

The mischief that is meditated, is of a magnitude that seems more than mortal, but happily the execution of it requires more than mortal force. The ignorant and innocent slaves that are the instruments on this occasion are men—they must be clothed and fed—they have men to contend with, and are liable to the death they are sent to inflict—they may perish by the sword, by fatigue, by famine, and by disease. The new Alarics that employ them are men also, weak, ignorant, and mortal like the rest. Death will soon level them with the instruments of their guilty ambition. In a few years, or perhaps a few months, Catharine will sleep, lifeless, with Joseph, with Leopold, with *Peter the Third*. New characters less tinctured with prejudice, will receive a portion of the spirit of the age, the systems of despotism be broken, and mortality come in aid of reason and truth.

In the mean time it is possible that Condé and Valenciennes may be taken, and that the hostile armies may march into France as before. If pursued into their own country, Frenchmen will, in all probability, continue united; and they will carry on the war, when compared to their assailants, at little expense. The men are on the spot; their provisions are behind them; muskets are in their hands; enthusiasm in their hearts. The more the nation is compressed within its centre, the more will the elasticity of its force and courage increase. The invaders will probably be again compelled to retreat, and their retreat will neither be easy nor certain: the victorious republicans will pursue them, and again perhaps disdain the restraints of prudence, push their conquests to the banks of the Rhine. A single action lost, a single action recovered, Flanders; and Flanders and Holland will now feel the same blow.

nothing so unlikely as the conquest of France. It has been discussed in the Morning Chronicle by a writer under the signature of "A Calm Observer," with a perspicuity and force of reasoning that nothing can surpass. The whole series of letters far exceed any similar production of the English press.

What

What shall save Holland if Flanders fall? The Coldstream you see are mortal men. Even the three princes of the blood-royal of England will not appal the fierce republicans—*What care these rovers for the name of King?** If the danger I state seem at a distance, let it not on that account be disregarded. Every step the allied armies advance into France, the danger seems to me to approach; and were they within ten leagues of Paris, I should tremble the more for the fate of Amsterdam.

The opportunity of restoring general peace presented itself at the time of the congress of Antwerp. Dumourier had retreated; Flanders was recovered. We had nothing to do but to declare, what must I think be declared in the end, that *if France will confine herself within her own territory, she may there shape out her own constitution at her will.* Had this been done at the time mentioned, Dumourier, not rendered odious by foreign alliance, would in all probability have been able to restore the constitutional monarchy; and in every event, France, occupied by intestine divisions, would, as it seems probable, have left Europe in quiet for many years to come. This policy was so clear that a mere child might have discerned it; it did not even require a negotiation with the French cabinet, and while it secured our best interests, it left our honour without a stain.

How then shall we account for the resolves of the congress of Antwerp? We must unveil the truth. The members of this congress were German princes, or their agents; even the representative of England *there was a German prince.* Such men, from their education, are in general ignorant, and labour under prejudices, from their situation, of a destructive kind.

Military despots in their own dominions, they feel it their personal interest, perhaps they think it the interest of mankind (such may be the force of prejudice) that despotism

* Shakespeare's Tempest.

should be universal. To such men the anarchy of France under Jacobin rulers is not half so alarming, as the constitution to which this may give birth. They are aware that the crimes acting there at present are sufficient to render the French name detestable among their subjects; but if these crimes should open the eyes of the French themselves—if out of the mingled wrecks of despotism and anarchy, a limited monarchy should arise in France, as it did in England, or any other form of a free constitution that secures subordination to law—then it is that the French example will become far more destructive to arbitrary governments than their arms, and the crowned heads of Germany, great and small, will have real cause to tremble. It is true, if they were enlightened, they need not tremble at all; they would see that arbitrary power is as destructive to him that possesses, as to him that endures it. But it cannot be expected that they should discern this—the errors of education blind all but very superior minds; and though Germany produces more princes than all Europe besides, it is not once in a century that she produces a prince that is a truly great man. *

Mr. Fox contends that government is *from* the people; Mr. Wyndham that it is *only for* the people. These philological distinctions are not attended to by the rulers of Germany, among whom even the word *people* is not to be found. Their *subjects*, they know, are accustomed to obedience; the bless-

* Frederick the second was an extraordinary man, and it has amused many persons to suppose how he might have acted on the present occasion. This however seems pretty certain, that he would not have lain eight months in the neighbourhood of Mentz before he found an opportunity of laying siege to it. The present conduct of the Prussians conveys an eulogium on the talents of that great monarch, beyond the power of Hertzberg's oratory. As however they considered themselves sacrificed before, their present backwardness may arise as much from spleen as from any other cause.

ings that flow from liberty and property they have never experienced, and they are therefore fit instruments in the hands of arbitrary power. Germany, it is well known, is inhabited chiefly by princes, nobles, musicians, and peasantry; merchants, manufacturers, and country gentlemen, the leading descriptions of Englishmen, are there almost wholly unknown. The three first of these classes are, during war, in their natural element; and the last, who sustain all the evils and all the burthens, are as yet too abject and too ignorant to make their sufferings dangerous to those by whom they are oppressed. A perseverance in the war will indeed destroy what little trade and manufactures there are in Germany, and render their governments (that of Hanover excepted, whose military expenses are defrayed by England) universally bankrupt. The creditors of the states will be ruined, but the expenses of the courts and armies will not perhaps on that account be less. The ordinary revenue of a German prince depends chiefly on the products of the soil, and dreadful must be the oppression indeed, before these fail. The peasantry will be taxed more and more to support increasing burthens, and the extortion of such taxes will rivet the poverty and ignorance through which alone these burthens are endured. It is thus that the tyranny of the rulers and the degradation of the people must keep equal pace; it is thus that despotism forms a natural alliance with ignorance; blasts every charm of rational nature, and blunts every feeling of the human heart. There is indeed a point at which the oppression of the most abject becomes no longer safe—a point which, if I mistake not, the despotic governments of Europe are fast approaching. They have undertaken to subdue the enemies of kingly government in France, and are staking their whole credit on the issue of an undertaking from which, according to every human appearance, they will return baffled and disgraced. The most despotic governments

governments depend for their existence on opinion as well as the most free. If the concert of princes should be baffled, the prejudices of their subjects will be shaken, and the foundation of their thrones will from that moment be for ever insecure.

Behold then, once more, a crisis which has so often occurred in history; which has presented so frequent and so awful a warning to rulers, and has presented it so often in vain! A government bankrupt by its own waste and folly; sensible of its insecurity, and therefore jealous, irritable, and oppressive. A people already labouring under almost intolerable burthens, and doomed to suffer others more heavy still—casting off with its prejudices, the habitual submission and respect to its rulers, and imbibing those immutable truths which are so dangerous to oppressors, and sometimes indeed so fatal to those who are oppressed. Every day the breach widens—the sword at length is drawn and the scabbard cast away.—In the dreadful conflict which follows there is only one alternative; the government must be overturned, or the people reduced to the condition of beasts. We cannot have forgotten the causes which have produced the revolutions of Switzerland, Holland, and England—which have so recently produced the revolution of France;—the same causes are again conspiring to shake all Europe to its centre, and to form a new æra in human affairs.

What a dreadful infatuation is it which involves the fate of Englishmen in this impending ruin—which embarks our commerce, our manufactures, our revenue, perhaps our constitution itself, the source of all our blessings, in this desperate crusade of despotism and superstition against anarchy and enthusiasm; in the course of which, however it terminate, we can reap nothing but misfortune; and in the issue of which we may learn, that no human institution can withstand the folly of those who administer its powers.

Men of Switzerland, how I respect you ! While the hurricane of human passions sweeps over France, Italy, and Germany, elevated on your lofty mountains, you are above the region of the storm. Secure in your native sense, your sincere patriotism, your simple governments, your invincible valour, your eternal hills—you can look down on the follies and the crimes which desolate Europe with calmness and with pity, and anticipate the happy æra when perhaps you may mediate universal peace. Sea-girt Britain might have enjoyed this situation, had she known how to estimate her blessings, and kept aloof from the madness of the day.

At this moment the session of parliament closes ;—a dead stillness prevails over England, the natural consequence of astonishment at the spreading destruction, and of strong passions violently suppressed. The Opposition, deserted by all those *feeble amateurs*, whose minds have not sufficient comprehension to discern the true interest of their country, or whose nerves are too weak to bear up against vulgar prejudice, has endeavoured, but in vain, to discover the extent of our continental engagements, or the real objects of the war *. Two hundred and eighty members, ranging behind you, support every measure you propose ; and among the whole number, not a man has been found to inquire of you openly, in the name and in behalf of the people of England, how long their patience is to endure, and how far the progress of ruin is to extend ?

You have assumed on this awful occasion the whole responsibility of public measures, and your character and reputation, I fear, you mistakingly conceive, are wholly committed on the successful issue of the war. Your real friends must

* Security and compensation are words that may be explained at pleasure.

sincerely

sincerely lament this on your own account ; the friends of their country will lament it, on account of the general calamities it is likely to produce. The nation, Mr. Pitt, has loved you "well—not wisely," and it is partly in consequence of this, that at the present moment her real interests are opposed to the personal honour of him she has trusted and idolized. In this day of distress she is told to repose in the constitutional responsibility of ministers. "Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle, thou whom the merchants of Zidon that pass over the sea have replenished."—ISAIAH. Alas ! what will silence do ? Will the responsibility of ministers restore her ruined trade, feed her starving manufacturers ; will it replace the husband and father to the widow or the orphan, or restore to the aged parent his gallant son ? Will it recall to life the brave men now mouldering in unhallowed earth in Flanders, joint-tenants of a common grave with those against whom they fought ? *

* * * * *

If I were bold enough to appreciate your political life, Mr. Pitt, I should be inclined to allow the outset of it extraordinary merit. The sentiment of approbation that attended you was indeed almost universal—you were the hope of the good, the pride of the wise, the idol of your country. If your official career had terminated with the discussions on the Regency, though one of the most fatal of your mistakes had been committed before this, it may be questioned whether modern Europe could have produced a politician or an orator more strenuous, more exalted, more authoritative † ; one whose

* This affecting circumstance is, I am told, literally true.

† See Mr. Gratton's character of Lord Chatham, printed as Dr. Robertson's.

ambition was apparently more free from selfishness; who afforded to his opponents less room for censure, or gave to his friends more frequent occasions of generous triumph and honest applause.—The errors that you have fallen into, are natural for men long possessed of power uncontrolled; and in imputing them to you, I accuse you only of the weaknesses of human nature. It is not necessary to a free people to have rulers exempt from such weaknesses; but it is necessary for them to watch and to guard against these infirmities.

It is natural, I believe, for successful ambition to seek new objects on which it may exert itself. Hence, after you had subdued opposition in England, you issued forth like another Hercules in quest of new adventures; and traversed the continent of Europe to seek monsters whom you might subdue. You could not however but be sensible, that the reputation of a minister of trade and finance, which you had justly obtained, was incompatible with that of a great war minister in the present state of the nation. You took therefore the middle line; you made preparations for fighting on every occasion, but you took care not to strike. England might perhaps bear the expense of arming, but could not actually go to war; and this secret, which your three successive armaments discovered to all Europe, led Mirabeau on his death-bed to give you the name of *ministre préparatif*.

In men long in possession of power, a secret sympathy (unknown perhaps to themselves) is gradually strengthening in favour of others in the same situation, and a secret prejudice, amounting perhaps at last to enmity, against opposition to power in every form. Hence the danger you saw to England in the triumph of the patriots of Holland over the Prince of Orange, and the safety we acquired from the subjugation of the Dutch by the Prussian arms.—Hence also the perfect composure with which you expected the conquest

quest of France by the despots of Germany, and the sudden alarm with which you were seized, on the repulsion of that invasion, and the overrunning of Flanders by the republican arms. By the freedom of Brabant, the constitution of England might be endangered; but it became the more secure in your eye, it should seem, by the extension of despotism over every corner of Europe, and the success of foreign bayonets in rooting out *liberty* as well as licentiousness in France.

It is also to the unhappy prejudices of your situation that I attribute your want of moderation of temper on occasions of the utmost moment; your allying your great talents with the weak judgments and violent passions of those around you; and your blindness (if such it be) to the real dangers of this commercial nation, and to the path of safety and of true honour, which it was no less your duty than your interest to pursue.

In contemplating events of such magnitude as those connected with the French revolution, the utmost calmness, as well as comprehension of mind, is required—and more particularly required in him who directs the affairs of a great nation. Unhappily these qualities are seldom found in any station; and this revolution, seen in part only, has become the object of wild encomium, or of bitter reprobation, as the prejudices of men have been affected, or their sympathies engaged. The most prudent part perhaps for one whose political situation is influenced by the opinions he is supposed to hold, is to be silent on the subject. It is uncertain how this extraordinary event may terminate, and its ultimate effects on the human race cannot yet be ascertained. At present however, it is well known, that not in England only, but in every part of Europe, the dreadful excesses in Paris, and elsewhere, have turned the tide of popular sentiment and opinion strongly against the French. Even under the most despotic governments, the people at present hug their chains, and tyr-
ranny

ranny itself is secure. Can it then be supposed, that in England there is any serious danger from the contagion of French principles; in England, where the constitution is so substantially good, and the people so loyal and united? The theological and sectarian prejudices of different and opposite kinds through which the affairs of France have been viewed, have indeed contributed most fatally to bewilder the understanding, and to inflame the prejudices of Englishmen; and to these is to be imputed in a great degree, that most singular delusion—that the safety of our constitution has depended on our risking all our blessings in this most fruitless, expensive, and bloody war. That delusion (for such I consider it) is now I hope nearly over; and peace, which is the general interest, will soon, I doubt not, be the universal wish. Every consideration calls loudly for it; and it may be much more easily obtained now, when our enemies are humbled, and the people of England are still patient and silent, than at a future period, when the invading armies may be checked or repulsed, and the nation is become openly impatient under the expense and ruin of the war. A man of your sagacity will easily discern, that in times like the present, the gale of popular opinion is constantly shifting the point whence it blows, and will see that it cannot be trusted to carry you forward in your present course, in the face of great and increasing obstacles.

The present state of affairs in this country, and on the continent of Europe, forms a subject too interesting to be left without reluctance—but far too extensive to be thoroughly investigated within the limits of a letter like this. The events of the day that is passing are likely to affect every portion of Europe, and, in their consequences, the condition of the human race throughout the habitable earth. Many of the “bearings and ties” of this important subject I have been obliged to neglect, and others I have only glanced at; for I write on the spur of the occasion, and under difficulties and interruptions

terruptions of various kinds. Should what I have written have the fortune to reach you, you will see that it is addressed to you more "in sorrow than in anger," and on that account alone that it is not wholly unworthy of your regard. But I would farther persuade myself that it may suggest topics for serious reflection, by impressing on your mind the progress and unexampled extension of the war-system throughout Europe; the corresponding progress of the funding-system; the crisis which this last has in some countries reached, and is every where approaching; and the probable as well as certain effects of this on our own commercial nation and on mankind at large.

Hitherto you have taken it for granted, that though there is a certain point of depression to which the commerce of this country may sink in consequence of the war, yet that from this, as in former wars, it will naturally return. I have suggested to you, that this supposition is dangerous, as well as fallacious, from the increased progress of our debts and taxes, from the locking up of the capital of our manufactures in foreign debts, and from the growing poverty as well as the general bankruptcy that spreads over Europe, in consequence of the continued pressure of former burthens, and the unexampled extent and expense of the present war. I have not stated to you, under this head, the effects of a rapidly sinking revenue, or of the emigration of our people to America; because these considerations are so extremely serious that they cannot be mentioned without grief and alarm, and may form, of themselves, a very ample subject for separate discussion.

Mr. Dundas told us, in the house of commons, that our commercial distresses arose from our extraordinary prosperity, and boasted that all the world united with us in the war against France. I have shewn that his assertion is a poor sophism, and his boast a subject of sorrow and apprehension.

Mr. Wyndham expressed his acquiescence in the loss of

our commerce, if we might retain our constitution ; and on the same ground of preserving our constitution, this perilous war has been often defended by yourself, your followers, and a great part of the nation. I have made out to you, what I know not how, as chancellor of the exchequer, you can well be ignorant of, that our commerce and our constitution have a most intimate dependence on each other ; and that when the union is formed by twenty-four millions of taxes, tythes, and poor-rates, and two hundred and fifty millions of debt, they may be considered as embarked in the same adventure, and as likely to perish in the same storm.

How the war commenced I have endeavoured to explain, and you will consider in your calmer moments, whether you really exerted yourself to preserve peace by negotiation, instead of procuring it by arms ; and to what profit you have turned the honest affection of your countrymen for their constitution and king, and the generous indignation with which they surveyed the madness and brutality of their neighbours.

On various occasions during this bloody contest I have shewn that the peace of Europe was in our power ; that it was in our power recently on the retreat of Dumourier, and after we ourselves had tasted the calamities of war. Why it was rejected you must yourself explain ;—I have described the congress at Antwerp, and am no farther master of the subject.

The views that you conceal cannot be ascertained, but what you have actually performed is not liable to misapprehension. I have suggested to you, that you have united Englishmen in the interests and in the councils of those who formed the treaty of Pillnitz ; who retain Fayette in chains ; who were the real cause of the triumphs of the Jacobin party in France over limited monarchy ; who are in fact the pretext that the present an-

chists have employed, and will employ, to justify their desperate proceedings; and who, by their recent conduct in Poland, have given such proofs of their ambition, as well as of their power, as must fill the heart of every friend of his species with horror and alarm. That the destroyers of the constitution of Poland can be friendly to our own, the model on which it was formed, no one will believe. They are the deadly foes of liberty throughout the world; and I might have shewn you, that in the destruction of our revenue and commerce, the bulwarks will be removed which secure us from their overwhelming force. I might also have pointed out the danger of sending our army to fight under their banners, and our princes to associate in their councils;—but there are sentiments of serious alarm which a lover of his country must deeply feel, that in this season of delusion it may be dangerous to utter.

Of the two motives for continuing the war, security and compensation, I have considered that which alone I can understand, the former; and have shewn that the attempt to take and to separate from France its frontier towns on the north, is full of difficulty and hazard, and that while it may render the war doubly bloody and desperate, it can afford no security beyond what might be obtained from fortifying Austrian Flanders, already in our power. The true security to this country arising from the settlement of the French government, I have endeavoured to shew, is not promoted, but absolutely prevented by the present invasion, which, should it be repelled, may leave unfortified Brabant, as well as Holland, an easy conquest to the republican arms.

In the fearful tragedy which is now acting on the theatre of Europe, you have unhappily made England one of the persons of the drama, and she cannot but act a part of unparalleled importance. You have assumed the direction of this

part to yourself, and before parliament again meets, the hopes and the fears of the enlightened, and the real interests of at least the present race of mankind, may be at issue on your single counsels. More than one false step you have already made—the precipice is directly in your path, that leads to inevitable destruction. I know the temptations and the difficulties of your situation—we will forget the past, but if you advance, how shall you be forgiven?

In considering the aspect of the present times, I am sometimes affected with deep melancholy; yet I am not one of those who despair of the fortunes of the human race. Through the thick clouds and darkness that surround us, I discern the workings of an overruling mind. Superstition I know is the natural offspring of ignorance, and governs in the dark ages with a giant's strength.—Unassisted reason is a feeble enemy: opposed to superstition, reason, in days of ignorance, is a dwarf. In the order of providence, enthusiasm arises to resist superstition—to combat a monster with a monster's force. What did Erasmus in the days of Luther? What would Lowth have done in the days of Wycliffe, or Blair in those of Knox? In the councils of Heaven, mean and wicked instruments are often employed for the highest purposes. The authors of the reformation were many of them ignorant, fierce, and even bloody; but the work itself was of the most important and most universal benefit to the human race. The *despotism* of priests then received its death-wound, and the *despotism* of princes has now perhaps sustained a similar blow.—Pure religion has survived and improved after the first; the true science of government may improve after the last, and be built every where on the solid foundations of utility and law. Before such happy consequences ensue, dreadful commotions may indeed be expected over Europe, commotions which England, and perhaps England only, may, if she is wise, escape.

escape. The present generation will probably be swept away before the intellectual earthquake subsides; but those who succeed them, will, I trust, find the air more pure and balmy, and the skies more bright and serene.

June 6, 1793.

J. W.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

IN printing a second edition of this letter, it may not be useless to enquire, how far the events which have happened since its first publication correspond to the representations, or illustrate the reasonings, it contains.

Your warmest and most injudicious partizans, Mr. Pitt, will not deny that the bankrupt state of the continental powers, our allies, becomes every day more evident.—Englishmen have had a melancholy proof of the nature of the connections they have formed, not merely in the subsidies to Hanover, or to that flower of chivalry the Prince of Hesse (who sells the lives of his subjects at the rate of thirty banco crowns for each), but in the succours demanded by the Austrians to enable them to keep the field; in the ruin of the commerce as well as the finance of Russia (when the ruble, by the regular opérations of its government, is reduced, in foreign exchange, to less than half its value); and in that most unprecedented of all treaties with the King of Sardinia, by which we are to pay him two hundred thousand pounds annually, to keep up his own army, for the defence of his own country!

Though the merchants of this kingdom felt the sad effects of the war first, it was predicted, that on the manufacturers it would fall with the most unrelenting ruin. The truth of this is now undeniable—even the woollen and iron branches of manufacture, which in former wars in a great measure escaped, are now almost in a state of stagnation.—He who handled the shuttle for three shillings a day, must now take sixpence, and handle the spear;—and many of the enlightened and virtuous assertors of the constitution at Birmingham, so successful in their skirmishes with heresy
and

and the beasts of the flesh, are now doomed to a harder service on the frontiers of France, where the "Bubble Reputation" must be "fought," not in the libraries or laboratories, or peaceful habitations of unprotected science, but in the hostile fortrefs, "and in the cannon's mouth."

The reasoning respecting paper-money is also confirmed—So far from this being the cause of our commercial distresses, it is now found, under proper regulations, to be the best alleviation for them that the times admit; and a Bank is proposed at Glasgow, and one has been established at Liverpool, for this express purpose.

What was observed on the subject of the supposed plots and conspiracies, which have so fatally bewildered the understandings of men, seems also to be strengthened by the progress of events.—The trial of Mr. Frost, from which so much was expected, is now before the public, and the tenderness of the recorder of Leicester has sunk deep into the public mind.—The zeal and activity of government have instituted various prosecutions, and leave no reason to suppose, that, through mistaken lenity, treason or sedition have been spared. As yet, however, the shadow of a conspiracy has not been discovered—If there be men, Mr. Pitt, lurking in the bosom of their country, who have plotted with France for the destruction of our constitution, let their guilty blood stream on the scaffold; the minister, who would spare them, is himself a traitor—but let not the friends of their king and country, who oppose your present measures, be involved in so foul a charge, "to fright the isle from its propriety," and to involve Us still deeper in this ruinous war.

With regard to those men who have persuaded themselves, that the safety of England depends on her persisting in the invasion of France, till monarchy shall be forced on that kingdom by the allied arms; the occurrences of the last two months on the continent may abate their confidence, and
dispose

dispose them to regard, with more attention and alarm, our situation at home—The fearful diminution of our existing revenue and the increased expenses of the war will require, it is evident, new methods and objects of taxation—these, our wounded commerce and our diminished consumption cannot possibly support ; and the necessity of increasing the land tax is already incurred :—but if the war continues, eight shillings in the pound will do little towards the support of the public expenditure, which, even on the peace establishment (if poor-rates be included), already exceeds the gross amount of all the landlords' rents in England—a tax on the funds, of which the Dutch have long ago set us the example, may, therefore, be expected, and may at last rouse the monied men from that blind and selfish acquiescence in the measures of every administration, which has been the chief support of our war-politicks.—A friend, Sir, to the family on the throne, to our limited monarchy, and our constitution of three estates—a friend, above all, to the interests of my country, and the happiness of the human race, I deprecate the continuance of this dreadful war—my reasons are now before you and the public—however ineffectual my humble exertions may be to ward off the impending calamities, I shall still have the satisfaction of having performed my duty, and can appeal to the Searcher of Hearts for the purity of my views.

* God of peace and love ! look down in mercy on thy erring creatures, and bid hatred, madness, and murder cease !

July 25, 1793.

J. W.

21

A
V I E W,
&c.

BY THE HONOURABLE THOMAS ERSKINE.

A (37)

VIEW

OF THE

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OF THE PRESENT

WAR WITH FRANCE.

BY THE HONOURABLE THOMAS ERSKINE.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH EDITION.

~~~~~

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. DEBRETT, PICCADILLY.

M,DCC,XCVII.

---

A  
V I E W,

82c.

---

ON the 26th of last December, his Majesty by a gracious message to both Houses of Parliament, communicated with the utmost concern, the abrupt termination of the late negotiation with France, and directed the details of the embassy to be laid before them for their consideration.

Upon this occasion it appeared, that the negotiation had terminated upon a difference totally unconnected with the original causes of the war. It was manifest, that this country had completely abandoned the principles which, in the face of all Europe, the great confederacy against France had assigned as the justification of hostilities. The return of peace (now removed to an incalculable distance) turned entirely upon territorial cessions, neither in fact nor in principle contested at the time of the rupture, but which, as will appear by the following pages, were put at the feet

of Great Britain, as the arbiters of universal tranquillity.

This was our condition. The object of the contest totally sunk, but the contest continuing without prospect of conclusion, one hundred millions of debt added to the former grievous weight of national incumbrances; many channels of our commerce obstructed, and our manufactures suffering in proportion; objects of revenue within the pale of luxury threatening unproduction from the necessity of extending them beyond what luxuries will carry, whilst the sinews of the laborious poor were cracking under the burdens already imposed upon all the necessaries of life.

The English people had heretofore been characterised by an extreme jealousy of their government; by a disposition rather to magnify, and even to imagine evils, than to submit without inquiry to actual and unexampled calamities. A great public sensation might, therefore, have been expected from such a conjuncture; more especially as the near approach of peace had been industriously circulated and anxiously anticipated; yet, as far as I have been able to inform myself, no public event of any magnitude ever appeared to be received with more perfect indifference and unconcern. Instead of any desire to question the prudence of the public councils, to review the past, or to provide for the future, it appeared to be more than ever the prevailing, and seemingly

seemingly exulting maxim, that government must be supported; mixed too with a considerable degree of bitterness against all who questioned its proceedings.

That government must be supported is a maxim just and incontrovertible, when properly understood. But the administration and the government have of late been confounded. A change in the one is considered as a subversion of the other; and a disposition to remove abuses, under any regulations, is accounted, even by those who admit and lament their existence, as an attack upon the constitution which suffers from them.

It is from this wide-spread sensation that the authors of our present calamities are cherished and supported, even by those who condemn them; whilst they, who with wisdom and perseverance have opposed all the measures which produced them, are discountenanced and distrusted.

Such an unnatural change in the feelings and characters of Englishmen has naturally given rise to speculations upon its causes. It is impossible to ascribe it wholly either to the general increase of luxury, or to the enormous increase of the crown's influence: these are capable, indeed, of producing great changes in the public character, and are fast producing them; but their march is too slow to have reached so suddenly to the pitch we are ar-

rived at. The state of the public mind must therefore be otherwise accounted for, and another cause has accordingly been assigned for it---the phenomenon of the French revolution, and its mighty influence upon the higher orders of men. This is true in part : the French revolution is the cause, but not the only cause ; it would have probably subsided quickly, and with consequences extremely different, but for the cotemporary phenomenon of the power and character of the British minister.

Within all our memories another great revolution had taken place, scarcely less striking and extraordinary, as it applied to alarm the government of Great Britain. The foundation of republican America had a similar, if not an equal, tendency to produce the same disposition in the people to an indiscriminate support of ministers. If degrees of comparisons were necessary to my argument, I might assert, that the era of the American war had even a more natural and obvious tendency than the later one in France to collect the landed and monied interest of England in a blind support of the ministers of the day.

The revolution in America, like the revolution of France, exhibited to the world the danger of suffering the general grievances of a people, real or imaginary, to remain unredressed ; but with this striking difference---the revolution in France was the subversion of a foreign government ; that of America was the destruction of our own : the discon-

tent



tents that provoked the French to resistance were abuses which could not be felt by Englishmen under any misgovernment ; but the Americans were revolted subjects, and the cause of their revolt was the abuses and corruptions in our own constitution ; the very abuses and corruptions which are complained of to this hour. Yet so impossible is it to take any correct account of the events of the world, without attending to the characters of men who are the actors in them ; so vain is it to think of tracing civil consequences from their causes, as if we were dealing with the operations of matter, that, unless we look to the accidental impulses arising from individual predominancy, we should be constantly deceived. The American convulsion produced a sensation in England directly the reverse of what is felt at this moment ; and the same man gave to the two events, so calculated to have produced corresponding effects, a direction and consequences diametrically opposite. With the one he roused the British democracy to threaten the corruptions of the other orders which had tainted and enslaved it ; with the other he now frightens the people into a surrender of their best privileges, and claims the title of an upright minister upon principles which he repeatedly and solemnly declared to be utterly inconsistent with the very existence of an upright administration.

It may be said, that the two revolutions were very different.—Very different indeed.—It is now too late

late to rail at or fight with the one, and our railing and fighting have created almost all the evils of the other. America and France began their revolutions upon the same principles, but with very different fortunes. America had no ancient internal aristocracy—France had nothing else. America had to contend with England only; a contention which gave her France to protect her: France had to contend against the world. When England had exhausted and disgraced herself, America was therefore free; but France had to exhaust and disgrace the world, and in the dreadful effort has been driven to extremities which frequently has disgraced herself. But, with these accidental differences, the objects were the same: discontent occasioned by abuses produced both revolutions. Both governments might have continued monarchical, if corrupt power would have submitted to correction: they are now both free representative republics; and if corruption will not yet be corrected, let her look to herself.

During the first of these great æras, Mr. Pitt began his public life, under circumstances so splendid and so honourable to himself, that, having no personal enmity towards him, it is painful to me to recur to them; indeed, if any part of what is written hereafter shall appear to be dictated by so unworthy a motive, I utterly and solemnly disclaim it. I make no attack upon his private character; but the public existence is at stake: Mr. Pitt is a minister in a most awful crisis: I feel a duty in examining his conduct

conduct in that capacity, and my public conduct in opposing him is equally open to the animadversion of the world. It is only by looking back to the past that we can hope to correct the future; and when delusion has overspread a nation, the illumination of an angel would only darken it, unless the causes of it were first detected and exposed. To obtain security for England, we must look back to the time when she was at peace: we must examine the causes and progress of the war; must retrace all our steps, and look, if we dare, to what they lead.

Towards the close of the American war, Mr. Pitt (a boy almost), saw the corrupt condition of Parliament, from the defect in the representation of the people, with the eyes of a mature statesman: the eagle eyes of his father had seen it before him, and the thunder of his eloquence had made it tremble. Lord Chatham had detected and exposed the rank corruption of the House of Commons as the sole cause of that fatal quarrel, and left it as a legacy to his son to avenge and to correct it. The youthful exertions of Mr. Pitt were worthy of the delegation.—From my acquaintance with him, both before and upon his first entrance into public life, I have no doubt of his perfect sincerity in the cause he then undertook; and the maturity of his judgment, even at that time, with which I was well acquainted, secures his conduct from the rashness of unthinking youth. His efforts are in the memory of the whole public, and their miscarriage at that time are not, in my opinion, to be imputed to him.

Corruption and abuse, always uniform, opposed to Mr. Pitt's propositions of reformation the identical objections which, *under his own auspices*, they oppose to all reformation now ; and Parliament at that time, like the late Parliament, for motives which I leave to every man's own reflection, rejected reformation in all its shapes. Within the walls of the House of Commons, the proprietors of boroughs expressed their indignation (as they have lately, and as they would to-morrow) that such a preposterous time should be chosen for alteration, however wise or regulated, as the conclusion of the American war ; the empire, they said, had been rent asunder by the fermentation of political opinions ; that our colonists had become republicans ; and that if the door were once opened to changes, who should prescribe their limits ?

These arguments triumphed in the House of Commons, but Mr. Pitt triumphed with the disinterested part of the nation. His arguments for chusing that crisis were convincing and unanswerable. The cause of reform was highly popular, and men of the greatest rank and fortune took the lead in it. Irregularities of course were committed, but the public mind was sound. Libels on Parliament at that time, as since, were written ; but Mr. Pitt's were unquestionably the strongest and the best. Public meetings, to take the sense of the people upon the conduct of the House of Commons in rejecting the proposition, were universally promoted ; but those of Mr. Pitt, at the Thatched House Tavern, (as might be expected from his talents

and

Corruption and abuse, always uniform, opposed to Mr. Pitt's propositions of reformation the identical objections which, *under his own auspices*, they oppose to all reformation now ; and Parliament at that time, like the late Parliament, for motives which I leave to every man's own reflection, rejected reformation in all its shapes. Within the walls of the House of Commons, the proprietors of boroughs expressed their indignation (as they have lately, and as they would to-morrow) that such a preposterous time should be chosen for alteration, however wise or regulated, as the conclusion of the American war ; the empire, they said, had been rent asunder by the fermentation of political opinions ; that our colonists had become republicans ; and that if the door were once opened to changes, who should prescribe their limits ?

These arguments triumphed in the House of Commons, but Mr. Pitt triumphed with the disinterested part of the nation. His arguments for chusing that crisis were convincing and unanswerable. The cause of reform was highly popular, and men of the greatest rank and fortune took the lead in it. Irregularities of course were committed, but the public mind was found. Libels on Parliament at that time, as since, were written ; but Mr. Pitt's were unquestionably the strongest and the best. Public meetings, to take the sense of the people upon the conduct of the House of Commons in rejecting the proposition, were universally promoted ; but those of Mr. Pitt, at the Thatched House Tavern, (as might be expected from his talents  
and

reformers: that the French revolution had intervened; that it had caused a great fermentation in the minds of men; that it appeared to have given to the zeal of some British reformers a tinge of republicanism; and that the effects and consequences of that great event had read an awful lesson to the world. Had Mr. Pitt acted with good faith upon these considerations, if he really entertained them, I know enough of the character of his understanding to believe that his conduct would have been different; and his original principle, on which he rested the whole of his memorable argument for the reform of Parliament, confirms me in that belief. Mr. Pitt's principle, illustrated by the American contest, was, that the holding high the abuses of government had been the foundation of all danger and violence to its authority. He would therefore have again brought forward the British constitution in its purity, as an antidote to republican speculations; confident that from his situation, and from the double hold he would have had by it over the nation, he might have given the spirit of reform his own direction, and moulded it to his own will. But unfortunately for England, he could not do this WITHOUT AT LEAST A TEMPORARY SACRIFICE OF HIS STATION AS MINISTER; Mr. Pitt, therefore, chose to remain in his station upon the only principles in which, without reform, it could possibly be maintained.

Having made this election, it is impossible, without the grossest injustice, to deny that he has con-

ducted himself with masterly skill, and with a boldness without example in the history of the minister of any regular government. The enthusiasm for English reform, animated in its zeal from the struggles of the first reformers of France, when the Bastille fell, and when the Parliament of Paris opened its doors to the representatives of the nation, began to assume an energy of which wisdom and virtue might have taken the safe direction, but which, I admit, at the same time, required either to be managed by a liberal support from government, or to be checked in its excesses by a prudent and constitutional restraint. The British minister took neither of these courses. Too old in office to put his situation to hazard, by supporting the liberal principles which bestowed it; too bold and too strongly supported to employ caution in his remedy; embittered, perhaps, with the reflection of his own defection, and with the reproaches levelled at him, he seems to have resolved to cut the Gordian knot with a sword. Alarmed at the contagion of liberty from France, he determined to cut off all communication between the two nations, and to keep them separated at the chance, or rather the certainty, from his own creation, of a general war in Europe.

For this purpose the honest but irregular zeal of some societies, instituted for the reform of Parliament, furnished a seasonable but a contemptible pretext; they had sent congratulations to the French government when it had ceased to be monarchical:

in their correspondencies through the country on the abuses and corruptions of the British constitution, they had unfortunately mixed many ill-timed and extravagant encomiums upon the revolution of France, whilst its practice, for the time, had broke loose from the principles which deserved them; and, in their just indignation towards the confederacies then forming in Europe, they wrote many severe strictures against their monarchical establishments, from which the mixed principles of our own government were not distinctly or prudently separated. They wrote besides, as an incitement to the reform of Parliament, many bitter observations upon the defective constitution, and the consequent corruptions of the House of Commons; some of which, according to the just theory of the law, were unquestionably libels.

These irregularities and excesses were, for a considerable length of time, wholly overlooked by government. Mr. Paine's works had been extensively and industriously circulated throughout England and Scotland; the correspondencies, which above a year afterwards became the subject of the state trials, had been printed in every newspaper, and sold without question or interruption in every shop in the kingdom; when a circumstance took place, not calculated, one would imagine, to have occasioned any additional alarm to the country, but which (mixed with the effects on the public from Mr. Burke's first celebrated publication on the French  
Revo-



Revolution,) seems to have given rise to the King's Proclamation, the first act of government regarding France and her affairs.

A few gentlemen, not above fifty in number, and consisting principally of persons of rank, talents, and character, formed themselves into a society, under the name of the Friends of the People. They had observed with concern, as they professed in the published motives of their association, the grossly unequal representation of the people in the House of Commons; its effects upon the measures of government; but, above all, its apparent tendency to lower the dignity of Parliament, and to deprive it of the opinion of the people. Their avowed object was, therefore, to bring the very cause, which Mr. Pitt had so recently taken the lead in, fairly and respectfully before the House of Commons; in hopes, as they declared, to tranquillise the agitated part of the public, to restore affection and respect for the legislature, so necessary to secure submission to its authority; and, by concentrating the views of all reformers to the preservation of our invaluable constitution, to prevent that fermentation of political opinion, which the French revolution had undoubtedly given rise to, from taking a republican direction in Great Britain.\* These were not only the professed objects of this association, but the truth and good faith of

\* I declare, upon my honour, these were my reasons for becoming a member of that society.

them received afterwards the sanction of judicial authority, when their proceedings were brought forward by government in the course of the state trials.

Nevertheless, on the very day that Mr. Grey, at the desire of this small society, gave notice of his intended motion in the House of Commons, there was an instantaneous movement amongst ministers, as if a great national conspiracy had been discovered. No act of government appeared to have been in agitation before that period, although the correspondencies before alluded to had, for months, been public and notorious, and there was scarcely an information, even for a libel, upon the file of the Court of King's Bench. Nevertheless, a council was almost immediately held, and his Majesty was advised to issue his royal proclamation of the 21st of May, 1792, to rouse the vigilance and attention of the magistrates throughout the kingdom to the vigorous discharge of their duties.

If this had been the only object of the proclamation, and if it had been followed up by no other proceedings than the suppression of libels, and a coercive respect for the authorities of Parliament, it would have been happy for England; unfortunately it seemed to have other objects, which, if as a subject of the country I have no right to condemn, I may at least, with the freedom of history, be now allowed to lament.

The proclamation had unquestionably for its object to spread the alarm against French principles; and, to do it effectually, all principles were considered as French by his Majesty's ministers which questioned the infallibility of their own government, or which looked towards the least change in the representation of the people in Parliament.

If it had issued, however, under the authority of the British ministry only, it probably could not have produced its important and unfortunate effects. But the minister, before he advised the measure, had taken care to secure the disunion of the Whig party, which had hitherto firmly and uniformly opposed both the principles and practice of his administration. To this body I gloried to belong, as I still do to cling even to the weather-beaten pieces of the wreck which remains of it. Neither am I ashamed of the appellation of party, when the phrase is properly understood; for without parties, cemented by the union of sound principles, evil men and evil principles cannot be successfully resisted. I flatter myself that the people of England will not hastily believe, that I have ever been actuated in my public conduct by interest or ambition.

The Whig party, as it has been called, was insignificant indeed from its numbers, and weak from the formidable influence of the crown in the hands of its adversaries; but formidable, nevertheless, from illustrious rank, great property, and splendid talents;

talents; still more from an opinion of public integrity, which formed a strong hold upon the minds of the country. I look back with the most heart-felt and dispiriting sorrow to the division of this little phalanx, whose union upon the principles which first bound them together might, in spite of differences of opinion in matters concerning which good men may fairly differ, have preserved the peace of the world, re-animated the forms of our own constitution, and averted calamities, the end of which I tremble to think of. Reflecting, however, as I do, upon the frailties of human nature, adverting to the deceptions which may be practised upon it, and which men, by insensible degrees, unconsciously practise upon themselves; compelled by candour to keep in view the unexampled crisis of the French revolution, the horrors which disfigured it, the alarms inseparable from it, but, above all, the dexterous artifices which it furnished to inflame and to mislead; I wish to draw a veil over the stages which divided statesmen and friends, at the very moment of all others when they ought to have drawn closer together, and when their union might have preserved their country. I shall, therefore, content myself with observing, that before the King's Proclamation was issued, the support of the Duke of Portland had not only probably been secured to it, but the assent of some of the most distinguished persons in the opposition had been well understood to the whole of that system of measures which ended in the war with France.

The proclamation, thus supported, was planted as the only genuine banner of loyalty throughout the kingdom, voluntary bodies, to strengthen the executive power by maintaining prosecutions, were every where instituted. Society was rent asunder, and the harmony and freedom of English manners were, for a season, totally destroyed.

It was at this period that the seeds of war were sown, which ever since we have been unfortunately reaping. Nothing is more distant from my temper, or my purpose, than to fasten the charge either of corruption or folly upon all who were seized with this alarm, or who even contributed to its propagation. Many worthy and intelligent persons, superior to common weaknesses, and aloof from all meanness, were undoubtedly hurried away by its influence. It is far more pleasant to me to hope, that many of those who were active in spreading the delusion were themselves deluded, than to scatter imputation upon thousands who may be wiser and better than myself. The public, in a cooler hour, will be prepared to make the proper distinctions, and to separate the innocent from the guilty. But the effects were not the less mischievous, whatever might have been the motives; and the delusion, however it may be yet disguised by the causes which produced it, will appear in the future history of England as a blot in the annals of an enlightened age and of a free country.

The spirit which became prevalent about this time, which bore down every thing before it, and prepared the nation for war, was an absolute horror of every thing connected with France, and even for liberty itself, because France avowed to be contending for it. It confounded the casual intemperance of an enlarged and warm zeal for the freedom and happiness of mankind with a tendency to universal anarchy, and to a resistance of all governments: it considered an irritable sense of the evils attending the Christian superstitions, and a complacency under their rapid declension, as a decided apostacy from the church, and as the sure test of irreligion, and even of atheism itself. It set down as a declared enemy to monarchy, however existing by consent, and poised, like our own, by the balances of a popular constitution, every man who did not throw up his cap when combined despotism was trampling upon the establishments, and casting lots for the territories of free men, or who dared to exult and triumph when a murderous manifesto was thrust down the throats of the tyrants who uttered it, and when a great people, determined to be free, succeeded in repelling the lawless invaders of their country.

These were the feelings which ministers at this period imputed to large classes of the people of Great Britain, and of our sister kingdom.

The imputation was made with truth: the inference only was fallacious and wicked. If the well-founded

founded imputation of these sensations, and the habits of publicly expressing them, be political guilt, I for one plead guilty; and I thank God, above all his other blessings, that he has indelibly impressed them upon my understanding and my heart. But let us examine what were the public fruits of these dangerous emotions, which rendered it necessary to convert the nation, as it were, into a large prison, by restrictive laws, by internal military stations, and by the separations of external war.

Considerable bodies of the people were desirous of stirring the question of reform at a time when Mr. Pitt had laid it down, and the followers of the Duke of Richmond (then a cabinet minister of the King) were not only the most numerous, but were distinguished by the lengths to which they seemed to push their views upon the subject; views which I admit to have been *very little short* of those which the Duke himself had avowed and acted upon a few years before.

Whilst it continues to be the office of courts of justice to decide upon evidence, I shall maintain this to have been the extent of the designs which at the date of the proclamation, or which at any time afterwards, prevailed in this country. Not a man had been then convicted, nor has now, whilst I am writing, for any treason against the state, though the laws have been new cast and manufactured to reach cases, which the venerable institutions of our forefathers did

not touch; and no conspiracy against the government had then, or has to this hour, been detected. Libels, indeed, both then and since, as at all other periods, were undoubtedly written by mischievous, turbulent, and misguided individuals. But the community at large was sound, and the object which gave the real offence was virtuous and laudable. It was to reform the representation of the House of Commons, by the ways of the constitution, by an endeavour to collect the public sentiment, and to produce it before Parliament. Three English juries determined this to have been the object, and the crown never invited a fourth to contradict them. The object, therefore, was virtuous and laudable; and if the constitution is to be preserved, the renewed pursuit will alone preserve it; and it might then have been secured without a struggle, without a war with France, and without fear of her revolution—if those who have the deepest interest in the state had not been afraid of **ENGLISH** liberty.

I never shall be the defender of popular excesses, nor of commotions which can endanger the peace of my country; God forbid that I should: but I know they never can arise, if men, who stand on the vantage ground in society, will only behave with common honesty and common sense. It is not yet too late for the higher orders of this country to consider well this subject. Let me implore them, while yet practicable, to give a safe direction to a spirit which neither Laws nor Wars will repress.

This



This spirit is at present high in Ireland, and the recent zeal of that brave and virtuous people has completely detected the false and pernicious calumnies upon both countries. It has demonstrated that a desire to reform abuses in the government is not at all connected with disloyalty to its establishment, and that the restoration of a free constitution by the wisdom and spirit of a nation has no alliance with, but, on the contrary, is utterly abhorrent to a submission to foreign force.

The late attempt upon Ireland ought nevertheless to make the deepest impression upon the government of England. The very sensation occasioned by it, and our congratulations upon the support of the elements, is in itself a condemnation of the measures pursued in that country.

If Ireland were conducted as she ought to be, what dependence, in God's name, could we have to place upon the winds? Could a protective government of three millions of men, happy under the enjoyment of our free constitution, have occasion to look to a weather-glass for its safety against twenty thousand men? or could any thing but a hope of disunion, held out to an enemy by the effects of a narrow policy, have suggested so weak and feeble an expedition?

This is a hope that will remain unextinguished in France, and which may be expected to produce future and more dangerous expeditions, unless satisfaction

*faction* be given to the feelings of that country. It is a dangerous mode of reckoning, that because the people have not manifested their discontent by inviting an enemy, they are therefore to be considered as contented; or, that their wishes may be the more safely neglected. It is justly observed by Locke, that nations, instead of being prone to resist their governments without cause, require long continued neglect and provocation to rouse them even to a reasonable and justifiable resistance. But he follows this observation by reminding the rulers of states and kingdoms, that this disposition leaves them neither justification nor protection when their authorities are subverted; and that the degree of disgust, which will at last surely overturn them, is not matter of safe or rational calculation: that the progress of disaffection is insensible and invisible, and that it is frequently hurried on to the fatal conclusion by accidents neither to be foreseen nor resisted.

These reflections ought to suggest the propriety of securing this most valuable part of the empire from the possible danger of a better concerted attack. This ought to be done, not merely by more watchful operations (for I have purposely shunned all consideration of the details of departments), but by setting the watch in the interests and affections of the Irish people.

Nothing can accomplish this but the absolute renunciation of that jealous and restrictive system of government, which characterises the present administration

tration every where, but more than any where in that kingdom. To rule with security over that people, or over any other; in the present condition of the world, they must be set at their ease, and made happy by every indulgence within the compass of their government. To make the interest of supporting any civil establishment universal, the privileges it confers must be made universal also. To inspire the multitude with indignation at a foreign enemy, they must be made to feel practically the privileges which his invasion strikes at, and the social blessings it would destroy.

It is said, that when peace arrives it may be prudent to consider these great objects. But without instant consideration of them, peace may never arrive at all. If I had the princely dominion of Ireland, and were lord of all her soil, I would choose that moment for reforming her parliament, and for complete emancipation, when the enemy was plying upon her coasts: not as acts of sudden fear, but of sound wisdom and critical justice. To withhold from great bodies of a people the freest and fullest communications of all the privileges of their government when its existence is externally threatened, is to bandage up the right arm when an enemy is approaching, and, by robbing it of its circulation, to deprive it of its strength.

But the Irish people flocked with loyalty to the standard of their country, For that very reason it  
1
should

should be crowned with the garland of constitutional freedom. Let the present moment be seized for making reformation a spontaneous act of liberal and enlightened policy, instead of being hereafter an act of cautious prudence, which may destroy its grace and effect. Let all the concessions of government in both countries be the concessions of wisdom and beneficence; and not, as was happily expressed by a great writer, like the restitution of stolen goods. Let the people of both countries receive the greatest degree of freedom which the true spirit of our constitution is capable of dispensing, and we may then smile at all invasions, whatever reach of coast our enemies may possess. Under such a system, instead of riots and murmurings, by coercive acts of parliament, every man would be a volunteer with a courage which no mutiny bill can inspire, and every house and cottage in Great Britain and Ireland would be a barrack for the soldiers of their country.

These are unfortunately not abstract and speculative reflections, they would have been so formerly: but they are now taught by the awful times we live in. It is the use of history and observation to be a guide for the future.

It was a restrictive system of government in Holland and the Netherlands, and the consequent divisions amongst their inhabitants, that has suddenly altered the face of Europe by their subjugation, and it is the difference between the noble and independent  
pride

pride of a free government and the vassalage of arbitrary power, that is wresting at this moment from the hands of the Emperor the sceptre of his Italian states.

The French system of fraternization, the effect of which we have seen with so much horror, could have had no other foundation. If the free governments which they subverted had not fallen off from the ends of their institutions, their subversions would have been impracticable, and the memorable decree of the 19th of November would have been the decision, instead of the terror of Europe.

I am sorry indeed to remark, that this decree, and the system of which it was a part, existed only upon paper, and in the inflammatory speeches of enthusiastic men, until confederated Europe began the actual and forcible fraternization of the monarchical part of France. When that nation had effected an internal revolution, no matter upon what principle or with what crimes, it should have occurred to her invaders, who could not have looked to subjugation but by the divisions of civil fury, that they were themselves practically pursuing that very species of hostility, the theory only of which had been an object of their execration, and the foundation of their confederacy. The same reflection ought to have deterred Great Britain from the merciless and impolitic expedition to Quiberon. The government of France had then assumed a regular form, and was in the exercise of a regular legal-  
E
galized

galized authority. The devoted handful of unhappy fugitives from their country could do nothing by the sword. The expedition, therefore, was to rekindle the torch of discord amidst twenty-five millions of men beginning to escape from its former fury, and settled under an established government. Our invasion was to work by confusion against established authority; to stir up all the elements of misery and mischief amongst the innocent part of the community, incapable of understanding the cause for which they fought, and without even the hope on our part of protecting them from the fury of the government against which they rebelled.

What was this proceeding but the very system we had imputed to France, and proclaimed with horror to the universe?

I hope, indeed, all civilized nations will hereafter concur in stigmatizing this horrible and barbarous system of hostilities: a stranger even to that heroism which has unfortunately converted the crimes of conquest into the most fascinating triumphs of mankind. It is a system which is directed against the first principle of social honour and happiness. It beats up for every bad, degrading, and dangerous passion of the human mind. It does not raise the open, manly standard of nation against nation, but in the cowardice of warfare, which dissolves its only enchantment, divides a nation against itself. It makes up an army of public crime and private discontent;  
of

of honest error and false opinion, of desperate vice and virtuous poverty driven to desperation. It sets free the victims of the laws to imprison and enslave the state; brings into the field against one another men whom the same land and the same fathers have bred, and which, instead of settling this horrible conflict by the cannon and the sword, the shortest cure for the miseries it has engendered, and extending no further than to the actual combatants, spreads wide the desolation by the slower weapons of jealousy and distrust, of terror and vengeance; scowls the land with disease and famine, and by the destruction of public credit, public confidence, and public opinion, destroys for the present, and puts to the die of chance hereafter, the existence and even the name of a country.

When my subject is attended to, I have no apology to make for this digression. Indeed it can hardly be called one; because the facts which gave rise to it stand in their proper places as connected with the origin of the war against France, and because the reflections from them are not spontaneous, being dictated by public duty to the historian of such events.

The excesses which unfortunately distinguished the French revolution, soon after the proclamation, further favoured the system of antipathy against France, and the death of her unhappy monarch yet

further ripened the plans of government already in agitation.

Before this memorable æra there was a visible disposition in ministers to a rupture with France, but the sense of her situation inspired the French councils with a prudence which disappointed it. Ministers had notoriously connived at, if not assisted in fomenting the conspiracy then forming throughout Europe; they had covertly libelled France in the proclamation which M. Chauvelin, by order from his court, had only mildly complained of, they had withdrawn Lord Gower from Paris; they had set on foot a correspondence between the secretary of state and her minister here in the most imperious language, and upon complaints which she either disavowed, or to the removal of which she seemed to submit.

All these provocations were resisted by France, and the concessions which she made before and after our refusal to acknowledge her ambassador would scarcely be believed, if it did not remain on record in the correspondence as it was laid before the House of Commons by ministers themselves, to vindicate their conduct in dismissing M. Chauvelin, and to justify the war which it produced.

This correspondence is scarcely known to, or recollected by, the English public. Its authenticity is unquestionable, and the examination of it will place the authors of the war in their proper colours.



The mission of M. Chauvelin, as ambassador from the King of the French, commenced in the spring of 1792, and his first note, as appears by the correspondence with Lord Grenville, bears date the 12th of May in that year. It had for its object to explain to the court of Great Britain (as will appear by reference to it) the reasons which had determined France to a war with the Emperor.

It stated, in the name of the French King, that a great conspiracy had been formed in Europe against France to destroy her new constitution, which he had sworn to maintain, making for a season the preparations of its designs by an insulting pity for his person and a zeal for his authority.

It set forth the remonstrances which he (the French King) had made upon the subject of this coalition, first to the Emperor Leopold, and afterwards to Francis, who succeeded him. He informed Great Britain, that it had at last been avowed, and a declaration made, that it should not cease “ *until France should remove the serious causes which had given rise to it.*” The note added, that this declaration had been accompanied with the assembling of troops upon all the frontiers of France, evidently for the purpose of constraining her inhabitants to alter the form of the government they had chosen.

Having thus stated the causes of the war with the Emperor, the French King appealed to the British govern-

government for the justice of his cause; and, to remove all jealousies respecting this country which had been industriously circulated, Monsieur Chauvelin, in his name, and by his authority, further declared, “ that whatever might be the fate of arms in that war, France rejected all ideas of aggrandisement; that she would preserve her liberty, her constitution, her unalienable right of reforming herself whenever she might think proper; that she never would allow other powers to nourish a hope of dictating laws to her. But that that very pride, so natural and so just, was a sure pledge to all the powers from whom she should receive no provocation, not only of her constant pacific disposition, but also of the respect which France would shew at all times for the laws, the customs, and the forms of governments, of different nations.”

As at this time much had been said of attempts made by France to produce disturbances in this country, the note further declared, “ that the French King desired to have it known, that he would publicly and severely disavow all agents at foreign courts in peace with France, who should dare to depart an instant from that respect, either by fomenting or favouring insurrection against the established order, or by interfering in any manner whatever in the interior policy of such states, under pretence of a proselytism, which, exercised in the dominions of friendly powers, would be a real violation of the law of nations.”

This