter decimum prope annum assiduus in oculis
 hominum fuerat; quæ res minus verendos magnos homines ipsa
 satietate facit.*’ (Liv. lib. 35, c. 10.)

These causes were all greatly increased in their influences at the general election, by the lavish corruption used to procure returns. Would that we could with truth and sincerity declare our conviction, that corruption, and the base acts by which low ambition purchases a degrading success, had been confined to the Tories. But though we believe that for the introduction of these vile practices that party was mainly responsible, and that corruption was much more lavishly resorted to by them, it cannot be denied that both parties entered deeply into this competition of venality; and neither can be held free from reproach, though guilty in a far different degree. The unfortunate preservation in the Reform Bill of franchises which have fostered the most undisguised corruption; the rapidity with which the moral contagion was allowed to spread when introduced among the new and purer constituencies; the defence of these unconstitutional practices by those who held the poorer classes in contempt; the example given by too many of the higher orders, showing their greedy readiness to work this iniquity, led to a wider and more intense corruption in 1842, than had ever before been exhibited to the indignation of honest men.

Such were the leading causes which, in our judgment, produced the Tory majority in 1842. That majority we believe to have greatly exceeded the expectation of the leaders of the party. Perhaps we might also surmise that it exceeded in some cases their wishes: we feel most certain that it is inconsistent with their permanent interests. When Parliament met, the majority seemed to be overwhelming. The first vote was decisive: Sir Robert Peel found himself restored to power amidst the acclamation of a very noisy, if not a well disciplined, corps of followers. This majority left him no excuse with respect to his parliamentary strength, and his ability to propound measures—unless, indeed, (as was then shrewdly suspected, and as has since been conclusively proved,) the politics of the first Minister and of his supporters were not quite consistent with each other; and thus, in proportion as his apprehensions of Whig attack were lessened, the certainty of Tory mutiny was increased. Time was demanded by the new government to prepare their measures. This, under ordinary circumstances, would not have been at all unreasonable. But when it was considered that the principles to which the new government stood pledged, had either been openly avowed, or fully admitted, the indulgence sought for and granted

was somewhat more than the occasion justified. Besides, the 'coy, reluctant, amorous delay,' which would not have been inappropriate in a young and blushing virgin, yielding her heart for the first time, seemed misplaced, if not ridiculous, when the lady at the altar was an experienced widow of maturer years, well acquainted with the world and all the ways of men.

We know not when more of curiosity and of expectation were combined, than at the real opening of the political drama in 1842. The theatre was crowded in all its parts. The applause of the Tory galleries was all prepared, and only awaited the signal. The stage lamps shone brightly. The great performers were known to be behind the scenes; the scenery, machinery, dresses, and furnishings were all said to be new, and to be got up under the direction of the new manager. The *premier coup d'archet* was heard; but when the curtain rose, and the performance was begun, greater astonishment and surprise could not have been created on comparing the playbill with the representation, than if the tragedy of Cato had been substituted for the Agreeable Surprise, or the dead march in Saul for the bridal chorus of the Freyschutz. It is true that all the actors whose names were announced, made their appearance; but, alas for the lovers of the melodrama! the actors appeared in new characters, and their dresses and machinery were those which had been so long worn and used by their rivals and predecessors. It is true that this bold confidence in the indulgence of their audience succeeded to a certain extent; but perhaps the cause was a theatrical one. The good folks had paid their money at the door, they had secured their seats, and, if they had yielded to their discontent, they might have been left without any play at all, or have been condemned to call back her Majesty's former servants.

If this contrast between the policy professed, and the policy pursued by the government, were not of the highest importance to the public interests, as well as to the characters of public men, it would be difficult to treat the subject with any decent seriousness. But, in order to estimate fairly the conduct of our present rulers, it is necessary to scrutinize more closely their proceedings during the last session. The three great branches of policy on which they had differed with their opponents were the Corn-Bill, and all agricultural questions—the Commercial Propositions contained in Mr Baring's and Sir Robert Peel's Budget—and the State of the Finances. We shall advert to the proceedings of the present government in respect to each.

The Conservative party had, we may say without exception, claimed credit for being pre-eminently the friends of the Agricultural interest; and had represented the protection of that

interest against foreign competition to be the public duty to which they stood especially pledged. It is quite true, that in all these proceedings the leader of the party adhered to certain words of caution, which enabled him to disclaim any specific engagement. But the spirit of all the acts, and all the declarations of the members of the Government—and still more, all the acts and declarations of their friends and supporters—tended to impress a conviction on the minds of reasonable men, of what was the fixed determination of the Tory party. When Sir R. Peel was pressed to state his opinions on this subject, he referred, in reply, to the steady and earnest support which he had given to the existing corn-law. But he gave further and *personal* securities to the farmers of England; he took into his Cabinet, in high office, a nobleman whose claim upon public consideration consisted in his uncompromising defence of the corn-laws; and the Paymaster of the Forces was also a man who had resisted even the most mitigated proposals for the modification of our system. These personages were his 'Johnny Nokes and Peter Styles' pledges to prosecute, on behalf of the agriculturists. If there had been any two men in the whole political world, whose names, indorsed on Sir R. Peel's political bills of exchange, would have insured their circulation amongst the country gentlemen and their dependents, he could not have offered more acceptable security than that of the Duke of Buckingham and Sir E. Knatchbull. We do not suppose that many of our readers will consider a pledge to be less binding, because it results from an honourable understanding rather than from a distinct engagement. The confidence which is accepted from a great party, becomes a consideration which ought to pledge the leader, accepting such confidence, to the most scrupulous performance of the conditions into which he has tacitly entered. It would be a new era in British politics, if the Statute of Frauds were allowed to be pleaded in politics, and if statesmen were permitted with impunity to set aside an engagement because it was not reduced to a written form. If any man thinks that we have put this argument too strongly, we are willing to bring it to a very simple but decisive test. We ask the members of the Cabinet, one and all, whether they believe that they could have obtained their parliamentary majority had their measures been announced *before* the General Election. If this question is answered in the negative, it follows that the constituencies of the country have been grossly deceived; and it is for them to decide whether the Government, or their representatives, have been the deceivers.

But not only has the protection held out to the farmer, by the former corn-laws, been considerably relaxed; new measures,

viewed with still greater alarm by the agriculturists, have been introduced and carried. That these measures were inconsistent with the principles on which it was fully understood that Sir Robert Peel's government was founded, is sufficiently proved by the resignation of the Duke of Buckingham, and the defection of a large portion of the ministerial members on the vote for reducing the duties on foreign cattle and provisions. The latter measure was one, we admit, considerably in advance of the propositions of the Whig ministry, and the step was taken in the right direction. But the dismay it created was unparalleled. Had it been announced in the Court Circular, that huge bales of Hamburg beef blockaded the door of the Board of Trade, or that a hundred foreign oxen roared at the levee of the first minister, the astonishment would not have been greater.

If, indeed, the measure was as productive of good to the public and the consumer, as it has been of alarm to the friends of monopoly, we should have been well satisfied. But while Sir Robert Peel professed to reduce the amount of protection on British grain, and did so, to a very considerable degree, there was one principle to which he held with a 'desperate fidelity.' He might afford to disappoint the expectations of his friends—he might depart from what were considered to be his implied engagements—he might throw overboard his colleague the Duke of Buckingham, and substitute for the ties of political connexion the less irksome bond of a blue ribbon; but whilst making all these sacrifices, the Sliding-Scale was held to be a sacred principle, to be adhered to through good and evil fortune. The present will be handed down to posterity under the title of the 'Sliding-Scale Government.' A sliding-scale proper, with the motto, *hac scalâ vinces*, may hereafter be assumed by the official chivalry of Whitehall and Downing Street as the badge of their new order. We pray these victors for one moment to suspend their triumph, and to consider the effect of their glorious success. We were told that, under this cunning device, a steady and equable supply of foreign corn would be furnished to the consumer. We were assured that foreign corn would be entered, in time of need, at a much lower duty than the eight shillings fixed-duty of the Whigs; which duty, it was added, never ought to be, and could never be, enforced and collected when a state of distress prevailed. Yet what has been the operation of Sir Robert Peel's new law? The suffering people of England have known but too well how much their wretchedness has been increased, during the last spring and summer, by the high price of bread. But the effect of the present sliding-scale, as of every other modification of the same principle, has been, to check the

entry of any considerable supply of foreign corn, till the price had reached its *maximum*, and the duty its *minimum*. It is obvious that, if the price of grain is steadily increasing from fifty shillings to fifty-five, to sixty, to sixty-five, and to seventy, no corn, or but a very small quantity of foreign corn, will ever be released from bond. The tendency to hold produce back will be greatly increased, when the seller, by so doing, obtains a double advantage, in a reduced duty as well as in an advanced price. It is principally when there is a prospect of falling prices, and of rising duties, that foreign grain is largely brought into the market from the bonded warehouse. The consequence of this necessarily is, that a prospect of an abundant harvest has brought into consumption many hundred thousand quarters of wheat, which would have remained in bond had scarcity been apprehended. Thus, a prospect of scarcity excludes, and a prospect of abundance admits, foreign corn. By this double operation, prices are eventually raised and eventually depressed; and the fluctuations between the highest and lowest ranges, are greater than they could be under any other system. In other words, the sliding-scale insures the largest supply when that supply is least required by the consumer; and limits the supply, however high the prices, when that supply is most necessary. Nor is the injury confined to the consumer. The sliding-scale acts equally to the great injury of the farmer. His prospects are injured, and injured frequently for many successive years, by prices unnaturally and artificially depressed; and, to complete the blessings of the sliding-scale, the revenue is at the same time exposed to loss. All this has been exhibited in the last few months; and the demonstration is so complete, that we doubt whether there will be hereafter found any but the luckless members of the Government itself to utter one word in defence of the sliding-scale.

This result, which all reasoners on this subject, whether in or out of parliament, predicted, will be practically exemplified by the Customs-House returns of the last six months. These accounts have not been given to a late period; but from what has appeared in the public papers, as well as in parliamentary returns, it is certain that the foreign and colonial wheat imported between the close of April, and the middle of August, has exceeded 2,400,000 quarters. Of this amount, 200,000 quarters, less than one-twelfth, were imported during the nine weeks from the close of April till the middle of July, during which time the price had steadily risen, and the duty had fallen from 13s. to 8s.; whilst nearly 2,000,000 quarters were imported in the five weeks after the duty had reached its minimum—the prospects of the harvest being then known to be favourable,

and there being a certainty that prices must fall. The admission of foreign corn, during four consecutive weeks in July and August, exemplifies this principle still further.

1st week, .	62,209	quarters.
2nd week, .	71,644	ditto.
3rd week, .	364,073	ditto.
4th week, .	1,354,797	ditto.

It was stated in the public papers, that on the 11th July prices fell 2s., on the 18th 2s., on the 25th 2s. and 3s., on August 1st 4s. and 6s., on the 25th August 2s.,—in all, a fall of 15s., which led to the introduction of 600,000 quarters in a single day.

Our readers will thus see, that in place of a steady supply of foreign wheat, as promised by Sir Robert Peel, the supply in five weeks has exceeded tenfold the supply of nine weeks preceding; that in place of duties lower than the fixed duty proposed by Lord John Russell, the duty has either been exactly the same, or it has been higher; that in place of a repeal of this duty under the pressure of distress, as was prophesied, the duty has been defended and maintained; and, to complete this contrast, in place of having this supply introduced at the time it was most required, it was at the moment when the home produce was most abundant, and the prospects of a good harvest were realized, and not till then, that any very considerable amount of foreign wheat was brought into market for the benefit of the consumer.

With these observations, we think we may dismiss the Corn-Bill of the last session; but in doing so, we must admit, and we do it freely, that the measure, though not in itself good, was an improvement upon the previous law; though a moderate fixed duty, as we have frequently shown, would have been infinitely preferable; and the abandonment of all protection whatever, is the ultimate object to which our future legislation should tend, not only for the benefit of the consumers, but of the agriculturists themselves. A population increased in Great Britain alone to the enormous extent of 8,000,000 during the last forty years—with this population steadily augmenting at the rate of about 1000 souls a day—with the formidable dangers which must exist, so long as discontent is enabled to attribute every scarcity to acts of the legislature—founded; as those acts are, on what are considered the selfish interests of the legislators; the sliding-scale and its advocates will be condemned, as well by common sense as by popular indignation; and Sir R. Peel is much too skilful a tactician to maintain a contest in a position which he finds to be indefensible.

Indeed, it is obvious, that in the principles he laid down, and the admissions he made, he has prepared the way, with great adroitness but with much caution, for the final abandonment of all protection whatever. His two 'rests,' at a duty of 6s. and 17s., are his preparations for a fixed duty: a fixed duty on his part will lead him further still. For this, his friends and supporters *passi graviora* must prepare themselves. They must try, if they can, to fall with dignity; or, if this is impossible, they should forget the ridicule to which '*the farmers' friends*' will be exposed by the acts of the Conservative chief, in the great benefits which his ultimate reforms will confer upon the country.

We proceed to the next of Sir Robert Peel's great measures, his Commercial Tariff; and here our approval may be more freely expressed; for the principles laid down by him, and by his distinguished coadjutor Mr Gladstone, were, with few exceptions, all we could wish, and all that the Masters of Economical Science could have required from public men. It was admitted unequivocally, that the aim of the legislature should be, to procure the most abundant and the cheapest supplies, and to encourage the freest and most unfettered commercial intercourse between nation and nation. We were told, and most truly, that a reduction of duty, if confined to duties paid upon home produce, would be more frequently a benefit to the monopolist than to the consumer. Sir Robert Peel, most justly, showed that this was the reason why the repeal of the leather-tax had not been productive of very general good. He further told us, that on the same principles a reduction of the duty on colonial sugars, if unaccompanied by a corresponding reduction on foreign sugars, would prove a failure. In all this, he laid down principles the most enlightened, in a manner the most convincing; but in so doing, it is undeniable that he *forsook the Tory faith*, and abandoned almost all the ancient doctrines upon which home protection and our colonial system is founded. From these principles he will find that there is no retreat. When the time comes (and it approaches speedily) when Parliament will be required to reconsider the Brazilian commercial treaty, and the duties on foreign sugar, we entertain no doubt that Sir Robert Peel will be reminded of these declarations. Indeed, our hope and expectation is, that these declarations will be embodied in the new arrangements which must then be adopted; in spite of the opposition of our colonial interests, or the misapprehensions of a mistaken philanthropy;—uninstructed by experience, and relying upon remedies already shown to be inadequate either for

the amelioration of the condition of the foreign slave, or for the suppression of the slave-trade.

In proportion as these measures, and more especially the reduction of the duty on foreign cattle and provisions, gratified the Political Economists, and the liberal party in parliament, in that very degree did the opposition and discontent of the Tory country gentlemen manifest themselves. 'Was it for this,' they exclaimed, 'that we fought our battles at the registration courts and on the hustings? Was it for this that we expelled the Whig government, and vindicated for ourselves the title of the farmer's friends? Not only are we called upon to bear a reduction of the existing protections upon British corn, more dangerous to us than the fixed duty of the Whigs, but we are also called on to renounce our still more valued system of entire prohibition, and to sacrifice to free-trade our flocks and herds, our firstlings and our fatlings. And we have to bear all this from our professed friends!

"Quid meruère boves, animal sine fraude dolisque,
Innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores;
Quid meruistis oves, placidum pecus?"

Nor was this discontent shown in complaints only. Indeed, if the principles of the aggrieved class had been as correct as they were sincere, they, like their oxen, might have been considered *natum tolerare labores*, had they surrendered without a struggle. They gave signs of resistance. Colonel Sibthorp and Mr George Palmer undertook the cause. Others, more able, prepared for the field; and many a ploughshare was forged into a sword, preparatory to an onslaught by the revolted agriculturists. We pray our readers to remember well the state of Parliamentary parties. Sir Robert Peel had staked the existence of his government on the success of the Tariff. If the Liberal party had hesitated in the course they ought to follow—had they joined, with the discontented agriculturists, in opposing the reduction of the duties on foreign cattle—Sir Robert Peel would have been left in a minority; and, on his own declaration, he must have resigned. But, in acting more honourably and more justly, the Opposition acted also more wisely. As in 1835, when, under similar circumstances, they had once before saved Sir Robert Peel from defeat on the question of the Malt Duty, they now, for the second time, threw their weight into the scale of their political adversaries: the measure was carried, and the existence of the government was preserved, by the active support of their opponents. Most fully was Lord Palmerston justified in stating that 'the

‘country has the satisfaction of knowing, that if the government should be deserted by any powerful body of its own friends in its attempts to carry its great principles into practice, the Opposition of the present day, unlike the Opposition of a former period, which prided itself on obstructing improvement, will cordially and honestly support the Government in its progressive course, and will assist the right honourable baronet, even when deserted by his own friends, in carrying his liberal measures into full and complete effect.’

Still, whilst we thus are disposed to do full justice to the Government for the principles they have laid down, we must guard ourselves from the inference that these principles have either been very wisely or very justly applied in all cases. It is not just to expose the labour of the artisan to a foreign competition, while a disproportionate protection is still maintained to benefit the property of the rich. It is in vain to expect the shoemaker of Northampton, or the glover of Worcester or Yeovil, to consider that he is treated fairly, if the principles of free-trade are applied when against him, and not applied when in his favour. It is not wise to have maintained, and in some cases to have created, colonial protections by differential duties, which disfigure our commercial code, and will impede its future reform. Above all, it is contrary to sound principle, more especially at a moment like the present, to have permitted the duties upon the raw materials of Wool and Cotton to continue—increasing the difficulties of competition in foreign markets, and the distress and discontent of our manufacturing population. This subject has been most ably and conclusively argued in the speech of Mr Charles Wood, who, having already acquired high reputation as an able servant of the Crown, has, in his argument on the Wool duties, proved his eminent qualifications as an enlightened representative of a great manufacturing community.

We proceed, next, to consider what have been the Financial Measures of the late session; and we must here be allowed to observe, that the first acts of the government were by no means fortunate. We allude to the complicated proposition for funding and borrowing L.5,000,000. Had this measure been carried, as originally proposed, it would have proved an utter failure; and the public service would have been but inadequately provided for. It was a wise and provident suggestion made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by his immediate predecessor, Mr Baring, which averted this disaster. This gentleman—to whose enlightened propositions when in office may be distinctly traced all that is most useful in the budget of this year, but

who was also desirous, by his measures, to have rendered the imposition of increased taxes unnecessary—perceived, with great forethought, that it would be impossible, or at least highly improbable, that Mr Goulburn's measure would yield the revenue which was anticipated. He therefore recommended that Parliament should entrust the government with a power of selling stock, within certain limits. By adopting this suggestion, the public was saved from the most serious embarrassments; and Sir Robert Peel's government was saved from the reproach of having totally failed in their first financial operation. For this they are indebted to the disinterested suggestions of a political opponent; and we allude to this the more freely, because it does not appear that the Opposition have condescended to claim this result as a merit for themselves; or that they have ever pointed out the defects in Mr Goulburn's bill as a reproach to their opponents.

This, however, was but a preliminary question, and the *novitas regni* might have been some reasonable excuse for an official mistake. It is by the merits of the Budget of the government, as deliberately brought forward by Sir Robert Peel, that the character of his policy is to be tried. Every indulgence had been shown that could have been demanded. Full time was granted to enable the minister to mature his measures. No impatient or harassing motions were made in either house. But many were the surmises of friends and foes in respect to the forthcoming budget. With these anticipations, were combined a repetition of the often-refuted attacks against the Whigs. The accumulated deficiency of four successive years were added together, and were represented as constituting one annual deficiency now to be provided for. As well might the whole national debt have been called a deficiency of the year. This inane absurdity was repeated till it found credence in a willing, because an ignorant or a malignant, audience. It was stated, with an equal want of truth, that the Duke of Wellington's government had left to Lord Grey a surplus revenue of L.3,000,000. It is true that such a surplus had existed the year before the Duke of Wellington's resignation. But Mr Goulburn's repeal of the beer and leather taxes converted that surplus into a deficiency, amounting to nearly L.700,000, in 1831. We were also told that at length we should see the public credit of England placed on a permanent and satisfactory basis. We were assured that the alarming and increasing deficiency would be amply provided for. We know not but, among the older financiers, there might have been some who contemplated the re-establishment of a permanent Sinking-Fund. But a very considerable surplus of income over expen-

diture was considered by all to be indispensable. The loss of revenue by the much reprobated reduction of postage duties, was now to be supplied, if not by a direct repeal of Lord Monteagle's act, at least by making provision for the income sacrificed. What had been most erroneously, as well as most mischievously, termed 'a tampering with the Savings Banks,' but which was, in fact, no tampering at all, was to be condemned and abandoned for ever. Care was to be taken that no increase of the public debt should hereafter take place; the income being to be more than equalized with the expenditure. Much of this was promised; and all that was not distinctly promised, was most confidently expected from Sir Robert Peel and his associates.

At length he made his celebrated financial propositions, in a speech of great ability and moderation, going far to satisfy the expectations of those who demanded from the Minister the enunciation of sound general principles, and extremely plausible and skilful in the manner in which his arguments were marshalled.

It was on the 11th of March that he submitted to Parliament these memorable propositions. His abstract declarations were all that could have been required, however he might have failed in applying principles practically. There certainly was not much candour or fairness in his adroit and plausible statement. In order to show the necessity of extreme remedies, he, too, added together the deficiencies of six successive years, giving the Public and Parliament to understand, that a sum of L.10,720,000 was to be provided for. Had he condescended to state the whole case fairly, he would have informed the House, that in the ten years of Whig government, from 1831 to 1840 inclusive, the surplus of income amounted to L.7,488,000, and the deficiency to L.4,803,000—showing an excess of income over expenditure of no less than L.2,101,000. Again, in referring to the charge of the debt, no reference was made either to the loan of L.20,000,000 raised for the West Indian planters; nor yet to the conversion of perpetual into terminable annuities. If an allowance is made for these operations, so far from there having been any real increase to the debt, the capital will be found to have been reduced L.22,592,000, between the years 1831 and 1841; and the annual charge to have been reduced by a sum of L.652,000 annually. We could easily point out other disingenuities and fallacies of the same kind. His statement of the resources of the present year was as follows:—

Estimated expenditure,	-	-	L.50,819,000
Estimated income,	-	-	48,850,000
			<hr/>
Deficiency,	-	-	L.2,469,000

In a subsequent part of the speech, he stated this deficiency to amount to L.2,570,000. At a later period of the session, it was estimated at L.3,000,000.

The Minister greatly exaggerated the difficulties, and underrated the resources of the country. No assumption could be more groundless than that on which his entire Budget was bot-tomed—namely, that the power of raising revenue by indirect taxation was exhausted. But we do not, on this account, deny that a case was made out, requiring energetic and deci-sive remedies. Sir Robert Peel did not show any want of courage. He took a course not only bold, but wholly un-precedented in British history. He proposed to impose an income-tax in time of peace, producing, at the rate of seven-pence in the pound, L.3,700,000. From this tax he exempted Ireland, as well as all incomes below L.150 per annum. He further asked Parliament to sanction increased duties on Irish spirits, estimated at L.250,000, and on Irish stamps, estimated at L.160,000. These sums, with L.200,000 received on the export of coal, were calculated to add L.4,310,000 to the public income—converting the deficiency of L.2,469,000 into a surplus of L.1,800,000. So far the object of Sir Robert Peel would seem to have been gained, and the promises made by his party to have been fulfilled; a real and efficient surplus of income being thus provided. But he did not stop here. We remember that on the return to England of a late diplomatist, it was observed that he had earned a great character abroad: "Wait a while," said a cynical observer, "for you will see that he will spend it at home like a gentleman." So it was with Sir Robert Peel; for having obtained his surplus of L.1,800,000, he pro-ceeded to spend it with more recklessness than the worst enemy could have attributed to any of his Whig predecessors. He sacri-ficed L.600,000 by reduction of the timber duties; L.170,000 by his alterations of the tariff; L.103,000 by the repeal of the export duties, and L.70,000 in stage-coach duties. These mea-sures reduced the surplus to L.520,000. But this nominal sur-plus Sir Robert Peel himself admitted to be a real deficiency; for he stated, (Speech, p. 30,) 'that this surplus was to meet 'the increased charge for the war in China,' estimated (p. 21) at L.800,000; and also to meet 'the increased expenses which 'the affairs in India might render necessary within the year.' It is therefore clear, that, on Sir Robert Peel's data, even after the imposition of an income-tax, he has left the country with a deficient revenue.

But this is not all. The Government was compelled to give way in their singularly absurd project of imposing a duty of

four shillings on coal exported. This most unwise proposition, which would have imposed a duty of 60 per cent on large, and 120 per cent on small coal, would neither stand examination nor argument; and the intended duties were, on compulsion, reduced one-half. The supposition that L.250,000 could be raised by increasing the duties on Irish spirits, which, already too high, acted as a practical bounty on smuggling, was abundantly proved to be a delusion. In this case, the morals and peace of the country were risked for the sake of a paltry experiment. The commercial treaties with Portugal and France, which were stated to be in progress, would still more diminish the income;—the sacrifice which would be produced, in the first instance, by the French treaty, having been estimated by Mr Baring at L.300,000. From these facts, it was evident to any one who looked below the surface of things, that the deficiency would be found infinitely greater than had ever before been voluntarily exhibited in the Budget-speech of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. This result, too, was consequent upon that strongest of all financial measures, the imposition of an Income-Tax in time of peace. Sir Robert Peel had called on Hercules for aid, but the wheel of his treasury Van was still left deep in the slough. It is thus that the Tory pledge of restoring the public credit of the country has been redeemed! The case was made still worse by explanations given on a subsequent occasion. Sir Robert Peel then stated the actual deficiency to be L.3,000,000, in addition 'to L.800,000 per annum:' on this showing, the actual deficiency of the year could not be less than L.700,000.

But if these measures had ever appeared likely to be successful, we doubt whether they could have been viewed as expedient or justifiable. An income-tax in time of peace is a most formidable experiment. Its effect upon commercial profits, at a period when foreign competition is active in all cases, and successful in many, cannot fail to be pregnant with danger. But the *Quarterly Review*, in the Number just published, denies that the income-tax should be considered as exclusively a war-tax; and asks, somewhat imprudently and tauntingly—'Why it should be so, and 'in what code that dogma is written?'—(No. 140, p. 489.) To this we answer, that an income-tax is a *war-tax*, by that law of common sense which forbids, in time of peace, the imposition of a tax amounting in principle to a confiscation, and which cannot be levied without an inquisition wholly unbearable. In time of war, or when contending for national existence *toto corpore regni*, every sacrifice must be submitted to, and this impost, odious

as it is, may become allowable. For written authority, we can refer our contemporary to every statute which has passed on this subject anterior to 1842. In these laws the property-tax has uniformly been dealt with, when imposed or when repealed, as a *war-tax*, and as a war-tax only. We also refer to the declarations of every public man of official experience, who has argued these questions, either in or out of parliament. One quotation will here be sufficient, and we select it from the speech of a minister unswayed either by Whiggism or Political Economy. When Mr Addington, on the 5th of April 1802, proposed the repeal of the property-tax, he stated, 'that the burden of this tax should not be allowed to rest on the shoulders of the people in *time of peace*. It should be reserved for those *important occasions* which he trusted would not soon recur. He thought it worthy of the credit and the character of this country to look forward to such a resource in the painful event of *being obliged to struggle for our honour and independence*.' The Reviewer having failed to show that the income-tax is justifiable in time of peace, takes new ground; he discovers that we are at war, because hostilities have not ceased in China and Affghanistan. But we submit, that these contests do not amount to the state of war contemplated by Mr Pitt, Mr Addington, or Lord Grenville, when they proposed or augmented the income-tax. Such a construction was once attempted, it is true, when the receipt of Mr Croker's war-salary, as Secretary to the Admiralty, was vainly attempted to be justified by reason of the expedition to Algiers. But we are sure that our contemporary cannot have forgotten the scorn with which this proposition was rejected; and yet, by a singular coincidence, we find the same argument urged in 1842.

The exemption of all incomes under L.150 a-year, whilst it operated as a bribe to secure the acquiescence of the middle and the poorer classes, introduced a principle more formidable than any in the wild dreams of the Chartists. The exemption of Ireland had been, a few years before, designated by Sir Robert Peel himself as a gross injustice to England and Scotland. This was a more important concession made to the popular party in Ireland, than had ever been made by Lord Melbourne. Within so very recent a period as on the 15th May 1841, Sir Robert Peel himself had declared, that 'there being about L.2,500,000 about to be raised, to attempt to raise that sum by a property-tax would not be advisable;' yet, on the 11th March 1842, to provide for a deficiency of L.2,570,000, the same Minister himself proposed

the very measure against which he had advisedly protested; and accompanied it by that very exemption of Ireland which he had declared to be unjust towards Great Britain!

If our space permitted, these arguments might be carried still further; but unless we are entirely deceived, we think we have sufficiently proved the total inadequacy of Sir Robert Peel's measures to place the public credit on that stable footing which had been promised as the first blessing to be conferred by the Tory Government. But that we would not run the risk of wearying our readers with such dull discussions, we could show, quite as conclusively, that although a reduction of the timber duties was called for, there was no necessity sufficient to justify the *amount* of revenue sacrificed; more especially in the total repeal of the duties on colonial produce. The new coffee duties are also far from wisely distributed. The export duties were not complained of, nor felt as a practical grievance; and were therefore unnecessarily repealed. They amounted to no more than L.100,000 on a foreign trade exceeding L.50,000,000. The concession made to the proprietors of stage-coaches was not called for where a competition of railroads does not exist, and will be wholly ineffectual where it does. In fact—whether we consider the taxes imposed, the taxes repealed, or the balance left between the income and the expenditure—the Tory Budget will not contribute, as a revenue measure, to the reputation of Sir Robert Peel and his government.

We do not feel ourselves called upon again to argue the principles of education, as applicable either to England or to Ireland. It is sufficient for our purpose to remark that the present Government, after having opposed the system which had been so usefully carried on by their predecessors, under the able direction of Lord Lansdowne, have not only adopted it in its most minute details, but have proposed to carry it still further. The controul of a Lay Board of members holding political office, had been loudly and especially condemned. This is now, most wisely and most unhesitatingly, adopted. The inspection of schools by persons named by the Crown, and responsible to Parliament, had been stigmatized as an inquisitorial exercise of authority, to which the trustees and patrons of schools never ought to submit. This inspection is adhered to, and enforced. The duty of preserving a perfect equality among all classes, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, in the distribution of aid, and the public encouragement granted for schools, had been described as inconsistent with the principles of an establishment; this reasonable and just principle was never more unequivocally affirmed than it has been by Lord Wharncliffe, the President of the Council. From the original

minutes of council down to the music of Mr Hullah, all is preserved unimpaired. For this Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues deserve thanks and praise, which should be the more liberally given, when it is considered how great are the sacrifices of former votes and declarations which have been made; how much of self-love and of the pride of party has been necessarily abandoned; and how much of effort must have been required to wring a reluctant assent from their colleagues and supporters, to a tribute thus offered to the merits of their Whig predecessors by the present administration. We have reason to believe, that in this, as in other questions, the measure originally intended to be adopted has not, yet, been fully carried out. We have reason to believe, that notwithstanding the choral meetings over which Cabinet Ministers presided, there has been some discord in the committee of council itself. What if it should be true, that the first Minister and Lord Wharnccliffe were outvoted at their own council board; and that an exception was successfully taken to the lectures in music and drawing, unless they were accompanied by more orthodox doctrine? This attempt to unite theology to linear perspective, and to set the Thirty-nine Articles to music, has been made; but although it has led to the abandonment of the original scheme of the government, it has not produced the adoption of the absurdities suggested by their troublesome allies and supporters. These allies have been foiled, but not defeated; and we observe, with deep regret, the bitterness of their renewed attacks upon Mr Kay Shuttleworth, one of the most estimable and zealous public servants; but whose merits are, we trust, too well known to Lord Wharnccliffe and Sir Robert Peel, to permit them to make the secretary of the committee of council a victim to the ignorant bigotry of his detractors.

So much for education in England. In Ireland, the measures of Lord Eliot have been those bequeathed to him by his excellent predecessor, which he has adopted to the signal overthrow of the expectations of his ultra-political supporters. These misguided and ill-judging men, though they did not venture to demand that, in the case of the Roman Catholics, the use of the alphabet and primer should be made penal—the multiplication table proscribed by act of Parliament, all samplers directed to be burnt by the ordinary, unless worked in orange and purple silks, and the birch applied as a punishment for learning and not for idleness—yet have called upon the legislature to establish separate schools, founded on church principles, and under the exclusive direction of the clergy. Let them pause, and consider what would be the immediate consequence if they were ‘cursed with granted prayer.’ The present 2300 national schools, with their 280,000 scholars,

would be at once converted into schools exclusively Roman Catholic, of which the direction would naturally, and almost justly, fall into the hands of the priesthood; and the very party who are the most jealous of the Roman Catholic clergy, would find themselves the unconscious but active agents in the erection, extension, and perpetuation of their ecclesiastical authority and dominion. In this cause, the Primate of Ireland and Archbishop Machale are fellow-labourers, but not upon equal terms; as the former, in contending for an imaginary good for the Church, is practically surrendering at discretion to the most violent of his opponents. These follies were all advocated by the zealots of the Tory party; these changes, as well as the overthrow of Maynooth, were expected from their leaders: a more bitter disappointment could not have been inflicted, than by the declarations of the government. How deeply this disappointment is felt, appears, amongst other things, in an address moved by a party of Orangemen in Dublin, praying the Queen to remove Lord Eliot from her councils for ever. It also appears in the opposition of the University of Dublin to the Irish Solicitor-General, and the pledges required from the more successful candidate, to vote against the declared wishes of Government. When, in addition to other mortifications, we consider the exclusion from political office of all the prominent members of that section in Irish politics which has furnished the most eager partisans, and the most active skirmishers in the Tory cause, we cannot imagine any line of policy so well calculated to excite discontent, and a bitter hostility, which only waits an opportunity for manifesting itself. This hostility, and the causes which produce it, must bring to the government real strength, as more than an equivalent for party support. If they lose the applause of a faction, they are laying in their claims to the gratitude of a people, who require no more than justice at their hands.

We may here be allowed to observe, that in place of the vehement declarations against the Roman Catholic priesthood, an eloquent, and, in most cases, a well-deserved panegyric upon that order has been pronounced by Lord Eliot. In place of the violent and constant abuse of Mr O'Connell, there has been a total and prudent abstinence from attack. Repeal meetings are held; Repeal rent is collected; and yet those who were the most eager in condemning the inaction of the late Government, have discovered the prudence of a similar course. Even the rash energy of Lord Stanley has been curbed and restrained; and the insane attempt to abridge and limit the political franchises of the Irish people, under colour of a Registration Bill, has been post-

poned, and we should hope, for the peace of Ireland, has been finally abandoned.

Let us next enquire how far the expectations of increased peace, good order, and obedience to the laws, have been realized since the change of Government. How lamentable is the contrast between those expectations and the event! It is indeed somewhat remarkable, that the closing months of Tory government in 1830, should have been made memorable by frightful agricultural riots, extending from Kent to Cornwall; and that the first year of the restoration to power of the same party, should be signalized by a still more formidable movement in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Thus, it would seem as if a Tory ministry were fated to leave us a legacy of incendiarism when they depart, and to make us a gift of insurrection when they return. We shall be asked if these acts can fairly be attributed to the measures either of the Legislature or of the Government. Without wishing to cast upon our opponents any exaggerated or undue responsibility, we cannot avoid entertaining the strongest conviction that the whole policy pursued by them, since 1835, has had a great share in producing the deplorable result which we have lately witnessed. The mode in which the new Poor-Law was opposed and discussed, diffused most widely a deep and settled, though a most unfounded conviction, that the oppression and degradation of the poorer classes was the effect, and almost the object, of the statute complained of. Those classes were taught to believe that their interests were disregarded, their feelings set at nought and outraged, and their liberties abridged. In this cry nine-tenths of the Tory party combined, and some of the demagogues disgracefully joined. At this their leaders connived, with some honourable exceptions; and of this cry the whole party took advantage. Nothing tended more than this to unsettle the minds of the people. The Poor-Law agitation prepared the way for the Chartist agitation which was sure to follow. Again, the question of the Factory Bill was used as a political instrument. The workmen were set against their employers by Tory agitators; they were taught to consider those employers as enemies and tyrants. The cry for a ten hours' bill was raised at many elections in the manufacturing districts; and riot and confusion were preached and practised in the name of religion and humanity. Further, on many occasions in which a sympathy for the cases of the felon and the convict could be turned against the government—as in the case of the Dorchester labourers—Tory sympathy was ready. The formation of a Tory democracy was proclaimed

to be a necessary duty; and, under this plan, Socialists and Chartists were all cajoled and flattered, provided they but possessed the necessary qualification of hatred to the Whigs and opposition to the Government.

The effects of this alliance between Chartists and Tory-Radicals were strongly felt at the general election. We witnessed with astonishment the step into which, by some unhappy mistake, the leading members of the Government were betrayed, in granting long interviews, and holding confidential communications with the least creditable members of the least creditable political societies; bandying compliments and courtesies with the printer of the *Northern Star*, and with the ex-doorkeeper of the National Convention. How the zeal of the Bishop of Exeter, so quick and energetic on former occasions, has been allowed to continue inactive at present, we know not; but we are certain that, with one-tenth part of the provocation he has lately received, this prelate would, in 1840, have called for the impeachment of Lord Melbourne and the Marquis of Normanby. The manner in which the question of machinery was dealt with, even in the arguments of the Government—the countenance publicly given to that most dangerous of all sophisms which represents machinery as prejudicial to the artizan—added to the general irritation. The whole was brought to a head by the misfeasance and the nonfeasance of the last session. Speeches like those of Mr Ferrand were cheered, applauded, printed, and circulated, whilst the principles of monopoly were defended as far as it was practicable; all enquiry was refused into the frightful distress so universally prevalent; the interests of the industrious classes were overlooked and undervalued in the new budget; the necessity of keeping up an artificial high price for bread was avowed, and, as far as might be, was justified; and no reduction was made in the duties levied on the raw materials of wool and cotton, by which reductions the employment of the labouring classes would have been encouraged. All these causes combined to add to the general discontent; and they were more closely connected with the late lamentable outrages than any of the absurd manifestoes of the Anti-Corn-Law League, to which they have been ascribed. Nor have these imputations been exclusively directed against the Anti-Corn-Law League; they have been extended to the whole class of mill-owners, or, in other words, to the capitalists who employ the greatest amount of labour. It is not only false, but ridiculous, to suppose that the leading manufacturers would conspire in order to arrest the progress of their own industry, to expose their own capital to certain loss, and their persons to violence and imminent danger.

It is impossible to touch upon this subject without expressing the deep sorrow and sympathy which we have felt for the sufferings of the working classes during the last twelve or eighteen months. These sufferings cannot any longer be treated as the exaggeration of interested men; they are described in the official reports made by agents employed by the Government. In all cases—whether the condition of a single town like Stockport is considered, or the interests of a whole class, like the hand-loom weavers—it is to our wretched Corn-Laws that we trace the aggravation of these calamities. Whole families are shown to have been left without fuel, furniture, with scarcely any raiment or bed-covering, and with a pittance of food inadequate to human support. In these miseries, old and young, the industrious as well as the idle, have been alike involved. The consequences have been wretchedness the most deplorable, the exhaustion of the charitable subscriptions collected, the depreciation of the property liable to assessment, the spread of contagion, and mortality frightfully increased. Under such circumstances, how strong is the appeal made to our hearts in a noble sonnet, in which Wordsworth has shown how truly the sympathies, as well as the genius, of man may be preserved and exalted in advancing years?—

‘ Feel for the wrongs to universal ken
Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies;
And seek the sufferer in his darkest den,
Whether conducted to the spot by sighs
And moanings, or he dwells (as if the wren
Taught him concealment) hidden from all eyes
In silence and the awful modesties
Of sorrow.’

That our Government and our Legislature felt deeply for these sorrows and sufferings, we are far from doubting; but let us ask, whether they have practically marked this sympathy in their acts. Perhaps it will be said, that nothing could be done in the way of relief. We are always slow in admitting this plea, the threadbare apology of indolence or ignorance. Parliament might have derived sounder instruction from a sublime exhortation which closes the poem we have quoted:

‘ Learn to be just; just through impartial law,
Far as ye may erect and equalize,
And what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice.’

Would that this precept had, in the last session, been practically adopted! But looking through the tedious statute-book, and the debates more tedious still, we confess that we see but little evidence to prove that the condition of the suffering workmen of

England has occupied a due share of the attention of our rulers.

We must, however, guard ourselves against what would be a most false inference, if it were to be deduced from these observations. Though we may admit many of the causes of complaint of the working classes to be just, we do not more strongly deplore than we condemn the late wicked outbreak. The grievances were not of a character to justify the illegal violence which has prevailed; and even if the grievances had been such, the illegal conduct of the rioters could not but aggravate them, and greatly increase the obstacles which impede the success of all remedial measures, whether political, economical, or social. Falstaff declined to give his reasons upon compulsion, and John Bull is apt to refuse to do justice as long as he can, if justice is demanded in a tone of menace. All violence, by creating alarm, throws back the cause of popular reform, and increases that power of resistance on which Tory ascendancy depends. But the whole movement was as absurd as it was iniquitous. Except in the ever-memorable blunder of the Irish insurgents who burned the notes of an unpopular banker, no example can be found of such signal folly as the violence which prompted men to interfere with active industry, and consequently with the remuneration of labour, at a time when the immediate cause of suffering was a want of employment. But in many cases the suffering, was not the criminal class; and even when the sufferers were led into criminal acts, they appear to have been the dupes and instruments of more guilty men. The sympathy which we feel for calamities, however deplorable, ought not to render us unwilling to repress or to condemn atrocities and violence which strike at the root of all prosperity, and whose severest and most immediate pressure falls on the poorest class of the community. Tranquillity, important as it is to all, is essential in a pre-eminent degree to those whose existence depends on their daily labour. The wages of the artizan are the first sacrifice made in times of civil confusion. The landed proprietor, and even the capitalist, may wait for better times, but the working classes perish. What to others is pain, to them is death.

We have hitherto adverted to the larger measures of policy, in which we have shown that the conduct of the present Government has been diametrically opposed to the anticipations of their friends, and to all their principles and their professions. Similar examples are to be found in almost every other act of the session, however secondary. The postponement of the Ecclesiastical Courts' Bill in former years, had been held up to reprobation as a proof of the indolence or the incapacity of

the Whig Government; yet that bill has been again postponed, as also the bill for the registration of voters. The curtailment of colonial measures in former sessions, had been relied on as conclusive evidence of the weakness of Lord Melbourne's Cabinet; yet we have seen Lord Stanley's Newfoundland Bill limited in its duration, and shorn of its fair proportions, when pertinaciously opposed by Mr O'Connell. The alteration of financial measures had been described as an unpardonable offence in Lord Spencer and Lord Monteagle; Sir Robert Peel not only reduced his proposed coal-duties one half, but he claimed credit for the concession. A bill authorizing the importation of foreign flour into Ireland, had been rejected in 1840 by the Tories; the Tories, in 1842, have carried the same measure. A proposal to allow the grinding of foreign wheat in bond, had formerly been opposed by Sir Edward Knatchbull, as being an insult and an injury to the agriculturists; in the last session the very same proposal was made by Mr Gladstone, and met with less opposition from the Paymaster of the Forces than he would have raised to the payment of a turnpike toll in Kent. So far from reducing the funded debt, the present Board of Treasury has increased it; and the redemption of Exchequer bills by the trustees of Savings Banks, (a measure so much misrepresented and objected to,) has received a new legislative sanction under the auspices of Sir Robert Peel. In short, the fixed and definite principle on which it would appear that the Government acted throughout, has been to oppose all that they had previously supported, and to support much that they had most strenuously opposed.

We might here be taxed with disingenuousness, if we were to pass over unnoticed a remarkable defence which has been somewhat ostentatiously put forward in the last number of the *Quarterly Review*. If that defence were admitted, we confess that much of our argument would be inapplicable, and many of our inferences most uncandid and unjust. It is contended that no want of truth and candour can be attributed to the leading Conservatives, no *suppressio veri*, and no *suggestio falsi*; because in June 1841, before the late General Election, an article had been published in that Journal, recommending some alterations in the scale of corn and customs duties. Now, we confess that a very great bribe is held out to induce us to agree with our contemporary. We should thereby assume for ourselves, as well as grant to him, new and most extraordinary rights and functions. We should claim, for our political essays, privileges and authorities hitherto confined to speeches from the Throne, state papers, and the official declarations of responsible ministers. The

present Government would rule not only by the force of a parliamentary majority, but by the grace and favour of the *Quarterly Review*. Till a diplomatist produces his letters of credence, and his full powers, he cannot be recognized by a foreign court. We doubt whether Sir Robert Peel will sign the unlimited power of attorney under which the *Quarterly Reviewer* demands to act. Indeed, it passes all credibility, that at a moment when the secret of the minister was so very carefully kept that the Duke of Buckingham remained his colleague, that Sir James Graham and Lord Stanley made their memorable speeches at Dorchester and in Lancashire, when all explanations were refused to Parliament, the whole future policy of the new administration should have been confided to the generous, faithful, and friendly Reviewer. The dilemma in which the over-zealous advocate has involved himself and his friends, is one of no common difficulty. If, in June 1841, Sir Robert Peel had determined on his line of policy, concealing it from his own cabinet, his friends, and the public, at a time when he confided it to any single literary and political associate, however strong his attachment and approved his fidelity, no greater deception was ever practised in the annals of our history. If, on the contrary, he only determined on his course upon subsequent deliberation, after profiting by those official counsels of which he stated himself to stand in need, the predictions of Mr Murphy's *Weather Almanac* are entitled to as much of authority as the mere surmises of the Reviewer. As well might the glory and responsibility of the victory of Waterloo be claimed by one whose only connexion with that event had been the command of a very awkward squad at Wormwood Scrubs. It also behoves us to reject this supposition, however gratifying to our own self-love as belonging to the class proposed to be exalted; because, if the supposition be founded on fact, many fatal inferences might follow. On the same principle, we might anticipate the reconstruction of the national Church of England according to Tractarian doctrines; the enactment of a new penal code in Ireland; and the excitement of hatred and all uncharitableness between the Anglo-Saxon races on each side of the Atlantic. How very indefensible must this chivalrous advocate have felt the position of his friends to be, when he thus throws himself into the breach, leads forward *les enfans perdus*, and exclaims, '*Me, me, adsum qui feci—in me convertite ferrum!*'

There is another subject which it is impossible to overlook, and yet it is one very difficult to discuss in a sketch so rapid as the present. The anticipated foreign influence of Sir Robert Peel's government has received a most signal contradiction, in the refusal of the French cabinet to ratify the treaty not only

agreed to by their minister, but in some degree negotiated at their own instance. The disgrace of this event, most fatal as it is to the character of the French government, but not very flattering to our national pride, rests, it is true, mainly with the King of the French and with M. Guizot, not with Lord Aberdeen; but had such an event occurred to Lord Palmerston, no epithets would have been too vituperative to have been applied to his conduct. We shall not imitate this injustice. Let the disgrace rest on the foreign statesmen who are really responsible. We not only hope, but we believe, that for this event the Foreign Secretary is in no respect to blame; we have, however, some curiosity to know in what language the complaints and protests of the British Minister have been expressed.

We feel some difficulty in referring to the inexplicable policy of Lord Ellenborough in the East, and yet it cannot be entirely overlooked. In an Empire like ours in British India, which depends so peculiarly upon opinion, and upon a conviction of our moral superiority, a degrading retreat seems to have been meditated, which has only been averted or postponed in consequence of opportune orders from home, or some other happy contingency, which has saved England from unexampled ignominy. Well, indeed, was Lord Palmerston justified in saying that 'he could not conceive a fouler dishonour, or any thing that would have dyed the cheek of every Englishman with a deeper blush, or that would have struck a more fatal blow at our Indian power, than a flight from Affghanistan in the circumstances in which Lord Ellenborough's order was issued.' But if this measure was disgraceful on political grounds, where shall we find words to condemn it, if English soldiers, English subjects, and English women, wives and daughters of our countrymen, were proposed to have been deserted, and left in the hands of barbarians? Our diplomatic minister had been treacherously murdered; the sacred compacts of treaty had been violated; our brave troops had been betrayed and cut to pieces; the heroic Lady Sale and her fellow-sufferers left in captivity; and yet no effort seems to have been made to avenge their wrongs, or to set them free. Scarcely less disgraceful will it be, if the safety of these unhappy persons has been made matter of low and unworthy compromise. At no former period of our history, in our most disastrous campaigns, has any event occurred which seems to us comparable to the ignominy of Lord Ellenborough's proposed retreat.

Whilst this article has been in the press, accounts have been received of the close of our diplomatic controversy with the United States, by the signature of Lord Ashburton's treaty. Considering peace between England and the United States to be impor-

tant, not only to the wellbeing and happiness of both countries, but essential to the cause of liberty and good government throughout the world, we should not feel disposed to enquire curiously whether too much may not have been granted, or too little obtained, as the price of so immeasurable a benefit. Still, if the rights of British subjects, born under British allegiance, and holding their property under British grants, have been abandoned, and if new causes of dispute respecting navigation have been substituted for those which we hope are now terminated, many explanations will be required before Lord Ashburton's treaty can be admitted to be a just claim on the public for gratitude and respect. That his explanations may be satisfactory, we hope, and indeed expect; and if they are so shown, no party difference will prevent us from rendering our most sincere acknowledgments to Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues, as well as to Lord Ashburton, for having happily effected a pacification between two states of common origin, between whom no serious differences can ever arise, without consequences the most fatal to both.

We have now taken a retrospect of the measures of the last session; omitting, however, the subject of Law Reform, including Lord Brougham's *Cessio Bonorum* Bill—one of the most benevolent results of his unwearied exertions in that great cause—for after discussion, in a separate article. We have shown, if our arguments are correct, that the corn-law of Sir R. Peel is founded upon a false principle, and that since its enactment it has worked badly for the Producer and the Consumer. We have shown that in his Tariff he has not carried out his own principles with courage and with effect. We have proved, that while the country is subjected to all the pressure and inquisitorial vexation of an Income-Tax, the Financial difficulties of the times have not been adequately met, nor has any certain surplus of revenue been secured. We have shown, that in place of domestic tranquillity, we have had to deplore riot and insurrection; and that this has been traceable, in a considerable degree, to the exciting and exaggerated doctrines of a section of the Tories, when in opposition. We have shown that all the leading badges and symbols of party, which produced success at the late election, have been thrown aside, as being now no longer necessary. We have shown that, in as far as the measures of the Government are right, they are the very measures of their Opponents; adopted and defended with a disregard of all consistency, and in violation of all the engagements of party connexion. Yet in the adoption of these principles, *we* have our reward, and *our* justification.

Sir Robert Peel may cast his party aside at his pleasure, and

they must submit ; for, difficult as they find it to live with him, without him they cannot live. But Sir Robert Peel cannot arrest the great commercial movement to which, on principle, he has now given his authority. His tariff is all-important by what it promises, if not by what it has effected. It may be described in the lines which an accomplished French poet has applied to Spring—

‘ Il plait plus aux humains
Par les plaisirs qu’il promêt, que par ceux qu’il procure.’

His measures must and will be followed up—his principles must and will be applied further : and if, in so doing, he condemns every measure adopted by his party during the last ten years ; if he thus pays an unwilling, but most respectful homage to the conduct of his opponents ; if he incurs the bitter hostility of his earliest friends ; if he leaves himself without one single newspaper to defend his administration generally ; if the keen blade of Sir Richard Vyvyan is bared against him in Cornwall ; if he is called upon to plead ‘ Guilty or Not Guilty ’ at Plymouth ; if in Leicestershire a cry is raised to dethrone him, in order that Lord Stanley may reign in his stead ; if he makes it a punishment to any of his political supporters to meet their constituents at public meetings, there to defend the votes they have given ; if a Conservative dinner would now be a grievous martyrdom, and a General Election would be all but fatal—he should be reconciled to these mortifications by the thought, that in acting on the impulses produced by the propositions of Mr Baring, he is averting from his country dangers the most imminent, and is promoting the best interests of his fellow-subjects, and of mankind.

Number CLIV. will be published in January.

LIST OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

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