HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

STATESMEN

WHO FLOURISHED IN

THE TIME OF GEORGE III.

SECOND SERIES.

BY

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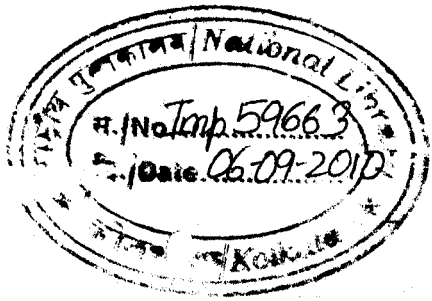

INTRODUCTION.

THE misstatements which were circulated respecting the First Volume of these Sketches make it necessary to mention that nothing can be more untrue than representing the work as a republication. By far the greater part of the articles which had ever appeared before were materially altered or enlarged, some of them almost written over again; while a great many were entirely new in every part: as those of Lords Mansfield, Thurlow, Loughborough, and North, Chief Justice Gibbs, Sir W. Grant, Franklin, Gustavus III., Joseph II., Catherine II., Queen Elizabeth.—The same observation is applicable in at least the same extent to the Second Volume. Much of George IV., the Emperor Napoleon, Lord Eldon, Sir W. Scott, is new; and Mirabeau's public character, with the whole of Sir P. Francis, Mr. Horne Tooke, Lord King, Mr. Ricardo,

Charles Carrol, Neckar, Carnôt, Lafayette, and Madame de Staël, are new.

No distinguished statesman of George III.'s time has been omitted, except one very eminent person, Lord Shelburne, afterwards Marquess of Lansdowne, to whom, however, occasion has been taken of doing some justice against the invectives of mere party violence and misrepresentation by which he was assailed. The reason of the omission has been of a personal nature. The long and uninterrupted friendship which has prevailed between the writer of these pages and Lord Shelburne's son and representative, both in public and private life, would have made any account of him wear the appearance of a panegyric or a defence of his conduct, rather than a judgment pronounced on its merits. If it should be urged that a similar reason ought to have prevented the appearance of other articles, such as that upon Sir S. Romilly, Mr. Horner, and Lord King, the answer is plain. Personal friendship with those individuals themselves gave him the means of judging for himself, and that friendship was only another consequence of the merits which he was called upon to describe and to extol. But in Lord Shelburne's case, friendship for the son might

have been supposed to influence an account of the father, who was personally unknown to the author.

It is a matter of sincere gratification to find that justice has been very generally done to the impartiality which was so much studied in the composition of the First Volume. To maintain this throughout the Second has been the chief aim of its author; and if he has ever swerved from this path which it was so much his resolution to tread, the deviation has, at least, been unintentional, for he is wholly unconscious of it.

It would be a very great mistake to suppose that there is no higher object in submitting these Sketches to the world than the gratification of curiosity respecting eminent statesmen, or even a more important purpose, the maintenance of a severe standard of taste respecting Oratorical Excellence. The main object in view has been the maintenance of a severe standard of Public Virtue, by constantly painting political profligacy in those hateful colours which are natural to it, though sometimes obscured by the lustre of talents, especially when seen through the false glare shed by success over public crimes. To show mankind who are their real benefactors—to teach them the wisdom of only exalting the friends of peace, of freedom, and of improvement—

to warn them against the folly, so pernicious to themselves, of lavishing their applauses upon their worst enemies, those who disturb the tranquillity, assail the liberties, and obstruct the improvement of the world—to reclaim them from the yet worser habit, so nearly akin to vicious indulgence, of palliating cruelty and fraud committed on a large scale, by regarding the success which has attended those foul enormities, or the courage and the address with which they have been perpetrated—these are the views which have guided the pen that has attempted to sketch the History of George III.'s times, by describing the statesmen who flourished in them. With these views a work was begun many years ago, and interrupted by professional avocations—the history of two reigns in our own annals, those of Harry V. and Elizabeth, deemed glorious for the arts of war and of government, commanding largely the admiration of the vulgar, justly famous for the capacity which they displayed, but extolled upon the false assumption that foreign conquest is the chief glory of a nation, and that habitual and dexterous treachery towards all mankind is the first accomplishment of a sovereign. To relate the story of those reigns in the language of which sound reason prescribes the use—to express the scorn of false-

nood and the detestation of cruelty which the uncorrupted feelings of our nature inspire—to call wicked things by their right names, whether done by princes and statesmen, or by vulgar and more harmless malefactors —was the plan of that work. Longer experience of the world has only excited a stronger desire to see such lessons inculcated, and to help in tearing off the veil which the folly of mankind throws over the crimes of their rulers. But it was deemed better to direct the attention of the people, in the first instance, to more recent times, better known characters, and more interesting events. In this opinion these Historical Sketches had their origin.

It remains to be explained why the Dialogue upon Monarchical and Republican Government has been omitted in the present publication, after being announced in the advertisement. Not only would the insertion of that piece have extended this second volume to an inconvenient size, but it would have given the work a controversial aspect and engendered political animosities, thus impeding the effects intended to be produced by a work avoiding all partial or violent discussions. For this reason the appearance of the Dialogue has been postponed. It was written some years ago; its doc-

trines have been destined to receive very material confirmation from subsequent events; they are very certain to become at no remote period the prevailing faith of the country.

But, although this more general discussion has for the present been omitted, constant opportunities have been afforded, in the course of these Sketches, for contemplating the comparative vices and advantages of the two forms of Government—for holding up to Sovereigns the imminent perils into which they rush by setting up their pretensions, and gratifying their caprices, at the expense of their people's rights and interests—for reminding the people of the mischiefs occasioned to themselves by violent and sudden changes to which the state of society has not been accommodated—for exposing the evil consequences of those abuses to which party connexions are liable—and, above all, for teaching the important duty incumbent on all men, under what Government soever they live, the sacred duty of forming their own opinions upon reflection, nor suffering them to be dictated by others whose object it is to deceive and to betray. In proportion as the People are thus educated and fitted for the task of Self-government will it be both safe and expedient to intrust them with an increased share of

power; and it would be difficult to fix any bounds to the extent of that share, other than are set to their own improvement in political knowledge and experience.

In the last volume the commonly received account was adopted which represents Lord Bute as having superintended the education of George III. A fuller inquiry into the subject has rendered it nearly as clear that this is an erroneous opinion as that an intimacy subsisted between those two eminent individuals after the Bute Ministry was broken up. It seems almost certain that there is no more foundation for the one notion than for the other, although both have been so generally prevalent.

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OF THE

TIMES OF GEORGE III

GEORGE IV.

It would not be easy to find a greater contrast in the character and habits of two princes succeeding one another in any country, than the two last Georges presented to the eye of even the most superficial observer.

George Prince of Wales had been educated after the manner of all princes whose school is the palace of their ancestors, whose teacher is boundless prosperity, whose earliest and most cherished associate is unrestrained self-indulgence, and who neither among their companions form the acquaintance of any equal, nor in the discipline of the seminary ever taste of control. The regal system of tuition is indeed curiously suited to its purpose of fashioning men's minds to the task of governing their fellow-creatures—of training up a naturally erring and sinful creature to occupy the most arduous of all human stations, the one most requiring habits of self-command, and for duly filling

which, all the instruction that man can receive, and all the virtue his nature is capable of practising, would form a very inadequate qualification. This system had, upon the Prince of Wales, produced its natural effects in an unusually ample measure. He seemed, indeed, to come forth from the school a finished specimen of its capabilities and its powers; as if to show how much havoc can be made in a character originally deficient in none of the good and few of the great qualities, with which it may be supposed that men are born. Naturally of a temper by no means sour or revengeful, he had become selfish to a degree so extravagant, that he seemed to act upon a practical conviction of all mankind being born for his exclusive use; and hence he became irritable on the least incident that thwarted his wishes; nay, seemed to consider himself injured, and thus entitled to gratify his resentment, as often as any one, even from a due regard to his own duty or his own character, acted in a way to disappoint his expectations or ruffle his repose.

His natural abilities, too, were far above mediocrity; he was quick, lively, gifted with a retentive memory, and even with a ready wit—endowed with an exquisite ear for music, and a justness of eye, that fitted him to attain refined taste in the arts—possessing, too, a nice sense of the ludicrous, which made his relish for humour sufficiently acute, and bestowed upon him the powers of an accomplished mimic. The graces of his person and his manners need not be noted, for neither are valuable but as the adjunct of higher qualities; and the latter, graceful manners, are hardly to be avoided by one occupying all his life that first station which,

by removing constraint, makes the movements of the prince as naturally graceful as those of the infant or the child too young to feel embarrassment. But of what avail are all natural endowments without cultivation? They can yield no more fruit than a seed or a graft cast out upon a marble floor; and cultivation, which implies labour, discipline, self-control, submission to others, can scarcely ever be applied to the Royal condition. They who believe that they are exempt from the toils, and hardly liable to the casualties of other mortals—all whose associates, and most of whose instructors, set themselves about confirming this faith—are little likely to waste the midnight oil in any contemplations but those of the debauchee; and beings, who can hardly bring themselves to believe that they are subject to the common fate of humanity, are pretty certain to own no inferior control. "Quoi donc" (exclaimed the young Dauphin to his Right Reverend preceptor, when some book mentioned a king as having died)—"Quoi donc, les Rois meurent-ils?" "Quelquefois, Monseigneur," was the cautious and courtly reply. That this Prince should afterwards grow, in the natural course of things, into Louis XV., and that his infant aptitude for the habits of royalty thus trained up should expand into the maturity of self-indulgence, which almost proved too great a trial of French loyal patience, is not matter of wonder. Our Louis, notwithstanding the lessons of Dean Jackson, and the fellowship of Thurlow and Sheridan, was a man of very uncultivated mind—ignorant of all but the passages of history which most princes read, with some superficial knowledge of the dead languages, which he had imperfectly learnt

and scantily retained, considerable musical skill, great facility of modern tongues, and no idea whatever of the rudiments of any science, natural or moral; unless the very imperfect notions of the structure of government, picked up in conversation or studied in newspapers, can be reckoned any exception to the universal blank.

We have said nothing of the great quality of all,—the test of character,—firmness, and her sister truth. That the Prince was a man of firm mind, not even his most unscrupulous flatterers ever could summon up the courage to pretend. He was much the creature of impulses, and the sport of feelings naturally good and kind; but had become wholly selfish through unlimited indulgence. Those who knew him well were wont to say that his was a woman's character, when they observed how little self-command he had, and how easily he gave way to the influence of petty sentiments. Nor was the remark more gallant towards the sex than it was respectful towards the Prince; inasmuch as the character of a woman transferred to the other sex implies the want of those qualities which constitute manly virtue, without the possession of the charms by which female weaknesses are redeemed; independently of the fact that those weaker parts are less prejudicial in the woman, because they are more in harmony with the whole. That they who draw the breath of life in a Court, and pass all their days in an atmosphere of lies, should have any very sacred regard for truth is hardly to be expected. They experience such falsehood in all who surround them, that deception, at least suppression of the truth, almost seems necessary for self-defence; and

accordingly, if their speech be not framed upon the theory of the French Cardinal, that language was given to man for the better concealment of his thoughts, they at least seem to regard in what they say, not its resemblance to the fact in question, but rather its subserviency to the purpose in view.

The course of private conduct which one in such a station, of such habits, and of such a disposition, might naturally be expected to run, was that of the Prince from his early youth upwards; and when he entered upon public life, he was found to have exhausted the resources of a career of pleasure; to have gained followers without making friends; to have acquired much envy and some admiration among the unthinking multitude of polished society; but not, in any quarter, either to command respect or conciliate esteem. The line of political conduct which he should pursue was chalked out by the relative position in which he stood to his father, and still more by that monarch's character, in almost all respects the reverse of his own.

It thus happened that the Whig party, being the enemies of George III., found favour in the sight of his son, and became his natural allies. In the scramble for power they highly valued such an auxiliary, and many of them were received also into the personal favour of their illustrious political recruit. But state affairs were by him only taken as a stimulant, to rouse the dormant appetite, when more vulgar excitement had fatigued the jaded sense; and it would be extremely difficult to name the single occasion on which any part was taken by him whom the Whigs held out as the most exalted member of their body, from the end of the

American war until the beginning of the contest with France. An event then occurred which brought his Royal Highness upon the stage, but not as a friend of the Liberal party. He came forward to disclaim them, to avow that his sentiments differed widely from theirs, and to declare that upon the great question which divided the world, he took part with the enemies of liberty and of improvement. The French Revolution had alarmed him in common with most of his order; he quitted the party for many years; he gave the only support he had to give, his vote, to their adversaries. The rest of his political history is soon told. When the alarm had subsided he gradually came back to the Opposition party, and acted with them until his father's illness called him to the Regency, when he shamefully abandoned them, flung himself into the hands of their antagonists, and continued to the end of his days their enemy, with a relentless bitterness, a rancorous malignity, which betokened the spite of his nature, and his consciousness of having injured and betrayed those whom, therefore, he never could forgive. It was indeed the singular and unenviable fate of this Prince, that he who at various times had more "troops of friends" to surround him than any man of any age, changed them so often, and treated them so ill, as to survive, during a short part of his life, every one of his attachments, and to find himself before its close in the hands of his enemies, or of mere strangers, the accidental connexions of yesterday.

After running the course of dissipation, uninterrupted by any more rational or worthy pursuit,—prematurely exhausting the resources of indulgence, both animal

and mental, and becoming incapable of receiving further gratification unless the wish of the ancient tyrant could be gratified by the invention of some new pleasure,—it was found that a life of what was called unbounded profusion could not be passed without unlimited extravagance, and that such enormous sums had been squandered in a few years as seemed to baffle conjecture how the money could have been spent. The bill was of course brought in to the country, and one of the items which swelled the total amount to above half a million, was many hundreds of pounds for Marechal powder, a perfumed brown dust with which the fops of those days filled their hair, in preference to using soap and water, after the manner of the less courtly times that succeeded the French Revolution. The discontent which this unprincipled and senseless waste of money occasioned had no effect in mending the life of its author; and in a few years after a new debt had been incurred, and the aid of Parliament was required again. There seemed now no chance but one of extricating the Prince from the difficulties with which he had surrounded himself, and obtaining such an increased income as might enable him to continue his extravagance without contracting new debts. That chance was his consenting to marry; in order that the event might take place, so pleasing to a people whom all the vices and the follies of royalty can never wean from their love of Princes, and the increase of the royal family be effected with due regularity of procedure from the heir-apparent's loins. But, although the entering into the state of matrimony in regular form, and with the accustomed publicity, might afford the desired

facilities of a pecuniary kind, such a step little suited the taste of the illustrious personage usually termed "the hope of the country." That the restraints of wedlock should be dreaded by one to whom all restraint had hitherto been a stranger, and who could set at nought whatever obligations of constancy that holy and comfortable state imposed, was wholly out of the question. If that were all, he could have no kind of objection to take as many wives as the law of the land allowed, supposing the dower of each to be a bill upon the patient good-nature of the English people, towards discharging some mass of debt contracted. But there had happened another event, not quite suited to the people's taste, although of a matrimonial kind, which had been most carefully concealed for very sufficient reasons, and which placed him in a predicament more embarrassing even than his pecuniary difficulties.

"The most excusable by far, indeed the most respectable of all the Prince's attachments, had been that which he had early formed for Mrs. Fitzherbert, a woman of the most amiable qualities, and the most exemplary virtue. Her abilities were not shining, nor were her personal charms dazzling, nor was she even in the first stage of youth; but her talents were of the most engaging kind: she had a peculiarly sweet disposition, united to sterling good sense, and was possessed of manners singularly fascinating. His passion for this excellent person was a redeeming virtue of the Prince; it could only proceed from a fund of natural sense and good taste, which, had it but been managed with ordinary prudence and care, would have endowed a most distinguished character in private life; and, could it by any

miracle have been well managed in a palace, must have furnished out a ruler before whose lustre the fame of Titus and the Antonines would grow pale. This passion was heightened by the difficulties which its virtuous object interposed to its gratification; and upon no other terms than marriage could that be obtained. But marriage with this admirable lady was forbidden by law! She was a Roman Catholic; sincerely attached to the religion of her forefathers, she refused to purchase a crown by conforming to any other; and the law declared, that whoever married a Catholic should forfeit all right to the crown of these realms, as if he were naturally dead. This law, however, was unknown to her, and, blinded by various pretences, she was induced to consent to a clandestine marriage, which is supposed to have been solemnized between her and the Prince beyond the limits of the English dominions, in the silly belief, perhaps, entertained by him, that he escaped the penalty to which his reckless conduct exposed him, and that the forfeiture of his succession to the crown was only denounced against such a marriage if contracted within the realm.* The consent of the Sovereign was another requisite of the law to render the marriage valid: that consent had not been obtained; and the invalidity of the contract was supposed to save the forfeiture. But they who so construed the plain provision in the Bill of Rights, assumed first, that no forfeiture could be incurred by doing an act which was void in itself, whereas the law of England, as well as

* Some affirm that it was performed in London at the house of her uncle.

of Scotland, and every other country,* abounds in cases of acts prohibited and made void, yet punished by a forfeiture of the rights of him who contravenes the prohibition, as much as if they were valid and effectual. The same courtly reasoners and fraudulent matchmakers of Carlton House next assumed that statutes so solemn as the Bill of Rights and Act of Settlement could be varied, and, indeed, repealed in an essential particular, most clearly within their mischief, by a subsequent law which makes not the least reference whatever to their provisions; while no man could doubt that to prevent even the attempt at contravening those prohibitions was the object of the Law, in order to prevent all risks; it being equally manifest that, if merely preventing a Catholic from being the Sovereign's consort had been the only purpose of the enactment, this could have been most effectually accomplished by simply declaring the marriage void, and the forfeiture of the crown became wholly superfluous. It is, therefore, very far from being clear that this marriage was no forfeiture of the crown. But, it may be said, the Prince ran this risk only for himself, and no one has a right to complain. Not so. The forfeiture of the crown was his own risk assuredly; but he trepanned Mrs. Fitzherbert into a

* To lawyers this matter is quite familiar. In England, if a tenant for life makes a feoffment in fee, this forfeits his life estate, although the attempt to enlarge his estate is altogether ineffectual, and the feoffee takes nothing by the grant. In Scotland, if an heir of entail, fettered by the fencing clauses, makes a conveyance contrary to the prohibitions, the deed is wholly void, and yet he forfeits the estate, to use the words of the Bill of Rights, "as if he were naturally dead."

sacrifice of her honour to gratify his passion, when he well knew that the ceremony which she was made to believe a marriage could only be regarded as a mere empty form, of no legal validity or effect whatever; unless, indeed, that of exposing her, and all who assisted, to the high pains and penalties of a *premunire*. While he pretended that he was making her his wife, and made her believe she was such, he was only making her the victim of his passions, and the accomplice of his crimes.

A few years after, when those passions had cooled, or were directed into some new channel, the rumour having got abroad, a question was asked in Parliament respecting the alleged marriage. His chosen political associates were appealed to, and, being instructed by him, denied the charge in the most unqualified terms. Before such men as Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey could thus far commit their honour, they took care to be well assured of the fact by direct personal communication with the Prince himself. He most solemnly denied the whole upon his sacred honour; and his denial was, through these most respectable channels, conveyed to the House of Commons. We are giving here a matter of history well known at the time;—a thousand times repeated since, and never qualified by the parties, nor ever contradicted on their behalf. It must be confessed, that this passage of the Prince's story made his treatment of Mrs. Fitzherbert complete in all its parts. After seducing her with a false and fictitious marriage, he refused her the poor gratification of saving her reputation, by letting the world believe he had really made her his wife. Instances are not wanting of men committing in public a breach of veracity, and sacrificing truth, to save the re-

putation of their paramours; nor is any moralist so stern as to visit with very severe censure conduct like this. But who was there ever yet so base as deliberately to pledge his honour to a falsehood, for the purpose of his own protection, and in order to cover with shame her whom his other false pretences had deceived into being his paramour? Bad as this is, worse remains to be told. This treachery was all for the lucre of gain; the question was raised, upon an application to Parliament for money; and the falsehood was told to smooth the difficulties that stood in the way of a vote in Committee of Supply!

The influence of Mrs. Fitzherbert gave place to another connexion, but she retained that sway over his mind which we have described as the brightest feature in the Prince's character. Hence he spared no pains to make her believe that the public denial of their wedlock was only rendered necessary by his father's prejudices and tyrannical conduct. She well knew, that to find an example of fear greater than that dread with which he quailed at the sound of his father's voice, or indeed the bare mention of his name, it was necessary to go among the many-coloured inhabitants of the Caribbee Islands; and hence she could the more easily credit the explanation given of the disclaimer so cruel to her feelings. In private, therefore, and with her, he still passed himself for her husband, and she learned, like other and more real wives, to shut her eyes upon his infidelities, while her empire over his mind remained unshaken. The pressure of new difficulties rendered a regular marriage necessary for his extrication; but as this must at once and for ever dispel all that remained of the matrimonial de-

lusion, he long resisted the temptation, through fear of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and dread of their intercourse coming to a violent end. At length the increasing pressure of his embarrassments overweighed all other considerations, and he consented to a marriage, and to give up Mrs. Fitzherbert for ever. Others with whom he lived upon the most intimate terms are supposed to have interposed fresh obstacles to this scheme; but these were overcome by an understanding that the new wife should enjoy only the name;—that systematic neglect and insult of every kind heaped upon her should attest how little concern the heart had with this honourable arrangement, and how entirely the husband continued devoted to the wedded wives of other men. Every thing was now settled to the satisfaction of all parties. The old spouse was discarded—the old mistresses were cherished, fondled, and appeased—the faithful Commons were overjoyed at the prospect of a long line of heirs to the crown—the loyal people were enraptured at the thoughts of new princes and princesses—the King, while he felt his throne strengthened by the provision made for the succession, was gratified with whatever lowered the person he most hated and despised—and the Prince himself was relieved of much debt, and endowed with augmented resources. One party alone was left out of the general consideration—the intended consort of this illustrious character, whose peculiar pride it was to be called by his flatterers the "First Gentleman in Europe."

Caroline Princess of Brunswick was the individual whom it was found convenient to make the sacrifice on this occasion to an arrangement that diffused so uni-

versal a joy through this free, moral, and reflecting country. She was niece of George III., and consequently one of the Prince's nearest relations. Nor has it ever been denied, that in her youth she was a Princess of singular accomplishments, as well of mind as of person. All who had seen her in those days represented her as lovely; nor did she, on touching our shores, disappoint the expectations which those eye-witnesses had raised. All who had known her in that season of youth, and before care had become the companion of her life, and the cruelty of others had preyed upon her feelings and sapped her understanding, described her mental endowments as brilliant; and a judge, alike experienced and severely fastidious, long after she had come amongst us, continued to paint her as formed to be "the life, grace, and ornament of polished society."* Her talents were indeed far above the ordinary level of women, and had her education not been rather below the average stock of Princesses, they would have decked her in accomplishments remarkable for any station. Endowed with the greatest quickness of apprehension, with a singularly ready wit, and with such perseverance as is rarely seen in the inmates of a court, she shone in conversation, and could have excelled in higher studies than statuary, the only one to which she devoted her attention. If it be said that her buoyant spirits were little compatible with the etiquette of a German court, and made her attend less to forms than the decorum of our English palaces, under the cold and stiff reign of George and Charlotte, might seem to require—so must it be

* Mr. Canning in the House of Commons.

confessed, on the other hand, that no person of the exalted station to which this great lady was born, and the still higher elevation of rank which she afterwards reached, ever showed such entire freedom from all haughtiness and pride, or more habitually estimated all who approached her by their intrinsic merits. The first duchess in the land, or the humblest of its peasants, were alike welcome to her, if their endowments and their dispositions claimed her regard; and, if by the accident of birth she was more frequently thrown into the fellowship of the one, she could relish the talk, seek out the merits, admire the virtues, and interest herself in the fortunes of the other, without ever feeling the difference of their rank, even so far as to betray in her manner that she was honouring them by her condescension. Thus, all might well be charmed with her good-nature, lively humour, and kindly demeanour, while no one ever thought of praising her affability.

But Caroline of Brunswick had far higher qualities than these; she put forward, in the course of her hapless and checkered existence, claims of a much loftier caste. She had a delight in works of beneficence that made charity the very bond of her existence; nor were the sufferings of her life unconnected with this amiable propensity of her nature. Her passionate fondness for children, balked by that separation from her only offspring to which she was early doomed, led her into the unwise course of adopting the infants of others, which she cherished as if they had been her own. Her courage was of the highest order of female bravery, scorning all perils in the pursuit of worthy objects, leading her certainly into adventures that were chiefly recommended

by their risks, but, like the active courage of a woman, suffering occasionally intervals of suspension according to the state of the animal spirits, possibly influenced by the physical constitution of the female frame, although the passive virtue of fortitude never knew abatement or eclipse. There were occasions, indeed, when her two distinguishing characteristics were both called forth in unison, and her brave nature ministered to her charity. While travelling in the East, the plague broke out among her suite. Unappalled by a peril which has laid prostrate the stoutest hearts, she entered the hospital, and set to others the example of attending upon the sick, regardless of even the extreme risk which she ran by hanging over their beds and touching their persons. Let it be added to this, that her nature was absolutely without malice or revenge; that she hardly knew the merit of forgiveness of injuries, because it cost her nothing; and that a harsh expression, a slanderous aspersion, any indication of hatred or of spite, never broke from her, even when the resources of ingenuity were exhausted in order to goad her feelings, and self-defence almost made anger and resentment a duty.

It will be said that the fair side is here presented of this remarkable picture,—remarkable if the original were found in a cottage, but in a palace little short of miraculous. If, however, there be so fair a side to the portraiture, shall it not turn away the wrath that other features may possibly raise on reversing the medal? But that is not the defence, nor even the palliation, which belongs to this unparalleled case. Was ever human being so treated—above all, was ever woman so treated as this woman had been—visited with severe censure if

she at some time fell into the snares at all times laid for her undoing? Were ever faults, made next to unavoidable, by systematic persecution in all matters down to the most trifling from the most grave, regarded as inexpiable, or only to be expiated by utter destruction? It is one of the grossest and most unnatural of the outrages against all justice, to say nothing of charity, which despots and other slave-owners commit, that they visit on their hapless victims the failings which their oppressions burn as it were into the character—that they affect disgust and reprobation at what is their own handiwork—and assume from the vices they have themselves engendered a new right to torment whom they have degraded. These men can never learn the lessons of inspired wisdom, and lay their account with reaping as they have sowed. Were a tyrant to assume some strange caprice, by grafting the thorn upon the vine-tree, or placing the young dove among vultures to be reared, surely it would surpass even the caprice of a tyrant, and his proverbial contempt of all reason beyond his own will, were he to complain that he could no longer gather grapes from the plant, and that the perverted nature of the dove thirsted for blood. Did any parent, unnatural enough to turn his child among gipsies, ever prove so senseless or unreasonable as to complain of the dishonest habits his offspring had acquired? By what title, then, shall a husband, who, after swearing upon the altar to love, protect, and cherish his wife, casts her away from him, and throws her into whatever society may beset her in a strange country, pretend to complain of incorrect demeanour, when it is no fault of his that there remains in the bosom of his victim one vestige of

honesty, of purity, or of honour? It is not denied, it cannot be denied, that levities little suited to her station marked the conduct of the Princess; that unworthy associates sometimes found admittance to her presence; that in the hands of intriguing women she became a tool of their silly, senseless plots; that, surrounded by crafty politicians, she suffered her wrongs to be used as the means of gratifying a place-hunting ambition, which rather crawled than climbed; and that a character naturally only distinguished by mere heedless openness, and a frankness greater than common prudence seems to justify in those who dwell in palaces, became shaded, if not tarnished, by a disposition to join in unjustifiable contrivances for self-defence. But the heavy charges of guilt brought against her, in two several investigations, were triumphantly repelled, and by the universal assent of mankind scattered in the wind, amidst their unanimous indignation; and from the blame of lesser faults and indiscretions into which she is admitted to have been betrayed, the least regard to the treatment she met with must, in the contemplation of all candid minds, altogether set her free.

No sooner was the marriage solemnized, which plunged the country into unmixed joy, and raised a mingled expectation and sneer among the population of the court, than the illustrious husband proceeded to the most exemplary, and indeed scrupulous fulfilment of his vows —but not those made at the altar. There were others of a prior date, to which, with the most rigorous sense of justice, he therefore gave the preference;—performing them with an exactness even beyond the strict letter of the engagement. It is true they were not quite

consistent with the later obligations "to love, cherish, and protect;" but they were vows notwithstanding, and had been attested with many oaths, and fierce imprecations, and accompanied with a touching and a copious effusion of tears. Their purport was an engagement to reject, to hate, and to insult the wedded wife; to yield her rivals, not unwedded, but the helpmates of other lords, the preference on all occasions; to crown the existence of the one with all favour, and affection, and respect, while that of the other should be made wretched and unbearable by every slight which could be given, every outrage which could be offered to the feelings most tyrannical over the female bosom. Swift followed, then, upon the making of the second and public vow, the punctual fulfilment of the first and private obligation. Never did the new-married pair meet but in the presence of others; the Princess was treated on every occasion, but most on public occasions, with ostentatious neglect, nay, with studied contumely; each resource of ingenious spite was exhausted in devising varied means of exhibiting her position in melancholy contrast with the empire of her rivals: when she submitted, trampled upon as dastardly and mean; when she was reluctantly goaded into self-defence, run down and quelled and punished as contumacious; and as soon as maltreatment was suspected to have begotten the desire of retaliation, she was surrounded with spies, that not a gesture or a look, a word or a sigh, might pass unregistered, unexaggerated, unperverted. Yet no one incident could be found upon which to hang the slightest charge of impropriety. Witness the necessity to which the Whig friends of

Carlton-House were reduced (for want of other blame), of complaining that the sympathy of the people had been awaked in behalf of the persecuted and defenceless stranger; and that she did not shun occasions of seeing her only friend, the People, so carefully as the Whig notion of female propriety deemed fitting, or the Carlton-House standard of conjugal delicacy required.

At the end of a tedious and sorrowful year, the birth of the Princess Charlotte once more intoxicated the nation with loyal joy, and made it forget as well the silent sorrows of the one parent, as the perfidious cruelty of the other. Scarce had the mother recovered, when a fresh and unheard-of outrage greeted her returning health. The "First Gentleman of his age" was pleased, under his own hand, to intimate that it suited his disposition no longer to maintain even the thin covering of decency which he had hitherto suffered to veil the terms of their union; he announced that they should now live apart; and added, with a refinement of delicacy suited to the finished accomplishments of his preeminence among gentlemen, that he pledged himself never to ask for a nearer connexion, even if their only child should die,—he added, with a moving piety, "Which God forbid!"—in case it might be imagined that the death of the daughter was as much his hope as the destruction of the mother. The separation thus delicately effected made only an apparent change in the relative position of the parties. They had before occupied the same house, because they had lived under one roof, but in a state of complete separation; and now the only difference was, that, instead of making a partition of the dwelling, and assigning her one half of

its interior, he was graciously pleased to make a new division of the same mansion, giving her the outside, and keeping the inside to his mistresses and himself.

The incessant vigilance with which the unhappy Princess's conduct was now watched, by eyes ready to minister fictions to those who employed them, soon produced a report that their prey had fallen into the appointed snare. It was duly represented to the "Most amiable Prince of his times," living with his paramours, that the wife whom he had discarded for their society, and to whom he had given what the head of the law, his comrade and adviser,* scrupled not to term "a Letter of Licence," had followed his example, and used the licence; in short, that she had been secretly delivered of a child. No intrigue had been denounced as detected by the spies; nor could any person be fixed on as he who had committed high treason, by defiling the solitary bed to which the "Companion of the King's son"† had been condemned by her tender and faithful consort. The charge, however, was made, and it was minutely investigated,—not by the friends of the accused, but by the political and the personal associates of her husband. The result was her complete and triumphant acquittal of all but the charge that she had, to vary the monotony of her sequestered life, adopted the child of a sailmaker in the neighbourhood of her residence; thus endeavouring to obtain for her own daughter's society a substitute upon whom the natural instinct of maternal feeling might find a vent, to relieve an

* Lord Thurlow.

† *La Compagne Fitz le Roy*—says the Statute of Treasons.

overburthened heart. It was little creditable, certainly, to the Commissioners who conducted this "Delicate Investigation," as it was termed, that they stooped to mention levities of conduct wholly immaterial, and confessedly quite inoffensive in her, while they cautiously abstained from pronouncing any censure upon the guilt of the other party, by whose faithlessness and cruelty her existence had been rendered a scene of misery.

In those days the accidental distributions of party had made the Princess acquainted with the most eminent of the Tory chiefs—Lord Eldon, Mr. Perceval, and Mr. Canning. These distinguished personages composed her familiar society, and they were her faithful counsellors through all her difficulties. Nor would it have been easy to find men on whom she could more safely rely for powerful assistance as advocates, or able advice as friends. They prepared an elaborate statement of the Princess's case, which accidental circumstances kept them from making public; but enough of the proceeding transpired to make the country aware of the extraordinary course which had been pursued by the Prince's political friends.

It is difficult to describe the sensation which the Report of the Secret Tribunal made wherever a knowledge of its contents reached. That a wife, a Princess, and a stranger should be subjected to treatment the most cruel and unmanly, should then be driven from the shelter of her husband's roof, should be surrounded by spies and false witnesses, and, having been charged with a capital offence—nay, with high treason—should be tried behind her back, with the most able counsel to

attend on behalf of her persecutor and accuser, without a human being present on her behalf, so much as to cross-examine a witness, or even to take a note of the evidence—was a proceeding which struck all men's minds with astonishment and dismay, and seemed rather to approach the mockery of all justice presented in the accounts of eastern seraglios, than to resemble anything that is known among nations living under constitutional Governments. But if the investigation itself was thus an object of reprobation and disgust, its result gave, if possible, less satisfaction still. What could be said of a sentence which showed that, even when tried behind her back, and by an invisible tribunal formed wholly of her adversaries, not the shadow of guilt could be found in her whole conduct; and that even the mercenary fancies and foul perjuries of the spies had failed to present any probable matter of blame; and yet, instead of at once pronouncing her innocent and unjustly accused, begrudged her the poor satisfaction of an acquittal, and, fearful of affording her the triumph to which innocence is entitled, and offending the false accuser, both passed over all mention of her unparalleled wrongs, and left a stigma upon her name, by the vague recommendation that the King should advise her concerning certain levities or indiscretions of behaviour—an allusion so undefined, that any one might fill up the dark outline as his imagination should enable him, or his want of common charity prompt him to do? Every one knew that, had there been the least tangible impropriety, though falling far short of guilt, it would have been stated in the Report; but the purposes of the accuser, to which the

secret judges lent themselves, were best served by a vague and mysterious generality, that meant everything, and anything, as well as nothing, and enabled him to propagate by his hireling favourites, all over society, any new slanders which he might choose to invent.

The confirmed insanity of the King, three years afterwards, called to the Regency the chief actor in these unhappy scenes. No prince ever ascended the throne with so universal a feeling of distrust, and even aversion. Nor was this lessened when the first act of his reign proved him as faithless to his political friends as he had been to his wife; and as regardless of his professed public principles as he had been of his marriage vows. It added little respect to the disesteem in which he was so universally held, that he was seen to discard all the liberal party with whom he had so long acted; with whom, after an interval of separation, he had become again intimately united, and among them the very men who had stood by him in his domestic broils; whilst he took into full favour his determined enemies, and, worst of all, the very men who had prepared attacks upon him too outrageous to find a publisher!

The accession of the Princess's friends to the Regent's favour was the period of their intercourse with their former client. Not the slightest communication could now be held with her whose just quarrel they had so warmly espoused while the Prince was their antagonist; and Mr. Canning alone of them all, to his transcendent honour, refused to pay the tribute exacted by the Court of deserting a former friend, because an enemy had been found placable; and because, he, setting

too high a value upon his forgiveness, required his new favourites to be as perfidious as himself.

It is impossible to separate from the history of George IV. that of his wife, for it is united with the most remarkable features of his character; his boundless caprice—his arbitrary nature—his impatience of contradiction and restraint—his recklessness of consequences when resolved to attain a private end—qualities which, if guided by a desire of compassing greater ends and sustained by adequate courage, would have aroused a struggle for absolute power, fatal either to the liberties of the country or to the existence of the monarchy.

The Princess of Wales, wearied out with unceasing persecution, had gone abroad, leaving behind her, as the only support on which she could rely, her only daughter, disease having deprived her of the steady favour and undeviating support of the King, her father-in-law and uncle. The death of both that King and that daughter was the signal of new attempts against her peace. The history of the Milan Commission is fresh in the recollection of all. A board of three persons—a Chancery lawyer, who had never seen a witness examined, and whose practice was chiefly confined to cases in bankruptcy, on which he had written an excellent book—a colonel in the army, who knew but little more of the matter—an active and clever attorney—composed this select body, commissioned to hunt for evidence which might convict the future Queen, and be ready to overwhelm her if she asserted her right to share her consort's throne.

Sir John Leach was an active adviser of all these

nefarious proceedings; nor could all England, certainly not all its bar, have produced a more unsafe counsellor. With great quickness of parts, an extraordinary power of fixing his attention upon an argument, and following steadily its details, a rare faculty of neat and lucid statement, even of the most entangled and complicated facts, considerable knowledge of legal principles, and still greater acquaintance with equity practice, he was singularly ignorant of the world, and had no kind of familiarity with the rules or the practice of evidence in the courts of common or criminal law. Moderately learned even in his own profession, beyond it he was one of the most ignorant men that ever appeared at the bar. Yet, by industry, and some art of gaining favour, by making himself useful to the powerful and the wealthy, little scrupulous how much he risked in any way to serve them, he had struggled with the defects of a mean birth and late adoption into the rank he afterwards so greatly affected; and he had arrived at extensive practice. "Nullum ille poetam noverat, nullum legerat oratorem, nullam memoriam antiquitatis collegerat: non publicum jus, non privatum et civile* cognoverat.—Is omnibus exemplo debet esse quantum in hâc urbe polleat multorum obedire tempori, multorumque vel honori, vel periculo servire. His enim rebus, infimo loco natus, et honores, et pecuniam, et gratiam consecutus, etiam in patronorum sine doctrinâ, sine ingenio, aliquem numerum pervenerat." (Cic. *Brutus*.) The power of deciding causes, which he showed when raised to the bench, was favourably con-

* Equity, *jus prætorium*, is not very clearly here excluded.

trasted with the dilatory and doubting habits of Lord Eldon; but there was much of what Lord Bacon calls "affected despatch" in his proceedings; and while he appeared to regard the number of judgments which he pronounced in a given time far more than their quality, he left it to his learned chief to complain that cases were decided at the Rolls, but heard when they came by appeal before the Chancellor: while the wits, calling one the court of *oyer sans terminer*, named the other that of *terminer sans oyer*; and a great and candid critic (Sir S. Romilly) professed himself, to Lord Eldon's extreme delight, better pleased with the tardy justice of the principal than with the swift injustice of the deputy. The ridicule which he threw around his conduct in society, by his childish devotion to the pursuits of fashionable life, in which neither his early habits nor his turn of mind fitted him to excel, was another result derived from the same want of sound judgment. But its worst fruit was that unhesitating and overweening confidence in his own opinion, which exceeded that of any other man, and perpetually led both himself and his clients astray. Uncontrolled conceit, a contracted understanding that saw quickly and correctly very near objects, and disbelieved in the existence of all beyond, conspired with a temper peculiarly irascible, to give him this habit of forming his opinion instantaneously, and this pertinacity in adhering to it, excluding all the light that could afterwards be let in upon the subject. The same hasty and sanguine temperament made him exceedingly prone to see matters as he wished them to be; and when he had a client whom he desired to gratify, or for whom he felt a strong interest, his advice became doubly dan-

gerous; because, in addition to his ordinary infirmities of judgment, he formed his opinion under all the bias of his wishes, while he gave it and adhered to it without running any hazard in his own person. His courage, both personal and political, was frequently commended; but there may be some doubt if to the latter praise he was justly entitled. His personal gallantry, indeed, was quite unquestionable, and it was severely tried in the painful surgical operations to which he submitted with an ease that showed the risk and the suffering cost him little. But the peculiarity of his character that made him so wise in his own conceit, and lessened the value of his counsels, also detracted much from the merit of his moral courage, by keeping him blind to difficulties and dangers, the presence or the approach of which could be discovered by all eyes but his own.

Such was the counsellor whom the Regent trusted, and who was as sure to mislead him as ever man was that undertook to advise another. The wishes of his great client were well known to him; his disrelish for the caution, and the doubts, and the fears of Lord Eldon had been oftentimes freely expressed; Sir John Leach easily saw every part of the case as the Regent wished—quickly made up his mind on the pleasing side—set himself in the same advantageous contrast with the Chancellor on this, as he delighted to do on more ordinary occasions—and, because he perceived that he delighted the royal consultor at present, never doubted that his successful conduct of the affair would enable him to supplant his superior, and to clutch the Great Seal itself. The possibility of royal ingratitude never entered his narrow mind, any more

than that of his own opinion being erroneous; nor did he conceive it within the nature of things, that in one respect the client should resemble his adviser, namely, in retaining his predilection only so long as measures were found to succeed, and in making the counsellor responsible in his own person for the failure of all from whom anything had ever been expected. Under these hopeful auspices, the most difficult and delicate affair ever yet undertaken by statesmen was approached; and while, under the sanguine counsels of Sir John, no one of the conspirators ever thought of questioning the success of their case, another question was just as little asked among them, which yet was by far the most important of all—Whether, supposing the case proved against the Princess, the conspirators were one hair's-breadth nearer the mark of effecting her ruin, or whether that first success would not bring them only the nearer to their own.

The Milan Commission proceeded under this superintendence, and as its labours, so were its fruits exactly what might have been expected. It is among foreigners the first impression always arising from any work undertaken by English hands and paid for by English money, that an inexhaustible fund is employed, and with boundless profusion; and a thirst of gold is straightway excited which no extravagance of liberality can slake. The knowledge that a Board was sitting to collect evidence against the Queen immediately gave such testimony a high value in the market of Italian perjury; and happy was the individual who had ever been in her house or admitted to her presence; his fortune was counted to be made.

Nor were they who had viewed her mansion, or had only known the arrangements of her villa, without hopes of sharing in the golden prize. To have even seen her pass and noted who attended her person, was a piece of good luck. In short, nothing, however remotely connected with herself, or her family, or her residence, or her habits, was without its value among a poor, a sanguine, and an imaginative people. It is certain that no more ready way of proving a case, like the charge of criminal intercourse, can be found, than to have it first broadly asserted for a fact; because, this being once believed, every motion, gesture, and look is at once taken as proof of the accusation, and the two most innocent of human beings may be overwhelmed with a mass of circumstances, almost all of which, as well as the inferences drawn from them, are really believed to be true by those who recount or record them. As the treachery of servants was the portion of this testimony which bore the highest value, that, of course, was not difficult to procure; and the accusers soon possessed what, in such a case, may most truly be said to be *accusatori maxime optandum*—not, indeed, *confitentes reos*, but the man-servant of the one, and the maid-servant of the other supposed paramour. Nor can we look back upon these scenes without some little wonder how they should not have added even the *confitentem reum;* for surely in a country so fertile of intriguing men and abandoned women—where false oaths, too, grow naturally, or with only the culture of a gross ignorance and a superstitious faith—it might have been easy, we should imagine, to find some youth like Smeaton in the original Harry the Eighth's time, ready to make his fortune, both in money

and female favours, by pretending to have enjoyed the affections of one whose good-nature and easy manners made the approach to her person no difficult matter at any time. This defect in the case can only be accounted for by supposing that the production of such a witness before the English public might have appeared somewhat perilous, both to himself and to the cause he was brought to prop with his perjuries.

Accordingly, recourse was had to spies, who watched all the parties did, and, when they could not find a circumstance, would make one; men who chronicled the dinners and the suppers that were eaten, the walks and the sails that were enjoyed, the arrangements of rooms and the position of bowers, and who, never doubting that these were the occasions and the scenes of endearment and of enjoyment, pretended to have witnessed the one, in order that the other might be supposed; but with that inattention to particulars which Providence has appointed as the snare for the false witness, and the safeguard of innocence, pretended to have seen in such directions as would have required the rays of light to move not straightforward, but roundabout. Couriers that pried into carriages where the travellers were asleep at grey daylight, or saw in the dusk of dewy eve what their own fancy pictured,—sailors who believed that all persons could gratify their animal appetites on the public deck, where themselves had so often played the beast's part, —lying waiting-women, capable of repaying the kindness and charity that had laid the foundation of their fortune, with the treachery that could rear it to the height of their sordid desires,—chambermaids, the re-

fuse of the streets and the common food of wayfaring licentiousness, whose foul fancy could devour every mark that beds might, but did not, present to their practised eye,—lechers of either sex, who would fain have gloated over the realities of what their liquorish imagination alone bodied forth,—pimps of hideous aspect, whose prurient glance could penetrate through the keyhole of rooms where the rat shared with the bug the silence of the deserted place—these were the performers whose exploits the Milan Commissioners chronicled, whose narratives they collected, and whose exhibition upon the great stage of the first tribunal of all the earth they sedulously and zealously prepared by frequent rehearsal. Yet, with all these helps to success, with the unlimited supply of fancy and of falsehood which the character of the people furnished, with the very body-servants of the parties hired by their wages, if not bought with a price —such an array could only be produced as the whole world at once pronounced insufficient to support any case, and as even the most prejudiced of assemblies in the accuser's favour turned from with disgust.

The arrival of the Queen in this country, on the accession of George IV., was the signal for proceeding against her. A *green bag* was immediately sent down to the two Houses of Parliament, containing the fruits of the Milanese researches; and a Bill of Pains and Penalties was prepared for her destruction. Such was the proceeding of the Court, remarkable enough, certainly in itself—sufficiently prompt—abundantly daring—and unquestionably pregnant with grave consequences. The proceeding of the country was more prompt, more decided, and more remarkable still. The people all in

the voice demurred to the Bill. They said, "Suppose all to be true which her enemies allege, we care not: she was ill-used; she was persecuted; she was turned out of her husband's house; she was denied the rights of a wife as well as of a mother; she was condemned to live the life of the widow and the childless, that he who should have been her comforter might live the life of an adulterous libertine; and she shall not be trampled down and destroyed to satiate his vengeance or humour his caprice." This was the universal feeling that occupied the country. Had the whole facts as charged been proved by a cloud of unimpeachable witnesses, such would have been the universal verdict of that country, the real jury which was to try this great cause; and so wide of their object would the accusers have found themselves at the very moment when they would have fancied the day their own. This all men of sense and reflection saw; this the Ministers saw; this, above all, the sagacious Chancellor very clearly saw with the sure and quick eye which served his long and perspicacious head; but this Sir John Leach never could be brought for a moment even to comprehend, acute as he was, nor could his royal friend be made to conceive it; because, though both acute men, they were utterly blinded by the passions that domineered in the royal breast and the conceited arrogance that inspired the vulgar adviser.

But if the Ministers saw all these things, and if they moreover were well aware—as who was not?—that the whole country was excited to a pitch of rage and indignation bordering upon rebellion, and that the struggle, if persisted in against a people firmly resolved to stand between the Court and its prey, must hurry them into

wide-spreading insurrection—how, it will be asked, was it possible that those Ministers—whose hatred of the bill must have been as great as their apprehension of its consequences were grave, and who had not the shadow of an interest in its fate, except that it should instantly be abandoned—could be brought to sanction a proceeding fraught not only with every mischief to the country, but with the extremest peril to themselves? The great difficulty of answering this question must be confessed; nor is it lessened by the reflection that at the head of the Government in those days there were men whose prudence was more striking than any other quality; men cautious, unpretending, commonplace, and loving place, like Lord Liverpool; wary, cold, circumspect, though of unflinching courage, like Lord Castlereagh; far-sighted, delighting in seeing all difficulties that existed, and many that did not, like Lord Eldon; above all, so firm-minded a man as the Duke of Wellington,—a man, too, so honourable in all his feelings, and so likely to influence the councils, if he failed to turn aside the desires, of the Sovereign. The defenders of the Ministers never affected to doubt the mischievous nature of the whole proceeding; they admitted all their opinions to be strongly and decidedly against it; they saw, and confessed that they saw, all the dangers to which it exposed the country; they did not deny that it was the mere personal wish of the King; and that it was the bounden duty, as well as the undoubted interest of his Ministers, peremptorily to refuse their assistance to such a wicked and hopeless project;—admitting, all the while, that as the bill never could be carried through and executed, all the agitation with which so monstrous

an attempt was convulsing the country had absolutely not a chance of success, in so far as concerned the King's object. Then, what reason did they assign for the Ministers lending themselves to such an enormity? It seems incredible, but it is true, that the only ground ever hinted at was the King's fixed determination, and the risk his Ministers ran of losing their places if they thwarted him in his favourite pursuit! Yes, as if the loss of office was like the loss of life, and they had no power of refusing, because refusal was death, they crouched to that command, rather than yield to which, men of integrity and of firmness would have faced death itself. It is certain, that had the Duke of Wellington been longer in civil life, and attained his due weight in the councils of the Government, he would have taken this and no other view of the question; but it is equally certain that the Ministers at large betrayed the same submissive obedience to their master's will, showed the same dread of facing his displeasure, which unnerves the slaves of the Eastern tyrant when his voice echoes through the vaults of the seraglio, or casts them prostrate before his feet, as the scimitar's edge glances in their eye, and the bowstring twangs in their ear.

The course taken by the leading supporters of the Queen rendered the conduct of the Government still more despicable. It was early announced by Mr. Brougham in the House of Commons that nothing could be more safe than for the Ministers to refuse carrying through the bill, because, if the Regent, after that, should venture to dismiss them on account of their refusal, no man among their adversaries would venture

to take office from which the former occupants had been driven for refusing to abandon their duty, and fly in the people's face. The Regent at once perceived the tendency of this announcement; and he met it in the only way that could be devised for counteracting that tendency. He gave his Ministers to understand, that if he turned them out for refusing to go on with the bill, he should take their adversaries into their places without requiring them to adopt or support it. The contrivance was certainly not without ingenuity; but a little reflection must have satisfied even the most timorous place-holder that he had little to fear from so senseless a resolution, and that, as long as the Whigs refused to outbid them for the royal favour in the only stock which had any value at Carlton House, support of the bill, there was no chance whatever of their being taken into office on any other terms. There surely must be something in official life as sweet as natural life is supposed to be, and something peculiarly horrible to statesmen in the bare possibility of political death—else why this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after longevity—or why this dread of dissolution that makes the soul shrink back upon itself? But in one material particular the two kinds of life and death widely differ. The official's death-bed is not cheered by any hopes of immortality. The world to which he now looks forward is another, but not a better world. He knows full sure that, from the pleasing state of being to which he has been so long used and so fondly clings, he must instantly, on the great change taking place, be plunged into the dreary night of a placeless existence; be cast away with other mournful ghosts on the tempest-beaten coast of

Opposition, there to wander uncertain of ever again being summoned from that inhospitable shore, or visiting the cheerful glimpses of the courtly day. Hence it is, that while men of ordinary powers are daily seen to meet death in the breach for honour or patriotism, hardly any can be found, even among the foremost men of any age, whose nerves are firm enough to look in the face the termination of official existence; and none but one bereft of his senses ever makes himself a voluntary sacrifice for his principles or his country. The Ministers of 1820 numbered not among them any one so void of political reason as to follow Mr. Canning's noble example, and all were resolved to forego the discharge of every duty, and incur, both then and ever after, the loudest reproaches, rather than put to hazard the existence of the Administration.

The people, we have said, in one voice Demurred to the Bill, and plainly indicated that, if every tittle of the charges against the Queen were proved, or were admitted to be true, they would not suffer her to be sacrificed to the rage of one who had no right whatever to complain of her conduct were it ever so bad. But this feeling did not prevent them from also being prepared, in justice towards her character, to take issue upon the fact; and accordingly the trial before the Lords was looked to with the most universal and painful anxiety, though with a confidence which nothing could shake. After a strenuous but unavailing attempt to arrest the progress of the measure, and fling out the bill on the first reading, her Majesty's counsel, Mr. Brougham, her Attorney, and Mr. Denman, her Solicitor General, prepared to resist it upon the merits of

the case, to meet the evidence of the Milan Commissioners, and to defend their august client from every accusation*. An adjournment of some weeks was allowed the promoters of the measure to prepare their case; the Parliament, instead of the usual prorogation, remained sitting, though the Commons adjourned from time to time; and the 17th of August was fixed for the opening of this extraordinary cause. All that public expectation and anxiety excited to the highest pitch could lend of interest to any trial, was here combined, with the unexampled attendance daily of almost all the Peers of the empire, the assistance of all the judges of the land, the constant presence of the Commons, a vast concourse of spectators. The Queen several times proceeded to the House in state, accompanied by her suite; and occupied a seat near her counsel, but within the bar. The Nobles best known to the surrounding multitude were greeted on their way to and from Westminster with expressions of popular feeling, friendly or hostile, according as they were known to take part with or against her Majesty; but, on the whole, extraordinary tranquillity prevailed. This was very much owing to the undoubted confidence of a favourable result, which kept possession of the people from the very first; for when the deposition of the chief witness against the Queen had proved very detrimental to her case, and her adversaries were exulting before his cross-examination had destroyed his credit, very alarming indications of irritation and rage were perceived, extending from the

* Her other counsel were Mr. Justice Williams, Mr. Serjeant Wilde, and Dr. Lushington.

people to the troops then forming the garrison of the capital. Nor were there wanting those who judged it fortunate for the peace of the empire and the stability of the throne, that so popular a Prince and so very determined a man as the Duke of Kent was not then living to place himself at the head of the Queen's party, espoused as that was by the military no less than by the civil portion of the community.

After great and memorable displays of eloquence and professional skill on all sides, it was found that the case had failed entirely; and the bill, which for so many months had agitated the whole country, was at length, on the 7th of November, withdrawn. It is said that the advisers of the Queen were dissatisfied with the conduct of that party to which they, generally speaking, belonged, the Whigs—because these might have much more shortly made an end of the case. There were several periods in the proceeding which offered the firmest ground for that great and powerful body to act with decisive effect; espousing as it did the right side of the question, but espousing it feebly, and not very consistently. If at any of those points they had made a strenuous resistance, and refused to proceed farther, though they might have been defeated by a small majority, the conductors of the Queen's case would have at once withdrawn from a proceeding which presented daily to the indignant world the spectacle, most abhorrent to every right feeling, of justice outraged no less in form than in substance. Had they retired from this scene of mockery and vexation, the country was so entirely with them, that the Lords never would have ventured to proceed in their absence

The difficulties in which the Whig leaders then were placed

But fate ordered it otherwise: the whole case on both sides was exhausted to the very dregs; and, the accusation failing, the Ministers were fain, on carrying one vote by only a majority of seven, to withdraw their master's bill and leave him to himself. There is every reason to believe that they were too happy to have so good a pretence for sounding a retreat from their hazardous position; and they rested satisfied with allowing the King to continue the same petty warfare of annoyance and insult in which the royal veteran had formerly reaped so many laurels, only refusing him any more Bills of Attainder.

Under such aggressions upon her peace and the comforts of all her associates and supporters, after a struggle of less than a year, the gallant nature sunk, which had borne up against all neglect, braved the pitiless storms of incessant annoyance, and finally triumphed over the highest perils with which persecution could surround her. The people continued firmly her friend, but the upper classes were, as usual, found unable to face the frowns, or resist the blandishments of the Court. As long as the interest of the contest continued, and popular favour could be gained by taking the right side, these aristocratic partisans could defy, or thought they could defy, the royal displeasure. But when the ex-

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hardly fell short of those of the Ministers. Than Lord Grey's whole conduct nothing could be more noble: whether the powers which he displayed or the honest independence of his demeanour be regarded. But we must restrain ourselves from the subject, so inviting, of sketching that amiable, honourable, and highly gifted person's character—offering such a brilliant contrast to many of whom we have spoken. Long, very long may it be before so irreparable a loss brings him within the province of history!

citement had subsided, and no precise object seemed furthered by any more popularity, they were disposed, some to regain lost favour elsewhere, almost all to avoid widening the breach. There would be no use in concealing the truth, were it not already well known; the Queen's circle became daily more and more contracted; her cause was as much as ever allowed to be that of right and justice: her husband's conduct that of a tyrant destitute alike of feeling and of honour; but he was powerful, and she was weak; so the sentiment most generally felt was, that the subject was irksome, that it might as well now be dropped, that there were never such atrocities as the Prince had committed, nor such balls as he well and wisely gave from time to time, and that, if the sense of public duty commanded votes and speeches against the Bill in either House of Parliament, a feeling of what was due to near and dear relatives dictated the private duty of eschewing all that could close against their fashionable families the doors of Carlton House. In this state of the public mind, the resolution of the Queen once more to leave a country where her lot had been so wretched, would, upon its being disclosed, have produced very different effects in the various parts of the community. The people would have felt general concern, probably great, perhaps just displeasure; the Aristocracy, even its Liberal members, would have rejoiced at the removal of an irksome inconvenience. This plan, when on the eve of being carried into execution, was frustrated by Her Majesty's death. Exhausted by continued and unremitted persecution, and suffering severely by the signal failure of an attempt to attend the coronation, ill-devised

and worse executed, because planned against the peremptory remonstrances of her law advisers, and executed without any of her accustomed firmness of purpose, she was stricken with a malady that baffled all the resources of the medical art, and expired, after declaring to her chief adviser, in an affecting interview, that she was happy to die, for life had never been to her any enjoyment since her early years, and was now become a heavy burthen.

It is remarkable that the extreme fondness for young children which had twice before led her into trouble, should have caused her to do the only reprehensible act of her latter days*. The adoption of the sailmaker's child had led to the "Delicate Investigation," as it was called, of 1806; the delight she took in the child of one of her attendants, when in Italy, was the cause of all the favour which the father enjoyed in her household; and now her love of the child of her chaplain

* In the acts which caused this celebrated Princess to be sometimes taxed with the habitual ingratitude of her *caste*, something may always be allowed for inconsistency and want of reflection. A striking instance of this occurred on the defeat of the Bill, in 1820. Mr. Brougham waited upon her to announce it, and tender his congratulations. She instantly said that there was a sum of 7000*l.* at Mr. D. Kinnaird's (the banker's), which she desired him to take, and distribute 4000*l.* of it among his learned coadjutors. This he of course refused. Her Majesty would take no refusal, but the day after recurred to the subject, and insisted on his laying her commands before her other Council. They all joined in the respectful refusal. A few weeks after, Mr. Kinnaird suggested that the salaries of her law officers were in arrear, they never having been paid. The sum was under 200*l.*, but she peremptorily refused to have it paid off—and both this arrear, and all their other professional emoluments, on the ordinary scale, were first paid after her decease by the Treasury, among the other expenses of the cause!

induced her to make room for the parents in her establishment, removing Lord and Lady Hood, whose services during her last persecution had been all that the most devoted attachment could render, and whose rank fitted them for the place according to the strictness of Court etiquette. It is matter worthy of observation, that during the three hours of wandering which immediately preceded her decease, the names of any of the persons with whom she had been accused of improper conduct never escaped her lips; while she constantly spoke of those children,—a remarkable circumstance, if it be considered that the control of reason and discretion was then wholly withdrawn.

The body of the Queen lay in state at her villa near Hammersmith, and was conveyed through the metropolis attended by countless multitudes of the people. The Regent was then in Dublin, receiving those expressions of loyal affection in which our Irish fellow-subjects so lavishly deal, more especially when they are filled with expectations of thereby gaining some favourite object. Indeed, Mr. O'Connell himself, in consideration that money enough had not been spent in providing palaces, headed a proposition for building a mansion by subscription; but this, like so many other promises and threats, proved mere noise and bluster, not one farthing ever having been subscribed, nor any one step, probably, taken, after all this vapour. The Ministers, therefore, in their Master's absence, and having no orders from him, could only conjecture his wishes and act accordingly. They therefore called out the troops to prevent the funeral procession from passing through the City, and a struggle ensued with

the people, which ended in the loss of life. Except that the funeral was turned aside at Hyde Park, this unjustifiable proceeding produced no effect; for, after moving along part of the New Road, it came back, supported by a countless multitude, and entered the Strand near Temple Bar, so as to traverse the whole City. The inscription upon the coffin, dictated by the Queen herself—"Caroline of Brunswick, the murdered Queen of England"—made some ecclesiastical authorities refuse it admission into the churches, on its way to the port of embarkation, where it arrived, accompanied by the executors—Mr. Sergeant Wilde and Dr. Lushington, attending the remains of their royal client to the place of her final repose in Brunswick. The indecent haste with which the journey to Harwich was performed excited indignation in all, surprise in none. Nor was there perhaps ever witnessed a more striking or a more touching scene than the embarkation displayed. Thousands of all ranks thickly covered the beach; the sea, smooth as glass, was alive with boats and vessels of every size, their colours floating half-mast high, as on days consecrated to mourning. the sun shone forth with a brightness which made a contrast to the gloom that shrouded every face; the sound of the guns booming across the water at intervals impressed the solemnity upon the ear. Captains, grown grey in their country's service, were seen to recall the Princess's kindness and charities, whereof they had been the witnesses or the ministers, unable to restrain the tears that poured along their scarred cheeks. At length the crimson coffin was seen slowly to descend from the crowded pier, and the barge that received it wheeled

through the water, while the gorgeous flag of England floated over the remains of the "Murdered Queen," whose sufferings had so powerfully awakened the English people's sympathy, and whose dust they now saw depart from their shores for ever, to mingle with the ashes of an illustrious race of heroes,—smitten with feelings in which it would be vain to deny that a kind of national remorse at her murder exacerbated their deep commiseration for her untimely end.

Let it not be supposed that, in sketching the characters of George IV. and his Queen, this pen has been guided by the feelings of party violence to excuse the errors of the injured party, or exaggerate the offences of the wrongdoer. The portrait which has here been painted of him is undoubtedly one of the darkest shade, and most repulsive form. But the faults which gross injustice alone could pass over without severe reprobation, have been ascribed to their true cause,—the corrupting influence of a courtly education, and habits of unbounded self-indulgence upon a nature originally good; and, although the sacred rules of morality forbid us to exonerate from censure even the admitted victim of circumstances so unfriendly to virtue, charity, as well as candour, permit us to add, that those circumstances should bear a far larger share of the reprehension than the individual, who may well claim our pity, while he incurs our censure.

It is impossible to close the sketch of these two exalted personages without a reflection suggested by the effects which were produced upon the public mind by the two most remarkable events connected with their

personal history—the death of the Princess Charlotte, and the persecution of the Queen.

To those who witnessed the universal and deep affliction into which the nation was plunged by the former event, no description of the scene is necessary—to those who saw it not, all description would fail in conveying an adequate idea of the truth. It was as if each house had been suddenly bereaved of a favourite child. The whole country felt the blow, as if it had been levelled at every family within its bounds. While the tears of all classes flowed, and the manlier sex itself was softened to pity, the female imagination was occupied, bewildered, distracted, and the labours of child-bearing caused innumerable victims among those whom the incident had struck down to the ground. Yet the fact of a young woman dying in childbed was anything rather than out of the course of nature; certainly not a town in which it did not happen every month—possibly not a parish of any extent in which it did not occur every year; and in neither town nor parish had the event ever produced the least sensation beyond the walls of the house in which the mournful scene took place.

So the maltreatment, however gross, of a wife by her husband is unhappily by no means an event of rare occurrence. It is not often, certainly, that so cruel and arbitrary a course of conduct has been pursued as that of George IV. towards his consort; but then cases of even greater brutality frequently occur, and pass with but little notice beyond the very small circle of those immediately connected with the parties. But the case

of Queen Caroline flung the whole country into a state of excitement only equalled in universality and intenseness by the pangs of grief felt for her daughter's death two years before. Every family made the cause its own. Every man, every woman, took part in the fray. Party animosities, personal differences, were suspended, to join with an injured wife against her tyrant husband. The power of sovereignty itself was shaken to its centre. The military and the civil powers bore their part in the struggle which threatened the monarchy with destruction. The people were so much exasperated that they refused to the injured party herself the right to judge of her own injuries. When she intimated a wish to withdraw from endless persecution, and put a period to incessant annoyance, by retiring from the country, the multitude was roused to frenzy by the bare mention of such a movement, and would have sacrificed to their infuriated sense of the Queen's injuries those advisers who should have honestly counselled her retirement, nay, the Queen herself, who really wished to go away, and restore the peace of the kingdom, while she consulted her own repose. So great was the diversity in the public consideration of a royal and a private family quarrel!

The treatment experienced by the King himself affords an additional illustration of the extreme favour in which kings are holden by their subjects in these realms. Than George IV. no prince was ever more unpopular while his father lived and reigned; nor could any one have been astonished more than that father would have been could he have seen the different eyes with which his son was regarded. when heir-

apparent to his throne, and when filling it as his successor. He would then have learnt how much of his own popularity depended upon his station, how little upon his personal fitness for the office. The Regency began: it was the period of our greatest military glory; all our warlike enterprises were crowned with success; the invincible Napoleon was overthrown, and banished as a criminal to a colony made penal for his special reception. Still the Regent gained no popular favour. At length his father, who had long ceased to reign, and, for any purposes of our rational nature, to exist, ceased to live. The Regent now only changed his name and style; for he had eight years before succeeded to the whole powers of the Crown. They who remember the winter of 1820 must be aware that the same individual who a week before the death of George III. had travelled to and fro on the Brighton and Windsor roads without attracting more notice than any ordinary wayfaring man, was now, merely because his name was changed to King from Regent, greeted by crowds of loyal and curious subjects, anxious to satiate their longing eyes with the sight of a king in name; the reality of the regal officer having been before the same eyes for eight years, and passed absolutely unnoticed.

In a few months came the Queen, and her trial speedily followed. The unpopularity of the Monarch was now renewed in more than its former generality and virulence. Nor was any prince, in any age or country, ever more universally or more deeply hated than George IV. during the year 1820. The course of the proceeding—his discomfiture in an attempt more tyrannical

than any of Henry VIII.'s, and carried on by more base contrivances—his subsequent oppression of his consort in every way—her melancholy end, the victim of his continued persecution—were assuredly ill calculated to lessen the popular indignation, or to turn well-merited scorn into even sufferance, far less respect. Yet such is the native force of reaction in favour of Royal personages, that he who a few months before durst as soon have walked into the flames as into an assembly of his subjects in any part of the empire, was well received in public wherever he chose to go, and was hailed by his Irish subjects rather as a god than a man, he having notoriously abandoned the principles he once professed in favour of that Irish people and their rights.

The accession of the present Queen was supposed by some to be rather a rude trial of the monarchical principle, inasmuch as a young lady of eighteen, suddenly transplanted from the nursery to the throne, might, how great soever her qualifications, be deemed hardly fit at once to hold the sceptre of such a kingdom in such times. But all apprehensions on the subject must have instantly ceased, when it was observed that there broke out all over the country an ungovernable paroxysm of loyal affection towards the illustrious lady, such as no people ever showed even to monarchs endeared by long and glorious reigns to subjects upon whom their wisdom or their valour had showered down innumerable benefits. The expectation bore the place of reality. The Queen was believed to have every good quality that it was desirable she should possess. There was a physical impossibility of her ever having done anything to earn the gratitude of her subjects, because she had only reigned a

day; and yet the most extravagant professions of attachment to her person and zeal for her character burst forth from the whole country, as if she had ruled half a century and had never suffered a day to pass without conferring some benefit upon her people, nor ever fallen into any of the errors incident to human weakness. It is true that the best friends both of the sovereign and of the monarchy viewed this unreflecting loyalty with distrust, and suspected that a people, thus ready to worship idols made with their own hands, might one day break their handiwork—that they who could be so very grateful for nothing might hereafter show ingratitude for real favours, —and that, having, without any grounds beyond the creation of their fancy, professed their veneration for an unknown individual, they might afterwards, with just as little reason, show neglect or dislike. But at any rate the feeling of enthusiastic loyalty and devotion to the sovereign, merely because she was sovereign, could not be doubted, and it could not be exceeded.*

And can it, after all these passages in our recent history, be said that the English people are of a republican tendency—that they care little for the affairs of princes or their smiles—that they are indifferent to, or impatient of, kingly government? Rather let it be asked if there is on the face of the globe any other people to

* It is hardly necessary to observe that no opinions whatever disrespectful or unkind towards the illustrious persons mentioned in these three paragraphs can be intended to be conveyed. What is said of the Queen's persecutions sufficiently proves this. In regard to the present Sovereign, it may be added that the above passage was written early in February, and before the harsh and unjust treatment which has lately been shown.

whom the fortunes and the favour of kings and queens are so dear an object of concern? The people of France, under their Grand Monarque, may have made themselves ridiculous by changing the gender of a word permanently, when their prince by mistake called for "mon carosse;" the Romans may have affected a twisted neck to imitate the personal defect of Augustus; these were rather the base flatteries of courtly parasites than the expression of feelings in which the public at large bore any part. The barbarians of Russia flocking to be murdered by their savage Czar, or the slaves of Eastern tyrants kissing the bowstring that is to end their existence, act under the immediate influence of strong and habitual religious feeling—the feeling that makes men quail and bow before a present divinity. But no people, no rational set of men, ever displayed to an admiring world the fondness for kings and queens, the desire to find favour in the royal sight, the entire absorption in loyal contemplations, which has generally distinguished the manly, reflecting, free-born English nation.

It is commonly said that the Irish far exceed us in yielding to mere impulses; and certainly the scenes at Dublin in 1821 are well calculated to keep alive this impression. But the excess on that memorable occasion was not great over what had been witnessed in this country, and extraordinary pains were undoubtedly taken to make it believed that George IV. was favourably disposed towards his Irish subjects, nay, that he could be talked, and hurraed, and addressed over, as it were, and deluded by fine honeyed phrases and promises

of subscription, into abandoning his new opinions, as he had before given up his old. The balance, therefore, between the two nations being struck, it can hardly be said that the sister kingdom materially excels our own country in the zealous affection for mere royalty.

It is very manifest, therefore, that the notion is wholly groundless which represents the cause of Royalty to be more unfavourably regarded in these kingdoms than elsewhere. A broad and a deep foundation exists in all the feelings, tastes, and habits of the people for building up a solid monarchical structure. Principles of policy, opinions upon the relative merits of different systems, are the result of reason and reflection: they may be propagated, may be acquired; they may be strengthened, may be impaired; nay, they may give place to other views taken up after experience and on deliberate consideration; and the formation or the change of such sentiments is never within the power of the rulers or the instructors of the community. But these sentiments, also, are much less to be relied upon for support in any crisis, and they are far less to be dreaded in any alteration which they may undergo, than the strong feelings born with men, and constituting a part of their very nature—feelings which they have not learned at the school of state affairs, or had inculcated by their instructors, or dictated by their leaders, but which form about as much a portion of their mental constitution, and almost influence it as much, as the blood that fills their veins does the structure and the functions of the body. This invaluable security the monarchical principle has in England, and it must, there-

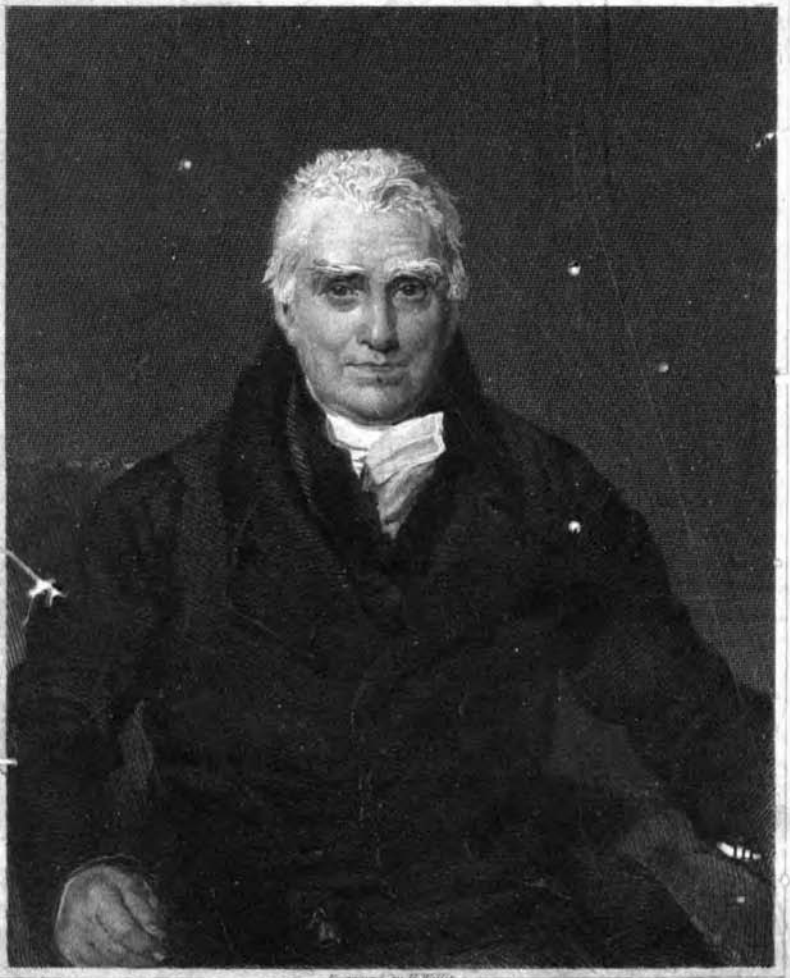
fore, be the fault of the monarch, and his family, and his servants, if it should ever prove ineffectual to save the Crown.

But there is no greater danger besetting that Crown than will arise from a disposition to rely too much upon the strong national love of monarchy, which has just been feebly pourtrayed. That its strength and elasticity is great, no man can doubt; that it possesses a singularly restorative virtue, a wonderful power of recovering the kingly authority after the rudest shocks which it can sustain, is certain; but it may be stretched till it cracks, and it may be relaxed by too frequent use. A wise and a prudent foresight, too, will teach the sovereign and his servants that the antagonist principle, ever at work, may both conjure up a storm which cannot be weathered, and may gradually undermine, and, as it were, eat into, that habitual devotion to royalty which, if the monarchy have but fair play, seems powerful enough to carry it through all ordinary trials.

LORD ELDON.

DURING the whole of the Regency and the greater part of his reign, George IV.'s councils were directed by Lord Liverpool, but the power which kept his ministry together was in reality the Chancellor, Lord Eldon; nor did it exist for a day when that powerful aid was withdrawn. For, although this eminent person did not greatly excel in debate, although he personally had no followers that could be termed a party, and although he certainly was of little service in deliberation upon state affairs from the turn of his mind, rather fertile in objections than expedients, he yet possessed a consummate power of managing men, an admirable address in smoothing difficulties with princes, of whom he had large experience, and a degree of political boldness where real peril approached, or obstacles seemingly insurmountable were to be got over, that contrasted strongly with his habits of doubting about nothing, and conjuring up shadowy embarrassments, and involving things of little moment in imaginary puzzles, the creation of an inventive and subtle brain.

This remarkable person had been one of Mr. Pitt's followers from early life, had filled under him the office of Attorney-General during the troublous period of the revolutionary war, and had thus been the principal instrument in those persecutions of his reforming associates which darken the memory of that illustrious minister. But when the Addington ministry was formed,



Engraved by H. Wallis

LORD ELDON.

From a Picture by Sir Thos. Lawrence.

and Lord Loughborough resigned the Great Seal, Lord Eldon, who had for a year presided over the Common Pleas with great ability and acceptance in Westminster Hall, became Chancellor, and formed one of the main supports of that useful though feeble administration. After first giving peace to the country because the burthen of the war could no longer be borne, and then breaking it because they had not the firmness to remain quiet, or the resolution to resist a popular clamour chiefly excited by the newspapers, those ministers, having once more plunged the country into serious embarrassments, were assaulted by a factious league of Pittites, Foxites, Grenvilles, and Windhams, and only defended by two lawyers, Mr. Perceval in the Commons, Lord Eldon in the Lords. But neither of these useful supporters were thoroughly attached to the colours under which they fought; both had a strong leaning towards the leader of the allies, Mr. Pitt, under whom the friends and partisans of Lord St. Vincent, the great ornament of the cabinet, were combined to overthrow it upon the ground of attacking that great man's reforming administration; and, although nothing could exceed the zeal or spirit of the battle which both, especially Mr. Perceval, made in defence of the citadel, yet, as neither were averse, especially Lord Eldon, to rejoin their ancient Pitt standard, it is more than suspected that the gates of the garrison were opened by the scheming and politick Chancellor, who on this occasion displayed his unscrupulous and undaunted political courage, by carrying on the communication on state affairs with the monarch, while his faculties were as yet but half restored after their total alienation.

It is best that we pause upon this remarkable passage of both their lives—remarkable for the light it throws upon Lord Eldon's real character; perhaps yet more remarkable for the reflections to which it unavoidably gives rise upon the Monarchical form of government. There is not the least doubt whatever of the extraordinary fact that, after the King had been in a state of complete derangement for some weeks, and after the government had during those weeks been carried on by the ministers without any monarch, important measures were proposed to him, and his pleasure taken upon them after Mr. Pitt resumed his office, when the Sovereign was so little fit to perform the functions of his high station, that Dr. Willis was obliged to attend in the closet the whole time of his Majesty's interview with his Chancellor. Hence we see that the exigencies of this form of government not only imply the Monarch exercising his discretion upon subjects wholly above the reach of his understanding on many occasions; not only involve the necessity of the most difficult questions being considered and determined by one wholly incapable by nature, or unfitted by education, to comprehend any portion of them; not only expose the destinies of a great people to the risk of being swayed by a person of the meanest capacity, or by an ignorant and inexperienced child; but occasionally lead to the still more revolting absurdity of a sovereign directing the affairs of the realm—conferring with the keeper of his conscience *circa ardua regni*,—while a mad-doctor stands by and has his assistants and the apparatus of his art ready in the adjoining chamber, to keep, by the operation of wholesome fear and needful restraint, the royal patient in order, and prevent

the consultations of politick men from being checkered with the paroxysms of insanity.

But should it be said that this was an accident, or that it was an offence for which Lord Eldon and Mr. Pitt alone were amenable, and not the Constitution, it is to be further observed that the inevitable necessity entailed by that Constitution of the state affairs being conducted in the name and by the authority of a lunatic prince, whose pleasure is, in the eye of the constitutional law, taken at each step, though he is as unconscious of it all the while as the Grand Lama is of Thibet affairs, does not differ materially from the hardly more revolting scene to which we have just adverted as having been enacted in the spring of 1804. These things constitute part, and no small part, of the heavy price which we pay for the benefits of inestimable value secured by the forms of Hereditary Monarchy, more especially the prevention which it affords of disputed succession and civil broils. But it is ever useful and becoming prudent men to bear in mind both sides of the account, and, while we justly prize the thing we have purchased, not to forget the price we have had to pay.

Lord Eldon, to great legal experience, and the most profound professional learning, united that thorough knowledge of men, which lawyers who practise in the courts, and especially the courts of common law,* attain in a measure and with an accuracy hardly conceivable by those out of the profession, who fancy that it is

* For many years he went the northern circuit, and was a leader upon it, the unwholesome practice not having then been established which separates Equity men from Common Lawyers.

only from intercourse with courts and camps that a knowledge of the world can be derived. He had a sagacity almost unrivalled; a penetration of mind at once quick and sure; a shrewdness so great as to pierce through each feature of his peculiarly intelligent countenance; a subtlety so nimble, that it materially impaired the strength of his other qualities, by lending his ingenuity an edge sometimes too fine for use. Yet this defect, the leading one of his intellectual character, was chiefly confined to his professional exertions; and the counsellor so hesitating in answering an important case—the judge so prone to doubt that he could hardly bring his mind to decide one—was, in all that practically concerned his party or himself, as ready to take a line, and to follow it with determination of purpose, as the least ingenious of ordinary politicians. The timidity, too, of which he has been accused, and sometimes justly, was more frequently the result of the subtlety and refinement which we have mentioned. At all events, no one knew better when to cast it off; and upon great occasions, like the one we have just been contemplating—that is, the occasions which put his interest or his power in jeopardy—a less wavering actor, indeed one more ready at a moment's warning to go all lengths for the attainment of his object, never appeared upon the political stage. His fears in this respect very much resembled his conscientious scruples, of which no man spoke more or felt less; he was about as often the slave of them as the Indian is of his deformed little gods, which he now makes much of, and now breaks in pieces, or casts into the fire. When all in politics seemed smooth, and the parlia-

mentary sea was unruffled as the peaceful lake, nothing was to be heard but his lordship's deep sense of his responsible duties; his willingness to quit the Great Seal; the imminent risk there was of his not again sitting in that place; the uncertainty of all the tenures by which official life is held; and even the arrival of that season when it became him to prepare for a yet more awful change; and the hearer who knew the speaker, felt here an intimate persuasion, that the most religious of mortals could not have named the great debt of nature with more touching sincerity, or employed an expression better calculated to convey the feeling of dread which such contemplations are fitted to inspire. Such were the songs of the swan when the waters were a mirror, and there was no fear of dissolution. But in foul weather—the instant that peril approached—be the black cloud on the very verge of the horizon, and but the size of a man's hand—all these notes were hushed, and a front was assumed as if the Great Seal had been given to him for life, with the power to name his successor by a writing under his hand, or by parole before a single witness. In like manner, when the interests of suitors required despatch, when causes had been heard by the hour and by the day, and all the efforts of the judge to coax the advocate into greater prolixity had been exhausted, the dreaded moment of decision came, but brought only hesitation, doubt, delay. So, too, when common matters occurred in Parliament, and no kind of importance could be attached to the adoption of one course rather than another, bless us! what inexhaustible suggestions of difficulty, what endless effusion of conflicting views,

what a rich mine of mock diamonds, all glittering and worthless, in the shape of reasons on all sides of some question never worth the trouble of asking, and which none but this great magician would stop to resolve! So again in the Council—when there was no danger of any kind, and it signified not a straw what was done, the day, had it been lengthened out by the sun being made to stand still, while our Joshua slew all the men in buckram that he conjured up, would yet have been too short to state and to solve his difficulties about nothing! But let there come any real embarrassment, any substantial peril which required a bold and vigorous act to ward it off—let there be but occasion for nerves to work through a crisis which it asked no common boldness to face at all—let there arise some new and strange combination of circumstances, which, governed by no precedent, must be met by unprecedented measures,—and no man that ever sat at a Council board, more quickly made up his mind, or more gallantly performed his part. Be the act mild or harsh, moderate or violent, sanctioned by the law and constitution, or an open outrage upon both, he was heard indeed to wail and groan much of piteous necessity—often vowed to God—spoke largely of conscience—complained bitterly of his hard lot—but the paramount sense of duty overcame all other feelings; and with wailing and with tears, beating his breast, and only not tearing his hair, he did in the twinkling of an eye the act which unexpectedly discomfited his adversaries, and secured his own power for ever. He who would adjourn a private road or estate bill for weeks, unable to make up his mind on one of its clauses, or would take a month to decide on what terms some amendment

should be allowed in a suit, could, without one moment's hesitation, resolve to give the King's consent to the making of laws, when he was in such a state of mental disease, that the Keeper of his Person could not be suffered to quit the royal closet for an instant, while his patient was with the Keeper of his Conscience performing the highest function of sovereignty!

With all these apparent discrepancies between Lord Eldon's outward and inward man, nothing could be more incorrect than to represent him as tainted with hypocrisy, in the ordinary sense of the word. He had imbibed from his youth, and in the orthodox bowers which Isis waters, the dogmas of the Tory creed in all their purity and rigour. By these dogmas he abided through his whole life, with a steadfastness, and even to a sacrifice of power, which sets at defiance all attempts to question their perfect sincerity. Such as he was when he left Oxford, such he continued above sixty years after, to the close of his long and prosperous life;—the enemy of all reform, the champion of the throne and the altar, and confounding every abuse that surrounded the one, or grew up within the precincts of the other, with the institutions themselves; alike the determined enemy of all who would either invade the institution or extirpate the abuse.

One of the most important passages of this remarkable person's life was his participation in the councils of the Princess of Wales, while persecuted by the Whig allies of her royal consort. To her confidence, as to her society, Lord Eldon was recommended, not more by the extraordinary fertility of his resources as a counsellor in difficult emergencies, than by his singular

powers of pleasing in the intercourse of private life. For his manners were rendered peculiarly attractive by the charm of constant good humour; and his conversation, if not so classical and refined as that of his brother, Sir William Scott, and somewhat soiled with the rust of professional society and legal habits, was nevertheless lively and entertaining in a very high degree. That she derived great benefit from his support, his countenance, and his skilful advice, no one can doubt. The length to which his zeal is supposed to have carried him, of having a fierce attack on the Prince's conduct towards her printed at a private press, cannot fitly be dwelt upon here, because the whole passage has been confidently denied, and, how universal soever the belief was, confirmed by a copy or two of the work being preserved, so that the whole was afterwards reprinted, and openly sold, the share which Lord Eldon and Mr. Perceval were said to have had in the transaction has never been established by any decisive proofs. This much, however, is quite certain, that they both left their illustrious client at a very short notice, and became as zealous servants of her persecutor as they had once been of herself. The King, whose uneasiness under the necessity in which the death of Mr. Pitt had placed him, of being counselled by a Whig cabinet, was manifest during the whole of the year 1806, had resolved to change his ministers, and to quarrel with them upon the highly popular ground of their having made themselves the confederates of the Prince, then in the acme of his unpopularity, and, as such, taken part against the Princess. Fortunately for that party, whose utter ruin this would have consummated, another scent crossed his

Majesty while in that pursuit, and he dexterously turned aside to follow it. This was the cry of No Popery, and Danger to the Church. Lord Eldon and his coadjutors were raised to power, and Mr. Perceval quitted his profession to share in the Government, that he might protect the altar from the Pope, and the Throne from the Whigs. For three or four years all went smoothly, and they continued the advocates of the wife, and the adversaries of the husband. A great change, however, was preparing in the relations of their allegiance. When the Prince became Regent he deserted his friends; he took his adversaries into his service; he soon added his favour, became fond of Lord Eldon's pleasant society, became by degrees tolerant of Mr. Perceval himself, and was affected to hysterical paroxysms when death deprived him of the man he had a few years before hated with a bitterness that spurned all bounds of common decency in the expressions which gave it vent.* The Princess was now entirely deserted by her former councillors, whose party tactics had led them to use her as an instrument for attacking their enemies.

* In 1806 His Royal Highness exclaimed to Sir Samuel Romilly, with most offensive personal abuse, and a comparison which cannot be recited, that he felt as if he could jump on him and stamp out his life with his feet. Mr. Perceval was at the moment arguing the celebrated case of Miss Seymour at the Bar of the House of Lords; and taking the somewhat invidious line of denying that any guarantee given of payment by the Prince's promise could be available—first, because there was no reason to believe he would keep his promise; and next, because, if he did, he was insolvent. The phrase expressive of His Royal Highness's wish, as given above, is in a very mitigated form; but, even as thus tempered, the reader may possibly deem its violation of all humanity and decorum sufficiently striking.

Neither Lord Eldon nor Mr. Perceval ever now darkened her doors; Mr. Canning, Lord Grenville, and Lord Dudley, alone of the party frequented her society; and this illustrious lady was thus placed in the cruel predicament of losing her former friends, the Tories, by their promotion, while her adversaries, the Whigs, awaiting not very patiently their own call, could hardly be expected to raise any obstructions beyond those already existing in their road to Court, by taking her part only because she was clearly right and had been cruelly wronged.

It remains to note the peculiarities that distinguished this eminent person's professional life, in which his long career was so remarkably brilliant. That he had all the natural qualities and all the acquired accomplishments which go to form the greatest legal character, is undeniable. To extraordinary acuteness and quickness of apprehension, he added a degree of patient industry which no labour could weary, a love of investigation which no harshness in the most uninteresting subject could repulse. His ingenuity was nimble in a singular degree, and it was inexhaustible; subtlety was at all times the most distinguishing feature of his understanding; and after all other men's resources had been spent, he would at once discover matters which, though often too far refined for use, yet seemed so natural to the ground which his predecessors had laboured and left apparently bare, that no one could deem them exotic and far fetched, or even forced. When, with such powers of apprehending and of inventing, he possessed a memory almost unparalleled, and alike capable of storing up and readily producing both the most general principles and the most minute

details, it is needless to add that he became one of the most thoroughly learned lawyers who ever appeared in Westminster Hall, if not the most learned; for, when it is recollected that the science has been more than doubled in bulk, and in variety of subjects has been increased fourfold, since the time of Lord Coke, it is hardly possible to question his superiority to that great light of English jurisprudence, the only man in our legal history with whom this comparison can be instituted. A singular instance of his universality, and of the masterly readiness with which his extensive learning could be brought to bear upon any point, was once presented in the argument upon a writ of error in the House of Lords. The case had run the gauntlet of the courts, and the most skilful pleaders, as well as the most experienced judges, had all dealt with it in succession; when he, who had not for many years had the possibility of considering any such matters, and had never at any time been a special pleader, at once hit upon a point in pleading which appeared to have escaped the Holroyds, the Richardsons, the Bayleys, the Abbots, the Littledales; and on that point the cause was decided.

From an excess of those endowments in which his extraordinary merits consisted, proceeded also his known and great defects. These were less conspicuous at the Bar than upon the Bench; though, even as an advocate and an adviser, they impaired his powers. His overdone ingenuity enfeebled the force of his argument; he presented every view that could be taken of his case, and many views that it was bootless to take, and that had better have been left unobserved. His opinion was with difficulty formed; and his answers to cases on which he

was consulted often contained all the arguments on both sides, but left out the result. His firmness of purpose, too, and promptitude of decision, were extremely deficient. Seeing too many views of each matter to prefer a particular course and abide by his choice, he could as little make up his mind on the line to be taken in debate as on the opinion to be given in consultation. Hence he was defective in one of the great qualities of an advocate and a debater—a prompt and steady determination as to the course he should pursue, that which is called the *coup d'œil* in the field. His wish to leave nothing unnoticed, being proportioned to the extreme anxiety of his disposition, he frequently overlaid his case at the Bar, while the multitude of his points gave his adversaries the opportunity of entangling him in the mazes of his own web, and still oftener enabled them to defeat him on some immaterial ground where he was weak, though other stronger and impregnable positions were his, had he never ventured out of them to fight at a disadvantage. Where a single and a learned judge alone is to deal with a case, this will seldom mislead him, but before a jury its effects must have been extremely prejudicial. Accordingly, his greatest failures were in such proceedings. A case of high treason, which required nine or ten hours to state, was to the ordinary apprehension of all mankind a clear case for acquittal. This in the eyes of many lessened the brilliancy of Mr. Erskine's great victory, by diminishing the chances of a conviction; but the dreadful excitement of the times was enough to have carried the prosecutors through their bad work, even under all the disadvantages of Lord Eldon's very injudicious conduct of the

cause. It was, perhaps, a yet greater fault that he suffered himself to be persuaded that a case of high treason existed, when, if he had only examined his proofs with a steady eye, he must have seen at once the merely seditious character of the whole matter, the certainty of a defeat if he prosecuted for treason, and the probability of a conviction had he gone upon the misdemeanor.

His elocution was easy, his language copious without being at all choice, his manner natural and not ungraceful. But to the qualities of eloquence he made small or no pretence. All that he desired to execute he readily enough accomplished; but no man could ever cite a speech of his either at the Bar, or on the Bench, in the Commons, or in the Lords, which had made any deep impression, or could be termed either a felicitous or in any way a striking performance. Many of his arguments, replete with learning, and marked by extreme ingenuity, many of his judgments, painfully sifting each corner of the complicated case, dealing in a commanding manner with all the arguments, and exhausting all the learning that could be brought to bear upon it, might be cited with ease as memorable examples of labour, of learning, of subtlety. But not a single occasion ever was presented during his long forensic and parliamentary life in which any one even of his admirers could affect to be struck with his performance as great or masterly, although perhaps not an instance could be named of his speaking at all without displaying extraordinary resources and powers. There was always so much wanting to perfection as left no idea of it in the mind of the audience, either while he

was working through his task, or after he had brought it to a close.

If the qualities which have been mentioned obstructed him as an advocate, they were still more likely to injure him as a judge. Yet it is certain that great errors were committed in regard to his judicial powers by those who only cursorily observed his apparent vacillation or infirmity of purpose. His opinion was really much more readily and generally formed on the Bench than at the Bar; and it was much more steadily abided by. He *appeared* to have great difficulty and slowness in coming to a determination. It would be far more correct to say that he had great reluctance to pronounce the decision he had long ago, without any hesitation, come to. The bad habit into which he fell, of not attending to the arguments while they were delivering before him, made him often postpone the forming of his opinion, but it was because he postponed giving his attention to the case. As soon as he brought his mind to bear upon it, he with great ease and quickness came to a judgment regarding it; and, having a great and most just confidence in the soundness of that judgment, he scarcely ever after altered it in any material respect. Indeed the hesitation with which he pronounced it, the slowness with which he gave it at all, and, when he gave it, the numberless arguments on both sides which he produced, and the endless difficulties which he raised in the way of the course he was manifestly all the while taking, gave him every appearance of hesitation and uncertainty, and made the person who knew him not fear that he was a vacillating judge, who had hardly

formed any opinion at all upon the case, and might be overset by the casting of dust in the balance to make each side almost indifferently preponderate. They who knew him best were well aware that he had months before thoroughly sifted the whole question, formed a clear and unhesitating opinion upon it, come as quickly as possible to that opinion, and persisted in it with much greater firmness, nay pertinacity, than the most determined looking of his predecessors, Lord Hardwicke, who decided each case as he heard it, assigning shortly and clearly the grounds of his judgment, or Lord Thurlow, who growled out his determination without a doubt or a reason, and without any delay, as if the decision followed the argument by a physical train of connexion, and as if no such thing as a doubt could ever exist in the judicial nature, and no such thing as a reason could be asked at the hands of judicial wisdom and power. It would be no exaggeration at all to assert that Lord Eldon's judgments were more quickly formed, and more obstinately adhered to, than those of any other judge who ever dealt with such various, difficult, and complicated questions as he had to dispose of.

But the apparent hesitation and the certain delay were of the very worst consequence to his usefulness on the Bench; and his inattention to the arguments of council produced on their part an habitual prolixity which the Bar has not yet recovered. From these causes arose the delays which in his time obstructed the course of justice, and well nigh fixed the current in perennial frost. It would be erroneous to say that all the efforts since made to clear the channels and revive the stream had restored its pristine and natural flow. The suitor

and the country will long continue to feel the five-and-twenty years of Lord Eldon's administration.

His knowledge and his ingenuity were not confined to his own peculiar branch of jurisprudence, the law of England. He was an admirable Scotch lawyer also; and he had the courage to decide, as well as the ability to sift, some of the greatest cases that have ever been brought by appeal from the Courts of Scotland, reversing the judgments of those courts on questions of pure Scotch conveyancing, and reversing them so as to offend those lawyers at first who were afterwards ready to confess that he was right, and had preserved the integrity of the Scotch law. But as a judge of appeal he often showed want of nerve; he would carp and cavil at the judgment below—argue over again all the reasonings of the judges—express doubts—raise difficulties—and show constant dissatisfaction—but end with affirming.

The defects which have been noted in his judicial capacity are of course to be traced in the Reports of his judgments. The force of the opinion, and even the course of the argument, are lost in the labyrinth of uncertainty, doubts, and ever conflicting arguments which make up the whole mass. In the sands which spread out far as the eye can reach, which shift perpetually about, which rise in whirls, and are tossed about and heaped up in mountains—the eye loses the view of the point towards which the current of decision is directed, and indeed the current itself is lost in the wide expanse. These learned and elaborate performances are therefore of far less use than they might have been as guides to future lawyers; for the arguments are lost in special circumstances, and the principal points choked among the

details. It was said, by Mr. Justice Williams, wittily and correctly, that they would be of special use as soon as the old Ptolemaic cycle should begin a second time to run, and every one thing to happen over again, and in the same order, which had occurred before.

The private character of Lord Eldon was blameless: his temper was admirable; his spirits gay and lively; his manners easy and graceful; far beyond those of any other man who had led his life of labour, and mingled but little in general society. In the domestic relations he was without a fault; affectionately attached to his family, mourning for years the great bereavement of his eldest son, and for years devoting himself to the care of an invalid wife with an assiduity not often exceeded. Indeed, it was to the accidental circumstance of his marriage, contracted clandestinely, and which prevented him from associating much with her family for some time, that they both owed the recluse habits which produced a distaste for society, and led to a very exaggerated notion of his disposition being parsimonious. What little ground there was for the charge resulted, certainly, from the very narrow circumstances of his early life, the consequence of his imprudently marrying before he had an income sufficient to support a family. In those days he had qualified himself for acting as a conveyancer, in case his failure to obtain practice in London should make it advisable to retire into the country and lead the obscure though respectable life of a provincial barrister. Nor was this event in his history, at one period, improbable or remote. Weary with waiting for clients, he had resolved to quit Westminster Hall, and, turning his

back on the "fumum, et opes, strepitumque Romæ," to seek his native city. The accident of a leading council's sudden indisposition introduced him to the notice of the profession, and prevented his name from being now only known as designating a still more learned and able recorder of Newcastle than the late very learned and able Mr. Hopper Williamson.

Reference has already been made to his powers of conversation; the part was named which he took in the select circle of the Princess of Wales, frequented by the most accomplished wits of the day. He was, indeed, a person of remarkable talents in that kind. His perfect good humour would, in his exalted station, have made his society agreeable anywhere but at a court; there he must shine more *proprio Marte* than by the foil of his station in the background. But he was well able to do so. He had no mean powers of wit, and much quickness of delicate repartee. In relating anecdotes he excelled most men, and had an abundant store of them, though, of course, from the habits of his life, they were chiefly professional: his application of them to passing events was singularly happy. The mingled grace and dignity of his demeanour added no small charm to his whole commerce with society; and, although the two brothers differed exceedingly in this respect, it was usual to observe that, except Sir W Scott, no man was so agreeable as Lord Eldon.

SIR WILLIAM SCOTT (LORD STOWELL).

FEW names are more intimately connected either with classical or judicial recollections than the one which has been just mentioned.

There has seldom if ever appeared in the profession of the Law any one so peculiarly endowed with all the learning and capacity which can accomplish, as well as all the graces which can embellish, the judicial character, as this eminent person. Confining himself to the comparatively narrow and sequestered walks of the Consistorial tribunals, he had early been withdrawn from the contentions of the Forum, had lost the readiness with which his great natural acuteness must have furnished him, and had never acquired the habits which forensic strife is found to form—the preternatural power of suddenly producing all the mind's resources at the call of the moment, and shifting their application nimbly from point to point, as that exigency varies in its purpose or its direction. But so had he also escaped the hardness, not to say the coarseness, which is inseparable from such rough and constant use of the faculties, and which, while it sharpens their edge and their point, not seldom contaminates the taste, and withdraws the mind from all pure, and generous, and classical intercourse, to matters of a vulgar and a technical order. His judgment was of the highest caste; calm, firm, enlarged, penetrating, profound. His powers of reasoning were in proportion

great, and still more refined than extensive, though singularly free from anything like versatility, and liable to be easily disturbed in their application to every-day use. If the retired and almost solitary habits of the comparatively secluded walk in which he moved, had given him little relish for the strenuous and vehement warfare of rapid argumentation and the logic of unprepared debate, his vast superiority was apparent when, as from an eminence, he was called to survey the whole field of dispute, and to marshal the variegated facts, disentangle the intricate mazes, and array the conflicting reasons which were calculated to distract or suspend men's judgment. If ever the praise of being luminous could be justly bestowed upon human compositions, it was upon his judgments, and it was the approbation constantly, and as it were peculiarly, appropriated to those wonderful exhibitions of judicial capacity.

It would be easy, but it would be endless, to enumerate the causes in which his great powers, both of legal investigation, of accurate reasoning, and of lucid statement, were displayed to the admiration not only of the profession, but of the less learned reader of his judgments. They who deal with such causes as occupied the attention of this great judge have this advantage, that the subjects are of a nature connecting them with general principles, and the matter at stake is most frequently of considerable importance, not seldom of the greatest interest. The masses of property of which the Consistorial Courts have to dispose are often very great; the matrimonial rights on which they have to decide are of an interest not to be measured by money at all; but the questions which arise in administering the Law of Na-

tions comprehend within their scope the highest national rights, involve the existence of peace itself, define the duties of neutrality, set limits to the prerogatives of war. Accordingly, the volume which records Sir W. Scott's judgments is not like the reports of common-law cases, a book only unsealed to the members of the legal profession; it may well be in the hands of the general student, and form part of any classical library of English eloquence, or even of national history. If among his whole performances it were required to select one which most excited admiration, all eyes would point to the judgment in the celebrated case of *Dalrymple* v. *Dalrymple*, where the question for his determination was the state of the Scottish law upon the fundamental point of what constitutes a marriage. The evidence given upon this question of fact, (as it was before him, a foreign judge,) consisted of the depositions of Scottish lawyers, the most eminent of their age, and who differed widely in their opinions, as well as the text-books referred to in their evidence. Through this labyrinth the learned civilian steered his way with an acuteness, a wariness and circumspection, a penetrating sagacity, and a firmness of decision, only to be matched by the singularly felicitous arrangement of the whole mass of matter, and the exquisite diction, at once beautifully elegant and severely chaste, in which his judgment was clothed. It is well known that this great performance, though proceeding from a foreign authority, forms at the present day, and will indeed always form, the manual of Scottish lawyers upon its important subject.

It is possibly hypercritical to remark one inaccurate view which pervades a portion of this judgment. Al-

though the Scottish law was of course only matter of evidence before Sir W. Scott, and as such for the most part dealt with by him, he yet allowed himself to examine the writings of commentators, and to deal with them as if he were a Scottish lawyer. Now, strictly speaking, he could not look at those text-writers, nor even at the decisions of judges, except only so far as they had been referred to by the witnesses, the skilful persons, the Scottish lawyers, whose testimony alone he was entitled to consider. For *they* alone could deal with either dicta of text-writers or decisions of courts. *He* had no means of approaching such things, nor could avoid falling into errors when he endeavoured to understand their meaning, and still more when he attempted to weigh them and to compare them together. This at least is the strict view of the matter; and in many cases the fact would bear it out. Thus we constantly see gross errors committed by Scottish and French lawyers of eminence when they think they can apply an English authority. But in the case to which we are referring the learned judge certainly dealt as happily, and as safely, and as successfully, with the authorities as with the conflicting testimonies which it was his more proper province to sift and to compare. In all respects, then, the renown of this famous judgment is of the highest order, and has left every rival case of the same class far behind it.

Sir William Scott's learning, extensive and profound in all professional matters, was by no means confined within that range. He was amply and accurately endowed with a knowledge of all history of all times; richly provided with the literary and the personal portion of historical lore; largely furnished with stores of the more

curious and recondite knowledge which judicious students of antiquity, and judicious students only, are found to amass; and he possessed a rare facility of introducing such matters felicitously for the illustration of an argument or a topic, whether in debate or in more familiar conversation. But he was above the pedantry which disdains the gratification of a more ordinary and every-day curiosity. No one had more knowledge of the common affairs of life; and it was at all times a current observation, that the person who first saw any sight exhibited in London, be it production of nature or of art or of artifice (for he would condescend to see even the juggler play his tricks), was Sir William Scott—who could always steal for such relaxations an hour from settling the gravest questions that could be raised on the Rights of Nations or the Ecclesiastical Law of the land. Above all, he was a person of great classical attainments, which he had pursued and, indeed, improved from the earlier years of his life, when he was a college tutor of distinguished reputation; and from hence, as well as from the natural refinement and fastidiousness of his mind, he derived the pure taste which presided over all his efforts, chastening his judicial compositions and adorning his exquisite conversation. Of diction, indeed, he was among the greatest masters, in all but its highest department of energetic declamation and fervent imagery. "Quid multa? Ipsum audiens equidem sic judicare soleo, quidquid aut addideris, aut mutaveris, aut detraxeris, vitiosius et deterius futurum."*

* Cic. de Orat. lib. iii.

To give samples of his happy command of language would be an easy thing, but it would almost be to cite the bulk of his Judgments. "Having thus furnished the rule which must govern our decision," said he, in the famous case already referred to, of *Dalrymple* v. *Dalrymple*, "the English law retires, and makes way for the Scottish, whose principles must finally dispose of the question." Quoting the words of Puffendorff (and, it may be observed in passing, misquoting them for the purpose of his argument, and omitting the part which answered it), who, after stating an opinion subtilely and sophistically held by some, adds, "Tu noli sic sapere," Sir William Scott at once gave it thus, in the happiest, the most literal, and yet the most idiomatic English—"Be not you wise in such conceits as these."

To illustrate by examples his singularly refined and pungent wit in conversation, or the happy and unexpected quotations with which he embellished it, or the tersely told anecdotes with which he enlivened it, without for an instant fatiguing his audience, would be far less easy,—because it is of the nature of the refined essence in which the spirit of the best society consists, not to keep. When some sudden and somewhat violent changes of opinion were imputed to a learned Judge, who was always jocosely termed Mrs. ——, "Varium et mutabile semper Femina," was Sir William Scott's remark. A celebrated physician having said, somewhat more flippantly than beseemed the gravity of his cloth, "Oh, you know, Sir William, after forty a man is always either a fool or a physician!" "Mayn't he be both, Doctor?" was the arch rejoinder,—with a most arch leer

and an insinuating voice half drawled out. "A vicar was once" (said his Lordship, presiding at the dinner of the Admiralty Sessions) "so wearied out with his parish clerk confining himself to the 100th Psalm, that he remonstrated, and insisted upon a variety, which the man promised; but, old habit proving too strong for him, the old words were as usual given out next Sunday, 'All people that on earth do dwell.' Upon this the vicar's temper could hold out no longer, and, jutting his head over the desk, he cried, 'Damn all people that on earth do dwell!'—a very compendious form of anathema!" added the learned chief of the Spiritual Court.

This eminent personage was in his opinions extremely narrow and confined; never seeming to have advanced beyond "the times before the flood" of light which the American War and the French Revolution had let in upon the world—times when he was a tutor in Oxford, and hoped to live and die in the unbroken quiet of her bowers, enjoying their shade variegated with no glare of importunate illumination. Of every change he was the enemy; of all improvement, careless and even distrustful; of the least deviation from the most beaten track, suspicious; of the remotest risks, an acute prognosticator as by some natural instinct; of the slightest actual danger, a terror-stricken spectator. As he could imagine nothing better than the existing state of any given thing, he could see only peril and hazard in the search for any thing new; and with him it was quite enough, to characterise a measure as "a mere novelty," to deter him at once from entertaining it—a phrase of which Mr. Speaker Abbott, with some humour, once took advantage to say, when asked by his friend what that mass of pa-

pers might be, pointing to the huge bundle of the Acts of a single session,—"Mere novelties, Sir William—mere novelties." And, in truth, all the while that this class of politicians are declaiming and are alarming mankind against every attempt to improve our laws, made judiciously and safely, because upon principle, and systematically, and with circumspection, they are unhesitatingly passing in the gross, and without any reflection at all, the most startling acts for widely affecting the laws, the institutions, and the interests of the country. It is deeply to be lamented that one endowed with such rare qualifications for working in the amendment of the Consistorial Law should have grown old in the fetters of a school like this. His peculiar habits of reasoning—his vast and various knowledge—his uniting with the habits of a judge, and the authority due to so distinguished a member of the Clerical Courts, all the erudition and polish of a finished scholar, and all the knowledge of the world and habits of society which are least to be expected in such dignitaries—finally, his equal knowledge of both the English and Scottish systems—seemed to point him out as the very person at whose hands this great branch of the jurisprudence of both nations might naturally have expected to receive its most important amendments.

DR. LAURENCE.

CONTEMPORARY with Sir William Scott, the leading practitioner in his courts, united to him in habits of private friendship, though indeed differing from him in many of his opinions and almost all his habits of thinking, was Dr. Laurence, one of the most able, most learned, and most upright men that ever adorned their common profession, or bore a part in the political controversies of their country. He was, indeed, one of the most singularly endowed men, in some respects, that ever appeared in public life. He united in himself the indefatigable labour of a Dutch Commentator, with the alternate playfulness and sharpness of a Parisian Wit. His general information was boundless; his powers of mastering any given subject, were not to be resisted by any degree of dryness or complication in its details; and his fancy was lively enough to shed light upon the darkest, and to strew flowers round the most barren tracks of inquiry, had it been suffered to play easily and vent itself freely. But, unfortunately, he had only the conception of the Wit, with the execution of the Commentator; it was not Scarron or Voltaire speaking in society, or Mirabeau in public, from the stores of Erasmus or of Bayle; but it was Hemsterhuysius emerging into polished life, with the dust of many libraries upon him, to make the circle gay; it was Grævius entering the Senate with somewhere from one-half to

two-thirds of his next folio at his fingers' ends, to awaken the flagging attention, and strike animation into the lazy debate. He might have spoken with the wit of Voltaire and the humour of Scarron united; none of it could pierce through the lumber of his solid matter; and any spark that by chance found its way, was stifled by the still more uncouth manner. As an author, he had no such defects; his profuse stores of knowledge—his business-like habit of applying them to the point—his taste, generally speaking correct, because originally formed on the models of antiquity, and only relaxed by his admiration of Mr. Burke's less severe beauties; all gave him a facility of writing, both copiously and nervously, upon serious subjects; while his wit could display itself upon lighter ones unincumbered by pedantry, and unobstructed by the very worst delivery ever witnessed,—a delivery calculated to alienate the mind of the hearer, to beguile him of his attention, but by stealing it away from the speaker, and almost to prevent him from comprehending what was so uncouthly spoken. It was in reference to this unvarying effect of Dr. Laurence's delivery, that Mr. Fox once said, a man should attend, if possible, to a speech of his, and then speak it over again himself: it must, he conceived, succeed infallibly, for it was sure to be admirable in itself, and as certain of being new to the audience. But in this saying there was considerably more wit than truth. The Doctor's speech was sure to contain materials not for one, but for half a dozen speeches; and a person might with great advantage listen to it, in order to use those materials, in part, afterwards, as indeed many did both in Parliament and at the Bar where he

practised, made an effort to attend to him, how difficult soever, in order to hear all that could be said upon every part of the question.* But whoever did so, was sure to hear a vast deal that was useless, and could serve no purpose but to perplex and fatigue; and he was equally sure to hear the immaterial points treated with as much vehemence, and as minutely dwelt upon, as the great and commanding branches of the subject. In short, the Commentator was here again displayed, who never can perceive the different value of different matters; who gives no relief to his work, and exhausts all the stores of his learning, and spends the whole power of his ingenuity, as eagerly in dethroning one particle which has usurped another's place, as in overthrowing the interpolated verse in St. John, or the spurious chapter in Josephus, upon which may repose the foundations of a religion, or the articles of its creed.

If is hardly necessary to add, that they who saw Dr. Laurence only in debate, saw him to the greatest disadvantage, and had no means of forming anything like a fair estimate of his merits. In the lighter intercourse of society, too, unless in conversation wholly unrestrained by the desire of distinction, he appeared to little advantage; his mirth, though perfectly inoffensive and good-natured, was elaborate; his wit or drollery wanted concentration and polish; it was unwieldy and clumsy; it was the gamboling of the elephant, in which, if strength was seen, weight was felt still more; nor was it Milton's

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* The experiment mentioned by Mr. Fox has repeatedly been tried at the Bar by the writer of these pages to a certain extent and with success.

elephant, recreating our first parents, and who, "to make them play, would wreathe his lithe proboscis;"—but the elephant capered bodily, and in a lumbering fashion, after the manner of his tribe. Yet set the same man down to write, and whose compositions are marked by more perfect propriety, more conciseness, more point, more rapidity? His wit sparkles and illuminates, without more effort than is requisite for throwing it off. It is varied, too, and in each kind is excellent. It is a learned wit, very frequently, and then wears an elaborate air; but not stiff or pedantic, not forced or strained, unless we deem Swift's wit, when it assumes this garb, unnatural or heavy—a sentence which would condemn some of his most famous pieces, and sweep away almost all Arbuthnot's together.

In his profession, Dr. Laurence filled the highest place. Practising in courts where a single judge decides, and where the whole matter of each cause is thoroughly sifted and prepared for discussion out of Court, he experienced no ill effect from the tedious style and unattractive manner which a jury could not have borne, and felt not the want of that presence of mind, and readiness of execution, which enable a *Nisi Prius* advocate to decide and to act at the moment, according to circumstances suddenly arising and impossible to foresee. He had all the qualities which his branch of the forensic art requires; profound learning, various and accurate information upon ordinary affairs as well as the contents of books, and a love of labour not to be satiated by any prolixity and minuteness of detail into which the most complicated cause could run—a memory which let nothing escape that it had once grasped,

whether large in size or imperceptibly small—an abundant subtlety in the invention of topics to meet an adversary's arguments, and a penetration that never left one point of his own case unexplored. These qualities might very possibly have been modified and blended with the greater terseness and dexterity of the common lawyer, had his lot been cast in Westminster Hall; but in the precincts of St. Paul's, they were more than sufficient to place him at the head of his brethren, and to obtain for him the largest share of practice which any Civilian of the time could enjoy without office.

The same fulness of information and facility of invention, which were so invaluable to his clients, proved most important resources to his political associates, during the twenty years and more that he sat in Parliament; and they were almost equally useful to the great party he was connected with, for many years before that period. It was a common remark, that nothing could equal the richness of his stores, except the liberality with which he made them accessible to all. Little as he for some time before his death had taken part in debates, and scantily as he had been attended to when he did, his loss might be plainly perceived, for a long time, in the want generally felt of that kind of information which had flowed so copiously through all the channels of private intercourse, and been obtained so easily, that its importance was not felt until its sources were closed for ever. It was then that men inquired "Where Laurence was?" as often as a difficulty arose which called for more than common ingenuity to meet

it; or a subject presented itself so large and shapeless, and dry and thorny, that few men's fortitude could face, and no one's patience could grapple with it; or an emergency occurred, demanding, on the sudden, access to stores of learning, the collection of many long years, but arranged so as to be made available to the most ignorant at the shortest notice. Men lamented the great loss they had experienced, and their regrets were mingled with wonder when they reflected that the same blow had deprived them of qualities the most rarely found in company with such acquirements; for, unwilling as the jealousy of human vanity is to admit various excellence in a single individual, (*mos hominum ut nolint eundem pluribus rebus excellere,*) it was in vain to deny that the same person, who exceeded all others in powers of hard working upon the dullest subjects, and who had, by his life of labour, become as a Dictionary to his friends, had also produced a larger share than any one contributor, to the epigrams, the burlesques, the grave ironies and the broad jokes, whether in verse or in prose, of the Rolliad.

The highest of the praises which Dr. Laurence had a right to challenge, remains. He was a man of scrupulous integrity and unsullied honour; faithful in all trusts; disinterested to a weakness. Constant, but rather let it be said, ardent and enthusiastic in his friendships; abandoning his whole faculties with a self-dereliction that knew no bounds, either to the cause of his friend, or his party, or the common-weal—he commanded the unceasing respect of all with whom he came in contact, or even in conflict; for when most

offended with his zeal, they were forced to admit, that what bore the semblance of intolerance was the fruit of an honest anxiety for a friend or a principle, and never was pointed towards himself. To the praise of correct judgment he was not so well entitled. His naturally warm temperament, and his habit of entering into whatever he took up with his whole faculties, as well as all his feelings, kindled in him the two great passions which checquered the latter part of Mr. Burke's life. He spent some years upon Mr. Hastings's Impeachment (having acted as council to the managers), and some upon the French Revolution, so absorbed in those subjects that their impression could not be worn out; and he ever after appeared to see one or other of them, and not unfrequently both together, on whatever ground he might cast his eyes. This almost morbid affection he shared with his protector and friend, of whom we have already spoken at great but not unnecessary length.

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS.

No man after Dr. Laurence was more intimately mixed up with the great leader of the Impeachment which has just been mentioned, than Mr., afterwards Sir Philip Francis. He had early in life been taken from the War-office, where he was a clerk, and sent out to India as one of the Supreme Council, when the government of those vast settlements was new modelled, a promotion not easily understood whether the dignity of the station, or its important functions at that critical period, be regarded. In the exercise of its duties he had displayed much of the ability which he undoubtedly possessed, more, perhaps, of the impetuous temper which as unquestionably belonged to him, all the hatred of other men's oppressions, and the aversion to corrupt practices, which distinguished him through life; and he had, in consequence of these qualities, become the regular opponent, and the personal enemy, of Warren Hastings, then governor-general, with whom his altercation ended, on the occasion, in a hostile rencounter and in a severe wound that threatened his life. Upon his return to Europe with a much smaller fortune than the lax morality of Englishmen's habits in those days allowed the bulk of them to amass, his joining in the Impeachment was quite a matter of course. His local knowledge and his habits of business were of invaluable service to the managers; he exerted his whole energies in a cause so near his heart from every principle and from all personal

feelings; nor could he ever be taught to understand why the circumstance of his being the private enemy of the man, as well as the public adversary of the governor, should be deemed an obstacle to his taking this part. The motives of delicacy, which so many thought that he ought to have felt on this subject, were wholly beyond his conception; for he argued that the more he disliked Mr. Hastings, the wider his grounds of quarrel with him were, the more natural was it that he should be his assailant; and the reason for the House of Commons excluding him by their vote from a place among the managers, surpassed his powers of comprehension. Had the question been of making him a judge in the cause, or of appointing him to assist in the defence, he could well have understood how he should be deemed disqualified; but that a prosecutor should be thought the less fit for the office when he was the more likely strenuously to discharge its duties of bringing the accused to justice and exacting punishment for his offences, because he hated him on private as well as public grounds, was a thing to him inconceivable. It never once occurred to him that an Impeachment by the Commons is like the proceeding of an Inquest; that the managers represent the grand-jury acting for the nation, and actuated only by the love of strict justice; and that to choose for their organ one who was also known to be actuated by individual passions, would have been as indecorous as for the prosecutor in a common indictment to sit upon the grand-jury, and accompany the foreman in presenting his bill to the court.

The trait which has just been given paints the character of Sir Philip Francis's mind as well as any that

could be selected. It was full of fire, possessed great quickness, was even, within somewhat narrow limits, endued with considerable force, but was wholly wanting in delicacy, as well as unequal to taking enlarged views, and unfit for sober reflection. But his energy begot a great power of application, and he was accordingly indefatigable in labour for a given object of no very wide range, and to be reached within a moderate time; for anything placed at a distance his impatient nature disqualified him from being a competitor. His education had been carefully conducted by his father, the translator of Demosthenes and Horace, two works of very unequal merit as regards the English language, though abundantly showing a familiarity with both the Latin and the Greek. The acquaintance with classical compositions which the son thus obtained was extensive, and he added to it a still greater familiarity with the English classics. His taste was thus formed on the best models of all ages, and it was pure to rigorous severity. His own style of writing was admirable, excelling in clearness, abounding in happy idiomatic terms, not overloaded with either words or figures, but not rejecting either beautiful phrases or appropriate ornament. It was somewhat sententious and even abrupt, like his manner; it did not flow very smoothly, much less fall impetuously; but in force and effect it was by no means wanting, and though somewhat more antithetical, and thus wearing an appearance of more labour, than strict taste might justify, it had the essential quality of being so pellucid as to leave no cloud whatever over the meaning; and seemed so impregnated with the writer's mind as to wear the appearance of

being perfectly natural, notwithstanding the artificial texture of the composition. In diction it was exceedingly pure; nor could the writer suffer, though in conversation, any of the modish phrases or even pronunciations which the ignorance or the carelessness of society is perpetually contributing, with the usages of Parliament, to vitiate our Saxon dialect. The great offender of all in this kind, the newspaper press, and perhaps most of any those half literary contributors to it who, enamoured of their own sentimental effusions and patchwork style, assume the licence of using words in senses never before thought of, were to him the object of unmeasured reprobation; and he would fling from him such effusions, with an exclamation that he verily believed he should outlive his mother tongue as well as all memory of plain old English sense, unless those writers succeeded in killing him before his time. His critical severity, even as to the language and tone of conversation, was carried to what sometimes appeared an excess. Thus he was wont to say that he had nearly survived the good manly words of assent and denial, the *yes* and *no* of our ancestors, and could now hear nothing but "unquestionably," "certainly," "undeniably," or "by no means," and "I rather think not;" forms of speech to which he gave the most odious and contemptuous names, as effeminate and emasculated, and would turn into ridicule by caricaturing the pronunciation of the words. Thus he would drawl out "unquestionably" in a faint, childish tone, and then say, "Gracious God! does he mean *yes?* Then why not say so at once like a man?" As for the slip-slop of some fluent talkers in society, who exclaim that they

are "*so* delighted," or "*so* shocked," and speak of things being pleasing or hateful "to a degree," he would bear down upon them without mercy, and roar out, "To what degree? Your word means any thing, and every thing, and nothing."

There needs no addition to this for the purpose of remarking how easily he was tired by prosers, (those whom it is the mode to call *bores*) come they even under coronets and crowns. Once when the Prince of Wales was graciously pleased to pursue at great length a narrative of little importance, Sir P. Francis, wearied out, threw back his head on his chair with a "Well, Sir, well?" The sensitiveness of royalty at once was roused, and the historian proceeded to inflict punishment upon the uncourtly offender by repeating and lengthening his recital, after a connecting sentence, "If Sir Philip will permit me to proceed."—A less exalted performer in the same kind having on another occasion got him into a corner, and innocently mistaking his agitations and gestures for extreme interest in the narrative which he was administering to his patient, was somewhat confounded when the latter, seizing him by the collar, exclaimed with an oath that "Human nature could endure no more."—In all this there was a consistency and an uniformity that was extremely racy and amusing. He is not now present to cry out, "What does that mean, Sir? What would you be at? No gibberish!" and therefore it may be observed that there was something exceedingly *piquant* in this character.*

He was in very deed "a character" as it is called.

* "Le rejouissant caractère de ce docteur"—says Le Sage.

By this is meant, a mind cast in a peculiar mould, and unwilling either to be remodelled and recast, or to be ground down in the mill of fashion, and have its angles and its roughnesses taken off so as to become one of the round and smooth and similar personages of the day, and indeed of all times and almost all nations. Such characters are further remarkable for ever bearing their peculiarities about with them, so as at all seasons and on all subjects to display their deviations from unlikeness to other men. Such persons are of necessity extremely amusing; they are rare, and they are odd; they are also ever in keeping and consistency with themselves as they are different from others. Hence they acquire, beside entertaining us, a kind of claim to respect, because they are independent and self-possessed. But they are almost always more respected than they at all deserve. Not only are many of their peculiarities the results of indulgence approaching to affectation, so as to make them little more than a respectable kind of buffoons, enjoying the mirth excited at their own expense, but even that substratum of real originality which they have without any affectation, commands far more respect than it is entitled to, because it wears the semblance of much more independence than belongs to it, and while it savours of originality is really only peculiar and strange. Sir Philip Francis had many much higher qualities; but his singularities were probably what chiefly recommended him in society.

The first Lord Holland had been Dr. Francis's patron, and to him his Demosthenes was dedicated. Through him, too, the son obtained his first promotion,

a place in the Foreign Office, which afterwards led to one in the War Department. Nor did he ever through life forget this early patronage—neither the present nor the former Lord, neither his own friend nor his father's friend did he ever forget. On his return from India, which he quitted with a character of unsullied purity far more rare in those days than in our own, he thus became naturally connected with the Whig party, flourishing under the illustrious son of his own and his father's patron. On all Indian questions he was of the greatest use, and of the highest authority. But his exertions were not confined to these. His general opinions were liberal and enlightened; he was the enemy of all corruption, all abuse, all oppression. His aid was never wanting to redress grievances, or to oppose arbitrary proceedings. When examined as a witness on the High Treason Trials in 1794, Mr. Horne Tooke, being for no conceivable reason dissatisfied with his evidence, used in private and behind his back to represent him as having flinched from bearing testimony to the character of his brother Reformers. The drama of examination which he was wont to rehearse was a pure fiction, and indeed not only never was performed, but, by the rules of procedure, could not have been represented; for it made the party producing Sir P. Francis as a witness subject him to a rigorous cross-examination.

To go out as Governor-General of India was always the great ambition of his life; and when, on Mr. Pitt's death, the Whig party came into office, he believed the prize to be within his grasp. But the new ministers could no more have obtained the East India Company's consent, than they could have transported the Himalaya

mountains to Leadenhall-street. This he never could be made to perceive: he ever after this bitter disappointment regarded Mr. Fox as having abandoned him; and always gave vent to his vexation in terms of the most indecent and almost insane invective against that amiable and admirable man. Nay more—as if the same grievance which alienated his reason, had also undermined his integrity, that political virtue which had stood so many rude assaults both in Asia and in Europe, had been found proof against so many seductions of lucre, so many blandishments of rank, and had stood unshaken against all the power both of Oriental satraps and of English dictators, is known to have yielded for a moment to the vain hope of obtaining his favourite object, through the influence of the man whom, next to Mr. Pitt, he had most indefatigably and most personally opposed. A proposition made to Lord Wellesley by him, through a common friend, with the view of obtaining his influence with Lord Grenville, supposed erroneously to be the cause of his rejection as Governor-General, was at once and peremptorily rejected by that noble person, at a moment when Sir P. Francis was in the adjoining room, ready to conclude the projected treaty. If this casts some shade over the otherwise honest and consistent course of his political life, it must be remembered that for the very reason of its being a single and a passing shade, the effect on his general estimation is exceedingly slight.

In parliamentary debates Sir P. Francis did not often take a part. The few speeches which he did make, were confined to great occasions, unless where Indian subjects came under discussion, and they were dis-

tinguished by the same purity of style and epigrammatic tone which marks his writings. It was chiefly as concerned in the party manifestoes and other publications of the Whigs, that he formed a considerable member of their body. In council, except for boldness and spirit, in which he was ever exuberant, there could be but little benefit derived from one so much the slave of personal antipathy and prejudice, so often the sport of caprice, so little gifted with calm, deliberative judgment. But he saw clearly; he felt strongly; he was above mean, paltry, narrow views; and he heartily scorned a low, tricking, timid policy. The Opposition never were so free from tendencies in that bad direction as not to benefit by the manly and worthy correction which he was always ready to administer; and if they had oftener listened to his councils, or dreaded his resentment, the habit of making war upon the Crown without conciliating the people, of leading on the country to the attack with one eye turned wistfully towards the Court, would never have become so confirmed, or worked such mischief as it did under the leadership of the aristocratic Whigs.

One peculiarity of Sir P. Francis's character has not been mentioned, and yet were it left out, the sketch would both imperfectly represent his failings, and omit a great enhancement of his merits. His nature was exceedingly penurious, and, like all men of this cast, he stooped to the smallest savings. His little schemes of economy were the subject of amusing observation to his friends; nor did they take much pains to keep from his knowledge an entertainment in which he could not very heartily partake. But if he stooped to petty

savings, he never stooped one hair's breadth to undue gains; and he was as sparing of the people's money as of his own. If avarice means a desire of amassing at the expense either of other men's stores or of a man's own honour, to avarice he was a stranger; and it justly raised him in all reflecting men's esteem, to consider that he who would take a world of pains to save half a sheet of paper, had been an Indian satrap in the most corrupt times, and retired from the barbaric land washed by Ormus and Ind, the land of pearls and gold, with hands so clean and a fortune so moderate, that, in the fiercest storms of faction, no man ever for an instant dreamt of questioning the absolute purity of his administration.

It remains to mention the belief which has of late years sprung up, that Sir Philip Francis lay concealed under the shade of a great name, once the terror of kings and their ministers,—the celebrated Junius. Nor can these remarks be closed without adverting shortly and summarily to the circumstantial evidence upon which this suspicion rests.

There is a singularly perfect coincidence between the dates of the letters and Sir P. Francis's changes of residence. The last letter, in 1772, is dated May 12, and was received some days before by Woodfall. Another letter mentions his having been out of town some time before; there had been an interval in the correspondence of some weeks; his father was then ill at Bath; and, on the 23d of March, he was dismissed from the War Office. That he went to Bath then, before going abroad, is very likely; that he remained on the Continent till the end of the year is certain; and no let-

ter of Junius appeared till January, 1773. His appointment to Bengal was soon after in agitation, for it must have been arranged before June, when it was finally made.

Again—he was in the War Office from 1763 to 1772, and Junius evinces on all occasions a peculiar acquaintance with, and interest in, the concerns of that department. Three clerks of much importance there, of no kind of note beyond the precincts of the Horse Guards, are spoken of with great interest and much bitterness occasionally. One of them is the object of unceasing personal attack, one whose very name had now perished but for this controversy,—a Mr. Chamier; and he is abused under all the appellatives of contempt by which familiars in the department might be supposed to have known him. Moreover, no less than four letters on this person's promotion are addressed to Lord Barrington, the Secretary at War, and these all under other signatures; obviously because such a fire on such a subject would have directed the attention of its objects to the War Office, in connexion with so important a name as Junius, whom we find expressing great anxiety to Woodfall that the circumstance of these War Office letters being written by the author of Junius's Letters should be kept carefully concealed. Nevertheless, this may have transpired, and enabled Lord Barrington to trace the authorship into the office. The fact is certain, that, after January, 1773, Junius wrote no more, and that Mr. Francis, the clerk lately dismissed, was sent out a member of Council to Calcutta.

But the War Office is not the only department in which Junius showed a peculiar interest. The Foreign

Office also appears to have shared his regard, and been familiar to him, from various passages both in his public and private correspondence with Woodfall. Now, before he was placed at the Horse Guards, Sir Philip Francis had been nearly four years a clerk in that department.

It is remarkable that Junius generally shows great regard, and at all times much forbearance towards the family of Lord Holland, even when most devoted to Lord Chatham, their powerful adversary. This tallies with the relation in which Sir P. Francis stood to Lord Holland. His father had been his domestic chaplain, and the son owed to him his first appointment. Junius seems also by numberless proofs to have had a singular personal kindness for, and confidence in, Woodfall, and none at all for the other publishers, through whom, under various signatures he addressed the country. Now, Sir P. Francis was a schoolfellow of Woodfall, and they were on friendly terms through life, though they seldom met. Junius seems to have been appresive that Woodfall suspected who he was; for, in one of his private notes, he entreats him "to say, candidly, whether he knew or suspected who he was."

It is known that Junius attended in the gallery of the House of Commons, and he has occasionally quoted the debates from his own notes or recollections. Sir P. Francis did the same, and he communicated his notes to Almon, for his life of Lord Chatham; there is a remarkable coincidence with Junius in some passages given by both, necessarily unknown to each other, and unaccountable unless they were one and the same person.

All these and other matters of external evidence of a similar description, make out a case of circumstantial proof, sufficiently striking, and strong enough to render the identity highly probable. Is the internal evidence equally strong? It is the singularity of this question, that, whereas in almost all other cases, the proof rests chiefly, if not wholly, on comparison of styles, and there is little or no external evidence either way, here, in proportion as the latter is abundant, the former is scanty. No doubt peculiar turns of expression are every where to be found the same in both; and even where the phrase is of a somewhat extraordinary kind; as "*of* his side," "so far *forth*," "I *mean* the publick cause" (for I would promote). There is also much of Sir P. Francis's very peculiar manner and hasty abrupt temper in the private communications with Woodfall, with many phrases common to those communications and Sir Philip's known writings and conversation. But here, perhaps, the similarity may be said to end. For there cannot be produced any considerable piece of composition known to have proceeded from Sir P. Francis's pen which is of the same kind with the Letters of Junius; although passages of great excellence, full of point, instinct with severity, marked by an implacable spirit, and glowing with fierce animation, have been selected for the just admiration of critics; such as his invective against Lord Thurlow, his attack upon the legal profession in the debate on the continuation of impeachment after a dissolution, and his defence of himself against Lord Kenyon's remarks. That these and others of his writings (for though these were spoken, they bear all the marks of preparation, and were couched

in a written style) were of far lesser merit than the Letters in point of composition no person of correct taste can doubt. But they were not written in the peculiar style of Junius, and could not be mistaken for the productions of the same much overrated pen.

It remains, while the question thus hangs in suspense, to mention the evidence of hand-writing. The comparison of Sir P. Francis's ordinary hand, which was a remarkably fine one, with the studiously feigned hand of Junius's Letters, and of all his private correspondence, seemed to present many points of resemblance. But a remarkable writing of Sir P. Francis was recovered by the late Mr. D. Giles, to whose sister he had many years before sent a copy of verses with a letter written in a feigned hand. Upon comparing this fiction with the fac-similes published by Woodfall of Junius's hand, the two were found to tally accurately enough. The authorship is certainly not proved by this resemblance, even if it were admitted to prove that Sir P. Francis had been employed to copy the letters. But the importance of the fact as a circumstance in the chain of evidence is undeniable.

To this may be added the interest which he always took in the work. Upon his decease, the vellum-bound and gilt copies, which formed the only remuneration he would receive from the publisher, were sought for in vain among his books. But it is said that the present which he made his second wife on their marriage was a finely bound copy of Junius.

The cause of his carefully concealing his authorship, if indeed he was the author, will naturally be asked. No one can tell very certainly, but many reasons may

be supposed; and it is quite certain that he himself ever regarded the supposition as a great impeachment of his character. Had he been on habits of intimacy with the objects of Junius's attacks, at the time of those attacks? Had he ever been under personal obligations to them? A promise of secresy, given when he was appointed to India, would only account for his concealing the fact, not for his indignation in denying it. That he was silenced by that appointment is another reason why he might not be ready to confess the truth. Add to all this, that they who knew him were aware how greatly superior he deemed many of his own writings to the much better known and more admired letters of his supposed representative.

There were those who, refining upon things, drew an argument in favour of his authorship from the manner of his denial. These reasoners contended that he never plainly and distinctly denied it. But this only arose from his feeling it to be an imputation, and therefore that he was bound to do a great deal more than disclaim—that it behoved him at least to repel with warmth. That his answer to all such questions implied and contained an unequivocal denial cannot be doubted. To one he said, "I have pleaded not guilty, and if any one after that chooses to call me a scoundrel, he is welcome." To another, who said "I'd fain put a question to you," he exclaimed, "You had better not; you may get an answer you won't like." To a third, "Oh, they know I'm an old man, and can't fight."

It is equally true that these answers are not inconsistent with the supposition of his having had a knowledge of the secret, and even been engaged in the copy-

ing of the letters, without being their author; and it must be added that the same supposition tallies also with the greater part, if not the whole, of the circumstances above detailed. In this belief it is upon the whole, perhaps, both most reasonable and most charitable to rest. If he felt the imputation of the authorship to be so grievous a charge against him, he has full right to plead the integrity and honour of his whole life in vindication from the main accusation, while his only being privy to the secret would imply no criminality at all, and his having had a merely mechanical share in the publication might be accounted for by private authority or by official or personal relationship.

From the purport of the preceding pages will be gathered an opinion upon the whole considerably lower of this distinguished individual than may be found embodied in the panegyrical portraiture of Mr. Burke's speech on the India Bill. It would not be correct to speak even as regards Indian affairs of "his deep reach of thought, his large legislative conceptions, his grand plans of policy," because the mind of Sir Philip Francis was not framed upon a model like this, which might serve for the greatest genius that ever shone upon state affairs. It is also an exaggeration for Mr. Burke and his colleagues to affirm that "from him all their lessons had been learnt, if they had learnt any good ones." But the highest part of the eulogy rises into no exaggeration.—"This man, driven from his employment, discountenanced by the directors, had no other reward and no other distinction but that inward 'sunshine of the soul,' which a good conscience can always bestow on itself."

MR. HORNE TOOKE.

MENTION has been made of the enmity which Mr. Horne Tooke always bore towards Sir Philip Francis; and it is not to be forgotten, among the circumstances which tend to connect the latter with Junius, that a fierce controversy had raged between the author of the Letters and the great grammarian; a controversy in which, although no one now doubts that the former was worsted, yet certainly the balance of abuse had been on his side, and the opinion of the public at the time was generally in his favour. Another circumstance of the same description is the zeal with which Sir Philip Francis always espoused the quarrel of Wilkes, as vehemently as he made war on Lord Mansfield. Few who recollect the debates of 1817 can forget the violence with which he attacked a member of the House of Commons for having said something slighting of Wilkes, while the eulogy of Lord Mansfield that accompanied the censure did not certainly recommend it to Sir Philip's palate. "Never while you live, Sir, say a word in favour of that corrupt judge."—"It was only the eloquence of his judgment on Wilkes's case that was praised."—"But the rule is never to praise a bad man for anything. Remember Jack Lee's golden rule, and be always abstemious of praise to an enemy. Lord Mansfield was sold on the Douglas cause, and the parties are known through whom the money was paid. As for Wilkes, whatever may be laid to his charge, joining to

run him down, is joining the enemy to hurt a friend." Sir P. Francis's instinctive rage on such subjects as the author of Junius must have felt most deeply upon was very remarkable. The last greatest effort which that shallow, violent, and unprincipled writer made, was against the illustrious judge, and it was attended with a signal discomfiture, sufficient to account for his ceasing to write under a name thus exposed to contempt for an arrogance which no resources sustained. Hence the bitterness with which the name of Mansfield was recollected by Sir P. Francis, suited exceedingly well the hypothesis of his identity with Junius; and Horne Tooke's hatred of Francis seems to betoken a suspicion, on his part, of some connexion with the anonymous writer. His warfare with Wilkes, whom both Junius and Francis always defended, is as well known as his controversy with Junius.

No man out of office all his life, and out of parliament all but a few months of its later period, ever acted so conspicuous a part in the political warfare of his times as Horne Tooke. From his earliest years he had devoted himself to the cause of liberty, and had given up the clerical profession because its duties interfered with secular controversy, which he knew to be his proper element. With the pursuits of the bar he perhaps unjustly conceived that this kind of partisanship could be more easily reconciled; but the indelible nature of English orders prevented him from being admitted a member of the legal profession; and he was thus thrown upon the world of politics and of letters for an occupation. His talents in both these spheres were of a high order. To great perspicacity, uncommon

quickness of apprehension, a ready wit, much power of application, he joined a cautious circumspection, and calm deliberation not often found in such company, and possessed a firmness of purpose not to be daunted by any danger, a steady perseverance not to be relaxed by difficulties, but rather to be warmed into new zeal by any attempts at opposition. That he was crafty, however, as well as sagacious and reflecting, soon appeared manifest; and when he was found often to put others forward on the stage, while he himself prompted behind the scenes, or moved the wires of the puppet, a distrust of him grew up which enabled plain dealers, pursuing a more straightforward course, to defeat him when they happened to fall out, although their resources were in every respect incomparably less extensive. Notwithstanding this defect, fertile in expedients, bold in council, confident of his own powers, his influence was very great with the popular party, to whom indeed he was largely recommended by the mere facility of writing when compositions were wanted on the spur of the occasion, and the power of attacking their adversaries and defeating their friends, through the press, now first become a great engine of political force. For many years therefore he was the adviser and partisan of greatest weight among the high liberty party, that body which numbers its supporters out of doors by the million, and yet is often almost unrepresented in either house of parliament; that body which regards the interests of the people, in other words its own interests, as everything, and the schemes, the tactics, the conflicts, of the regular parties, as nothing, except a proof of Party being a game played for the interests of a few under the guise of public principle.

Personal considerations, as well as strongly-entertained opinions, gave this view of Party a strong hold over Mr. Tooke's mind. He had never become acquainted with the Whig leaders, except in conflict. With those of the opposite faction of course he never could amalgamate. The aristocratic and exclusive nature of Whig society, the conviction then prevailing, and at all times acted upon, that the whole interests of the state are wrapt up in those of "the party," while those of the party are implied by the concerns of a few great families, their dependants, and their favourites,—was sure to keep at an unpassable distance one who, like Mr. Tooke, felt his own real importance, was unwilling to measure it by the place he held in the estimation of some powerful lord or more puissant lady, and was determined not to substitute for it the base nominal value attached to obsequious servility.

In many of their objections to the regular parties in the state, Horne Tooke, and those with whom he acted, were very possibly right; and the friends of liberal principles certainly have had abundant reason to lament the misconduct of that party which came the nearest themselves in the line of policy they approved. But it would be the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that those persons had any claims to superior patriotism, on the ground of abjuring all party association, or even that they conducted their own affairs as a faction upon less exclusive principles. The people at large, whom they counselled and generally led, might well object to the abuse of the party principle, and might deny the right either of Whig or Tory to dictate their opinions; but Mr. Tooke and his friends, who assumed to be the

popular leaders, were banded together in as regular and compact a body as ever flocked under the standards of the Government or the Opposition; they acted together in concert; they gave up lesser differences of individual opinion for the purpose of joining to gain some greater advantage on grounds common to all; nay, they were as jealous of any Whig interference as the Whigs could be of them; and had a coterie of their own, with all the littlenesses of such assemblages, just as much as Devonshire House or Holland House. The table of some worthy alderman was at one time their resort; the country residence of an elderly gentleman, who intended to leave Mr. Horne his fortune but only gave him his name of Tooke, was afterwards their haunt; latterly, the residence of the grammarian himself received the initiated; and it was still more rare, perhaps, to see a regular Whig face in any of those very patriotic and very select circles than to meet Mr. Tooke himself under the roof of the patricians. The acquisition of office was, perhaps, much less the object in view with those popular chiefs; it certainly was placed at a far greater distance from their grasp; but they had as little tolerance for any difference of opinion with their own creed, as little charity for the errors of those who went half-way with them towards their goal, and as great contempt or dislike of their persons, as if they had gone under any of the appellatives which distinguish the parliamentary divisions of politicians.

That Mr. Tooke could take the field in political conflict as well as rule the councils of the people by his wisdom, was constantly made sufficiently apparent. If the pen of a ready writer were wanted, none more ready

to take up whatever gauntlet the literary enemies of freedom might throw down, or to rouse the sleeping lion of state prosecution. If the scene of the fight lay on the Hustings, the Parson of Brentford was one of the most skilful and readiest to address the gathered multitude. If, in either capacity, as a writer or as a speaker, he came within the fangs of the law, those who kept him from conducting the suits of others soon found that he was the most able and skilful advocate of his own. Whether the contest were to be maintained with the scribes of the Treasury through the press, or its candidates at public meetings, or its lawyers in the courts of justice, he was ready with his pen, his tongue, his learning; and he seldom left any antagonist reason to gratulate himself on the opponent he had met or the victory he had won. His conduct of his own defence, against a prosecution for libel at the breaking out of the American war, when he had no assistance of counsel; and his cross-examination of the witnesses, when tried for High Treason in 1794, having the powerful aid of Mr. Erskine, were both justly admired, as displaying great address, readiness, presence of mind, and that circumspection which distinguished him in all situations, making him a far more safe counsellor than the high popular party almost ever at any other time possessed.

But it was not in action only that he distinguished himself, and gained great and deserved popularity. He suffered and suffered much for his principles. A bold and a just denunciation of the attack made upon our American brethren, which now-a-days would rank among the very mildest and tamest effusions of the periodical press, condemned him to a prison for

twelve months, destined to have been among the most active of his life. His exertions to obtain parliamentary reform and good government for the country, accompanied with no conspiracy, and marked by no kind of personal or party violence, subjected his house to be ransacked by police officers, his repositories to be broken open, his private correspondence to be exposed, his daughters to be alarmed and insulted, his person, now bent down with grievous infirmities, to be hurried away in the night, undergo an inquisitorial examination before a secret council, be flung into prison, and only released after months of confinement, and after putting his life in jeopardy by a trial for High Treason. These are sufferings which fair-weather politicians know nothing of, which the members of the regular parties see at a distance, using them for topics of declamation against their adversaries, and as the materials for turning sentences in their holiday speeches—but they are sufferings which make men dear to the people; which are deeply engraved on the public mind; which cause them to be held in everlasting remembrance and love and honour by all reflecting men; because they set the seal upon all professions of patriotism, and, bolting the wheat from the chaff in the mass of candidates for public favour, show who be they that care for their principles, by showing who can suffer for them, and tell with a clear voice upon whom it is safe to rely as the votaries of public virtue.

That Mr. Tooke should after these trials have remained out of Parliament, to enter which he made so many attempts, could only be accounted for by the corrupt elective system which was then established. No sooner had a partial reform been effected than Cobbett and even

Hunt found a seat for populous places. But the only time that Mr. Tooke ever sat in the House of Commons he was returned by the most close of all close boroughs, Old Sarum itself, then the property of Lord Camelford, the most harmless of whose vagaries was placing this eminent person in parliament. The old objection however of holy orders being indelible, was now revived; and though it was not determined that he whom it had prevented from practising as a lawyer was thereby also incapacitated from exercising the functions of a legislator, yet a declaratory act was passed which prevented any priest from ever after sitting in the House of Commons. The act was so far retrospective that it affected all persons then in orders.

By this proceeding neither Mr. Tooke nor the country sustained any loss. His talents appeared not to be, at least now that he had reached a late period of life, well fitted for Parliamentary debate. On the hustings he had shone with great brilliancy. Even in the warfare of the bar he was well calculated to excel. For addressing the multitude with effect he had many of the highest qualifications. Without any power whatever of declamation, with no mastery over the passions, with a manner so far from ever partaking at all of vehemence that it was hardly animated in the ordinary degree of conversation, he nevertheless was so clear in his positions, so distinct in his statements of fact, so ready in his repartee, so admirably gifted with the knowledge of what topics would tell best on the occasion, so dexterous in the employment of short, plain, strong arguments, so happy in the use of his various and even motley information, could so powerfully season his discourse with wit

and with humour, and so boldly, even recklessly, handle the most perilous topics of attack, whether on individuals or on establishments, that it may be doubted if any man in modern times, when the line has been drawn between refined eloquence and mob oratory, ever addressed the multitude with more certain, more uniform success. Whoever reads the speeches at the different Westminster elections of 1790, 1796, and 1802, when he stood against both the Government candidate and Mr. Fox, will at once perceive how vastly superior his were to those of the other speakers. But, as Mr. Fox was generally very unsuccessful on such occasions, this comparison would furnish an inadequate notion of his great merits in this kind. It is more material to add, that his slow, composed manner, and clear enunciation, enabling what he said to be easily taken down, the reports which are penned convey a very accurate idea of the singular degree in which he excelled. On the other hand, he was peculiarly fitted for the very different contests of forensic skill, by his learning, his subtlety, his quick and sure perception of resemblances and of diversities, which with his unabashed boldness, his presence of mind, and his imperturbable temper, made him a most powerful advocate, whether before a judge in arguing points of law, or in the conduct of the inquiry for a jury's decision. That he was wholly impregnable in the position which he took, both the Court felt when its efforts to stop him or turn aside his course were found to be utterly vain, and the opposing advocate who never for an instant could succeed in putting him down with the weight of authority and of station, any more than in circumventing him by the niceties of technical lore. All that the

Mansfields and the Bullers could ever effect, was to occasion a repetition, with aggravating variations, of the offensive passages; all that Attorney-Generals could obtain was some new laughter from the audience at their expense. Unruffled by the vexation of interruptions, as undaunted by power, by station, by professional experience, by the truly formidable conspiracy against all interlopers, in which the whole bar, almost filling the court on great occasions, really is in a considerable degree, but appears to be in a far larger extent combined, —there stood the layman, rejected as a Barrister, relying only on his own resources, and in the most plain and homely English, with more than the self-possession and composure of a judge who had the whole Court at his feet, uttered the most offensive opinions, garnished with the broadest and bitterest sarcasms at all the dogmas and all the functionaries whom almost all other men were agreed in deeming exempt from attack and even too venerable for observation. That his coolness and boldness occasionally encroached upon the adjoining province of audacity, which might even be termed impudence, cannot be denied. When he would turn the laugh against a person who had offended him, or had defeated him, there was nothing at which he would stick. Thus Mr. Beaufoy having fallen short of his expectations in his evidence to character, or to political and personal intimacy, at the Treason trials, he resented his coldness and refreshed his recollection by a story, invented at the moment. "Was it not when you came to complain to me of Mr. Pitt not returning your bow in Parliament-street?" And in private society he was as unscrupulous in dealing with facts, as has been remarked

when speaking of the dislike he bore Sir P. Francis. "It was another defect in his forensic exertions that he was apt to be over-refining; but this and other faults need excite little wonder, when we reflect that on those occasions he laboured under the extreme disadvantage of entire want of practice. The wonder is that one who was only three or four times in a court of justice should have displayed a talent and a tact of which experienced advocates might have been proud.

When he came into the House of Commons, where earlier in life he certainly would have had great success, he entirely failed. One speech, that in his own case, was favourably received; but on the few other occasions on which he came forward, he was without any dispute unsuccessful. His Hustings habits and topics were entirely unsuited to the more severe genius of the place; and he was too old to lay them aside, that he might clothe himself in the parliamentary attire.

But much and justly as he was distinguished in his own time both among popular leaders, and as a martyr for popular principles, it is as a philosophical grammarian that his name will reach the most distant ages. To this character his pretensions were of the highest class. Acumen not to be surpassed, learning quite adequate to the occasion, a strong predilection for the pursuit, qualified him to take the first place, and to leave the science, scanty when his inquiries began, enlarged and enriched by his discoveries; for discoveries he made as incontestably as ever did the follower of physical science by the cognate methods of inductive investigation.

The principle upon which his system is founded excels in simplicity, and is eminently natural and reason-

able. As all our knowledge relates primarily to things, as mere existence is manifestly the first idea which the mind can have, as it is simple without involving any process of reasoning,—substantives are evidently the first objects of our thoughts, and we learn their existence before we contemplate their actions, motions, or changes. Motion is a complex and not a simple idea: it is gained from the comparison of two places or positions, and drawing the conclusion that a change has happened. Action, or the relation between the agent and the act, is still more complex: it implies the observation of two events following one another, but, until we have pursued this sequence very often, we never could think of connecting them together. Those actions which we ourselves perform are yet less simple, and the experience which teaches us our own thoughts must be accompanied with more reflection. As for other ideas of a general or abstract nature, they are still later of being distinctly formed. Hence the origin of language must be traced to substantives, to existences, to simple apprehensions, to things. Having given names to these, we proceed to use those names in expressing change, action, motion, suffering, manners of doing, modes of suffering or of being. Thus verbs are employed, and they are obtained from substantives. Relations, relative positions, comparisons, contrasts, affinities, negatives, exclamations follow; and the power of expressing these is obtained from substantives and from verbs. So that all language becomes simply, naturally, rationally, resolved into substantives as its element, or substantives and verbs, verbs themselves being acquired from substantives.

The simple grandeur of this leading idea, which runs through the whole of Mr. Tooke's system, at once recommends it to our acceptation. But the details of the theory are its great merit; for he followed it into every minute particular of our language, and only left it imperfect in confining his speculations to the English tongue, while doubtless the doctrine is of universal application. He had great resources for the performance of the task which he thus set himself. A master of the old Saxon, the root of our noble language; thoroughly and familiarly acquainted with all our best writers; sufficiently skilled in other tongues ancient and modern, though only generally, and, for any purposes but that of his Anglo-Saxon inquiry, rather superficially, he could trace with a clear and steady eye the relations and derivations of all our parts of speech; and in delivering his remarks, whether to illustrate his own principles, or to expose the errors of other theories, or to controvert and expose to ridicule his predecessors, his never-failing ingenuity and ready wit stood him in such constant stead, that he has made one of the driest subjects in the whole range of literature or science, one of the most amusing and even lively of books; nor did any one ever take up the Diversions of Purley* (as he has quaintly chosen to call it) and lay it down till some other avocation tore it from his hands.

The success of this system has been such as its great essential merits, and its more superficial attractions combined, might have led us to expect. All men are convinced of its truth; and as every thing which had been

* Επεα πτεροεντα is the more classical synonyme which it bears.

done before was superseded by it, so nothing has since been effected unless in pursuing its views and building upon its solid foundations. One only fault is to be found, not so much with the system as with its effects upon the understanding and habits of the ingenious author. Its brilliant success made him an etymologist and grammarian in everything. He became prone to turn all controversies into discussions on terms. He saw roots and derivatives in everything; and was apt to think he had discovered a decisive argument, or solved a political or a metaphysical or an ethical problem when he had only found the original meaning of a word. Thus he would hold that the law of libel was unjust and absurd because *libel* means a little book; no kind of proof that there may not be a substantive offence which goes by such a name, any more than forgery is denied to be a crime, although the original of the name is the very innocent operation of hammering iron softened in the fire. But he also in the case referred to left wholly out of view half the phrase; for it is certain that libel, or *libellus*, is not the Latin of libel, but *libellus famosus*, a defamatory writing.

But this etymological pedantry was engrafted upon a rich stock of sound and healthy constitutional learning. Few men were better acquainted with the history of his country in all its periods. The antiquities of our language were hardly better known to him, or the changes which it had undergone, than the antiquities and the progress of our mixed constitution. His opinions might be strongly tinged with democracy, but towards a republic he had no leaning whatever; and he erred fully as much in undervaluing the people's capacity of self-government,

as in the belief of their having anciently enjoyed more power in the monarchy than they ever possessed. In the virtues of representative government, the great discovery of modern times, by which popular rights are rendered capable of exercise on a large scale, and a democratic scheme of polity becomes reconcilable with an extensive territory and a numerous community, he had the most entire confidence: but he would have pushed the right of suffrage farther than the education of the people rendered safe; and it was a great inconsistency in his doctrines, that while he held the notion of the whole people governing themselves to be utterly chimerical and absurd, he yet desired to see the whole people yearly select their rulers. Nor can we trace in any of his writings the idea, so natural, and indeed so obviously flowing from his own principles, that in proportion as the people became better informed and more experienced, the extension of their rights becomes safe, and if safe, becomes also just and necessary, until at length they are fitted for a much larger share in managing their own affairs than any merely Parliamentary Reformer has ever yet assigned to them.

Subject to these remarks, and to the further observation, that, like all learned men and legal antiquaries, he set too great store by antiquity, guided himself too much by precedent, and was not sufficiently alive to the necessity of new schemes of policy in an altered and improved state of circumstances, his constitutional knowledge, and the use made of it was of very great value. He was ever ready to stand on the firm ground of right, and to press the claims of men to their legal privileges. He brought many important constitu-

tional questions to a fair issue; he was the patron, the supporter, the fellow-labourer of all who dared to resist arbitrary power, and would make a stand for the rights of man, and the principles of the constitution. In the pursuit of these things he could resist both the frowns of power and the clamours of the mob; and although his life was spent as one among the leaders of the high popular party, he was as often in controversy with others who having no learning like his, and no discretion to guide them, went extravagant lengths to please the multitude, and as often the object of popular dislike, as he was of favour from the mass of his followers. In his controversy with Wilkes, he showed this courage abundantly: he was clearly in the right; he was attacked in a manner wholly vile and odious by a profligate man, and an unprincipled politician; he maintained his ground to the satisfaction of the reasoning and reflecting few; but he was the object of general and fierce popular indignation for daring to combat the worthless idol of the mob.

In private life he was eminently agreeable, and his manners were those of a high-bred gentleman. His conversation was admirably diversified with both wit and argument, ordinary and rare information. Its vice was that of his understanding—a constant pursuit of paradox;—and that of his character—a love of victory, and a carelessness about truth. His etymological renown brought him in contact with many men of letters; and his ancient antagonist, Lord Thurlow, hopeless of living to see the last part of the Επεα πτεροεντα, proposed to make his acquaintance, that he might discuss its subject with him. They met accordingly, the ex-Chancel-

lor volunteering a visit to Wimbledon, as being by a little the less infirm of the two. A considerable intimacy thus grew up between these veterans, who were probably reconciled even on political scores by their common enmity to the powerful minister of the day.

LORD CASTLEREAGH.

We have stepped aside from contemplating the figures of those who had the confidence of George III., and who also presided over the councils of George IV. during the Regency and during his reign, in order to consider three of their opponents; but it is time that we return to survey others of the leading men in whose hands the guidance of the state was placed, until the period towards the end of his reign, when the Tory party was broken up by the differences between Mr. Canning and his colleagues. Those men also belong to the times of George III. They were, like Lord Eldon, the component parts of Mr. Addington's administration, the cabinet which enjoyed his favour more than any he ever had after the dismissal of Lord North; and perhaps it was the mediocrity of their talents, in general, that chiefly recommended them to his regards. For with the exception of Lord Eldon and Lord St. Vincent, the list comprises no great names. Of the "safe and middling men," described jocularly by Mr. Canning, as "meaning very little, nor meaning that little well," Lord Castlereagh was, in some respects, the least inconsiderable. His capacity was greatly underrated from the poverty of his discourse; and his ideas passed for much less than they were worth, from the habitual obscurity of his expressions. But he was far above the bulk of his colleagues in abilities; and none of them all, except Lord St. Vincent, with whom he was officially connected

only for a short time, exercised so large an influence over the fortunes of his country. Indeed scarce any man of any party bore a more important place in public affairs, or occupies a larger space in the history of his times.

Few men of more limited capacity, or more meagre acquirements than Lord Castlereagh possessed, had before his time ever risen to any station of eminence in our free country; fewer still have long retained it in a State, where mere Court intrigue and princely favour have so little to do with men's advancement. But we have lived to see persons of more obscure merit than Lord Castlereagh rise to equal station in this country. Of sober and industrious habits, and become possessed of business-like talents by long experience, he was a person of the most commonplace abilities. He had a reasonable quickness of apprehension and clearness of understanding, but nothing brilliant or in any way admirable marked either his conceptions or his elocution. Nay, to judge of his intellect by his eloquence, we should certainly have formed a very unfair estimate of its perspicacity. For, though it was hardly possible to underrate its extent or comprehensiveness, it was very far from being confused and perplexed in the proportion of his sentences: and the listener who knew how distinctly the speaker could form his plans, and how clearly his ideas were known to himself, might, comparing small things with great, be reminded of the prodigious contrast between the distinctness of Oliver Cromwell's understanding, and the hopeless confusion and obscurity of his speech. No man, besides, ever attained the station of a regular debater in our Parliament with

such an entire want of all classical accomplishment, and indeed of all literary provision whatsoever. While he never showed the least symptom of an information extending beyond the more recent volumes of the Parliamentary Debates, or possibly the files of the newspapers only, his diction set all imitation, perhaps all description, at defiance. It was with some an amusement to beguile the tedious hours of their unavoidable attendance upon the poor, tawdry, ravelled thread of his sorry discourse, to collect a kind of *ana* from the fragments of mixed, uncongruous, and disjointed images that frequently appeared in it. "The features of the clause"—"the ignorant impatience of the relaxation of taxation"—"sets of circumstances coming up and circumstances going down"—"men turning their backs upon themselves"—"the honourable and learned gentleman's wedge getting into the loyal feelings of the manufacturing classes"—"the constitutional principle wound up in the bowels of the monarchical principle"—"the Herculean labour of the honourable and learned member, who will find himself quite disappointed when he has at last brought forth his Hercules"—(by a slight confounding of the mother's labour which produced that hero, with his own exploits which gained him immortality)—these are but a few, and not the richest samples, by any means, of a rhetoric which often baffled alike the gravity of the Treasury Bench and the art of the reporter, and left the wondering audience at a loss to conjecture how any one could ever exist, endowed with humbler pretensions to the name of orator.

Wherefore, when the Tory party, "having a devil," preferred him to Mr. Canning for their leader, all men

naturally expected that he would entirely fail to command even the attendance of the House while he addressed it; and that the benches, empty during his time, would only be replenished when his highly-gifted competitor rose. They were greatly deceived; they underrated the effect of place and power; they forgot that the representative of a government speaks "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." But they also forgot that Lord Castlereagh had some qualities well fitted to conciliate favour, and even to provoke admiration, in the absence of everything like eloquence. He was a bold and fearless man; the very courage with which he exposed himself unabashed to the most critical audience in the world, while incapable of uttering two sentences of anything but the meanest matter, in the most wretched language; the gallantry with which he faced the greatest difficulties of a question; the unflinching perseverance with which he went through a whole subject, leaving untouched not one of its points, whether he could grapple with it or no, and not one of the adverse arguments, however forcibly and felicitously they had been urged, neither daunted by recollecting the impression just made by his antagonist's brilliant display, nor damped by consciousness of the very rags in which he now presented himself—all this made him upon the whole rather a favourite with the audience whose patience he was taxing mercilessly, and whose gravity he ever and anon put to a very severe trial. Nor can any one have forgotten the kind of pride that mantled on the fronts of the Tory phalanx, when, after being overwhelmed with the powerful fire of the Whig opposition, or galled by the fierce denunciations of the

Mountain, or harassed by the splendid displays of Mr. Canning, their chosen leader stood forth, and presenting the graces of his eminently patrician figure, flung open his coat, displayed an azure ribbon traversing a snow-white chest, and declared "his high satisfaction that he could now meet the charges against him face to face, and repel with indignation all that his adversaries were bold and rash enough to advance."

Such he was in debate; in council he certainly had far more resources. He possessed a considerable fund of plain sense, not to be misled by any refinement of speculation, or clouded by any fanciful notions. He went straight to his point. He was brave politically as well as personally. Of this, his conduct on the Irish Union had given abundant proof; and nothing could be more just than the rebuke which, as connected with the topic of personal courage, we may recollect his administering to a great man who had passed the limits of Parliamentary courtesy—"Every one must be sensible," he said, "that if any personal quarrel were desired, any insulting language used publicly where it could not be met as it deserved, was the way to prevent and not to produce such a rencounter."—No one after that treated him with disrespect. The complaints made of his Irish administration were well grounded, as regarded the corruption of the Parliament by which he accomplished the Union, though he had certainly no direct hand in the bribery practised; but they were entirely unfounded as regarded the cruelties practised during and after the Rebellion. Far from partaking in these atrocities, he uniformly and strenuously set his face against them. He was of a cold temperament and determined charac-

ter, but not of a cruel disposition; and to him, more than perhaps to any one else, was owing the termination of the system stained with blood. It is another topic of high praise that he took a generous part against the faction which, setting themselves against all liberal, all tolerant government, sought to drive from their posts the two most venerable rulers with whom Ireland had ever been blessed, Cornwallis and Abercromby. Nor can it be too often repeated that when his colleagues acting under Lord Clare had denounced Mr. Grattan, in the Lords' Report, as implicated in a guilty knowledge of the rebellion, he, and he alone, prevented the Report of the Commons from joining in the same groundless charge against the illustrious patriot. An intimation of this from a common friend, (who communicated the remarkable fact to the author of these pages,) alone prevented a personal meeting between the two upon a subsequent occasion.

(Lord Castlereagh's foreign administration was as destitute of all merit as possible.) No enlarged views guided his conduct; no liberal principles claimed his regard; no generous sympathies, no grateful feelings for the people whose sufferings and whose valour had accomplished the restoration of their national independence, prompted his tongue, when he carried forth from the land of liberty that influence which she had a right to exercise,—she who had made such vast sacrifices, and was never in return, to reap any, the least selfish advantage. The representative of England, among those Powers whom her treasure and her arms had done so much to save, (he ought to have held the language becoming a free state, and claimed for justice and for liberty the recogni-

tion, which he had the better right to demand, that we gained nothing for ourselves after all our sufferings, and all our expenditure of blood as well as money. Instead of this, he flung himself at once and for ever into the arms of the sovereigns—seemed to take a vulgar pride in being suffered to become their associate—appeared desirous, with the vanity of an upstart elevated unexpectedly into higher circles, of forgetting what he had been, and qualifying himself for the company he now kept, by assuming their habits,—and never pronounced any of those words so familiar with the English nation and with English statesmen, in the mother tongue of a limited monarchy, for fear that they might be deemed low-bred, and unsuited to the society of crowned heads, in which he was living, and to which they might prove as distasteful as they were unusual.

It is little to be wondered at, that those potentates found him ready enough with his defence of their Holy Alliance. When it was attacked in 1816, he began by denying that it meant anything at all. He afterwards explained it away as a mere pledge of pacific intentions, and a new security for the stability of the settlement made by the Congress of Vienna. Finally, when he was compelled to depart from the monstrous principles of systematic interference, to which it gave birth, and to establish which it was originally intended, he made so tardy, so cold, so reluctant a protest against the general doctrine of the allies, that the influence of England could not be said to have been exerted at all in behalf of national independence, even if the protest had been unaccompanied with a *carte blanche* to the Allies for all injuries they were offering to particular states. In the

genuine spirit of the system protested against. The allies issued from Troppau one manifesto, from Leybach another, against the free constitution which had just been established at Naples by a military force co-operating with a movement of the people. On the eve of the Parliament meeting (19th Jan. 1821,) Lord Castlereagh delivered a note to the Holy Allies, expressing in feeble and measured terms, a very meagre dissent from the principle of interference; but adding a peremptory disapproval of the means by which the Neapolitan revolution had been effected, and indicating very plainly, that England would allow whatever they chose to do for the purpose of putting down the new government and restoring the old. It is certain that this kind of revolution is of all others the very worst, and to liberty the most unpropitious. It is also probable that the people of Naples knew not what they sought; nay, when they proclaimed the Spanish Constitution, it is said, there was no copy of it found in the whole city. Nevertheless the same kind of military movement had produced the destruction of the same constitution in Spain, and restored the power and prerogative of Ferdinand; and no exception had been ever taken to it, in that instance, either by the Holy Allies or by England. There could therefore be no doubt whatever, that this mode of effecting changes in a government was only displeasing to those parties, when the change happened to be of a popular kind, and that a military revolution to restore or to found a despotic government, was a thing perfectly to their liking. Thus faintly dissented from as to the principle, and not even faintly opposed as to the particular instance, the three sovereigns deputed one of

their number to march, and the Austrian troops ended, in a few days, all that the Neapolitan army had done in as many hours.

But late in 1822, Spain, or rather Madrid, again became the scene of a revolutionary movement; and the people obtained once more a free form of government. Again the Holy Allies were at work; and, on this occasion, their manifestos were directed to arm France with the authority of the League. First, an army was assembled on the Spanish frontier, under the stale pretext of some infectious disorder requiring a sanatory cordon; the same pretext on which the predecessors of the Holy Allies had in former times surrounded unhappy Poland with their armed hordes—the only difference being, (that an epidemic was in that instance said to be raging among the cattle, and now it was supposed to be the plague among men.) A great change had, however, now taken place in the British department of Foreign Affairs. Lord Castlereagh's sudden death had changed Mr. Canning's Indian destination, and placed him both at the head of the Foreign Office, and in the lead of the House of Commons. His views were widely different from those of his predecessor. He was justly jealous of the whole principles and policy of the Holy Alliance; (he was disgusted with the courtly language of the crafty and cruel despots who, under the mask of religious zeal, were enslaving Europe: he was indignant at the subservient part in those designs which England had been playing; and he was resolved that this obsequiousness should no longer disgrace his country. In America, he was determined that the colonies of Spain should be recognised as clothed with the independence

which they had purchased by their valour; in Europe, he was fixed in the design of unchaining England from the chariot wheels of the Holy Allies. It is from this portion of his life, and from his having, in 1827, been joined by most of the more considerable Whigs, that men are accustomed to regard Mr. Canning as a man of liberal opinions. In no other respect did he differ from Lord Castlereagh, who was also a steady friend of Catholick Emancipation.

LORD LIVERPOOL

THE eminent individual whom we have just been surveying* never rose to the place of ostensible Prime Minister, although for the last ten years of his life he exercised almost all its influence, and was the ministerial leader of the House of Commons. But Lord Liverpool was the chief under whom he served. He presided over the councils of England for a longer time than any other, excepting Walpole and Pitt, and for a period incomparably more glorious in all that is commonly deemed to constitute national renown. He was Prime Minister of England for fifteen years, after having filled in succession almost every political office, from under-secretary of state upwards; and passed his whole life, from the age of manhood, in the public service, save the single year that followed the death of Mr. Pitt. So long and so little interrupted a course of official prosperity was never, perhaps, enjoyed by any other statesman.

But this was not his only felicity. It happened to him, that the years during which the helm of the state, as it is called, was intrusted to his hands, were those of the greatest events, alike in negotiation, in war, in commerce, and in finance, which ever happened to illustrate or to checker the annals of Europe. He saw the power of France attain a pitch altogether unexampled, and embrace the whole of the continent, except Russia alone, hitherto believed safe in her dis-

* Lord Castlereagh.

tant position and enormous natural strength; but he saw her, too, invaded, her numerous armies overthrown, her almost inaccessible capital destroyed. Then followed the insurrection of conquered Germany—the defeat of victorious France—the war pushed into her territory—the advance of the allies to the capital—the restoration of the ancient dynasty. By a singular coincidence, having signalized his outset in political life by a supposition which he propounded as possible—a march to Paris—this was then deemed so outrageous an absurdity that it became connected with his name as a standing topic of ridicule; yet he lived to see the impossibility realized, was Prime Minister when the event happened, and did not survive the dynasty which he had mainly contributed to restore. Peace was thus brought back, but without her sister, plenty; and intestine discord now took the place of foreign war. He saw the greatest distress which this country had ever suffered in all the departments of her vast and various industry; agriculture sunk down, manufactures depressed to the earth, commerce struggling for existence, an entire stop put to all schemes for lightening the load of the public debt, and a convulsion in the value of all property, in the relations of all creditors and all debtors, in the operation of all contracts between man and man—the inevitable effects of a sudden and violent alteration of the currency, the standard of which his colleagues, twenty years before, had interfered to change. Gradually he saw trade, and agriculture, and industry in all its branches, again revive, but public discontent not subsiding; both in Ireland, which he mainly helped to misgovern, and in England, where he opposed all poli-

tical improvement, he witnessed the tremendous effects of a people becoming more enlightened than their rulers; and the last years of his life were spent in vain efforts to escape from a sight of the torrent which he could not stem. It made an interlude in this long and varied political scene, that he consented to the worst act ever done by any English monarch, the persecution of his Queen for acts of hers and for purposes of his own, connected with a course of maltreatment to which the history of conjugal misdemeanor furnishes no parallel.

Yet, prodigious as is the importance, and singular as the variety of these events, which all happened during his administration,—and although party ran higher and took a far more personal turn during those fifteen years than at any other period of our political history,—no minister, nay, few men in any subordinate public station, ever passed his time with so little ill will directed towards himself, had so much forbearance shown him upon all occasions, nay, engaged uniformly so large a share of personal esteem. To what did he owe this rare felicity of his lot? How came it to pass that a station, in all other men's cases the most irksome, in his was easy—that the couch, so thorny to others, was to him of down? Whence the singular spectacle of the Prime Minister—the person primarily answerable for any thing which is done amiss, and in fact often made to answer for whatever turns out unluckily through no possible fault of his own, or indeed of any man—should, by common consent, have been exempted from almost all blame; and that whoever attacked most bitterly all other public functionaries, in any department, should have felt it no business of his to speak otherwise than

respectfully, if not tenderly, or if not respectfully, yet with mild forbearance of him, who, having been all his life in high office, a party to every unpopular and unfortunate proceeding of the government, and never a changeling in any one of his political opinions, even in the most unpopular of all, was now for so many long years at the head of the national councils, and in the first instance, by the law of the constitution and in point of fact, answerable for whatever was done or whatever was neglected?

This question may, perhaps, be answered by observing that the abilities of Lord Liverpool were far more solid than shining, and that men are apt to be jealous, perhaps envious, certainly distrustful, of great and brilliant genius in statesmen. Respectable mediocrity offends nobody. Nay, as the great bulk of mankind feel it to be their own case, they perhaps have some satisfaction in being correctly represented by those who administer their affairs. Add to this, that the subject of these remarks was gifted with extraordinary prudence, displaying, from his earliest years, a rare discretion in all the parts of his conduct. Not only was there nothing of imagination, or extravagance, or any matter above the most ordinary comprehension, in whatever he spoke (excepting only his unhappy flight about marching to Paris, and which for many years seemingly sunk him in the public estimation)—but he spoke so seldom as to show that he never did so unless the necessity of the case required it; while his life was spent in the business of office, a thing eminently agreeable to the taste, because closely resembling the habits, of a nation composed of men of business. "That's a good young man, who is always at his

desk," the common amount of civic panegyric to a virtuous apprentice, was in terms, no doubt, often applied to Mr. Robert Jenkinson. "Here comes a worthy minister, whose days and nights have been passed in his office, and not in idle talking," might be the slight transformation by which this early eulogy was adapted to his subsequent manhood and full-blown character. Nor must it be forgotten that a more inoffensive speaker has seldom appeared in Parliament. He was never known to utter a word at which any one could take exception. He was besides (a much higher praise) the most fair and candid of all debaters. No advantage to be derived from a misrepresentation, or even an omission, ever tempted him to forego the honest and the manly satisfaction of stating the fact as it was, treating his adversary as he deserved, and at least reciting fairly what had been urged against him, if he could not successfully answer it. In these respects, Mr. Canning furnished a contrast which was eminently beneficial to Lord Liverpool, with whom he was so often, absurdly enough, compared, for no better reason than that they were of the same standing, and began life together and in the same service. But, in another respect, he gave less offence than his brilliant contemporary. A wit, though he amuses for the moment, unavoidably gives frequent umbrage to grave and serious men, who don't think public affairs should be lightly handled, and are constantly falling into the error that, when a person is arguing the most conclusively, by showing the gross and ludicrous absurdity of his adversary's reasoning, he is jesting and not arguing; while the argument is in reality more close and stringent, the more he shows the opposite position

to be grossly ludicrous,—that is, the more effective the wit becomes. But though all this is perfectly true, it is equally certain that danger attends such courses with the common run of plain men. Hence all lawyers versed in the practice of *Nisi Prius*, are well aware of the risk they run by being witty, or ingenious and fanciful before a jury; unless their object be to reduce the damages in an absurd case, by what is called laughing it out of court; and you can almost tell, at a great distance, whether the plaintiff or the defendant's counsel is speaking to the jury, by observing whether he is grave, solemn, and earnest in his demeanour, or light and facetious. Nor is it only by wit that genius offends; flowers of imagination, flights of oratory, great passages, are more admired by the critic than relished by the worthy baronets who darken the porch of Boodle's—chiefly answering to the names of Sir Robert and Sir John; and the solid traders,—the very good men who stream along the Strand from 'Change towards St. Stephen's Chapel, at five o'clock, to see the business of the country done by the Sovereign's servants. A pretty long course of observation on these component parts of Parliamentary audience, begets some doubt if noble passages (termed "fine flourishes") be not taken by them as something personally offensive.

Of course, we speak not of quotations—these, no doubt, and reasonably, are so considered,—especially if in the unknown tongues; though even an English quotation is not by any means safe, and certainly requires an apology. But we refer to such fine passages as Mr. Canning often indulged himself, and a few of his hearers with; and which certainly seemed to be received as an

insult by whole benches of men accustomed to distribute justice at Sessions—the class of the

—Pannosus vacuis ædilis Ulubris—

—him whom Johnson called (translating)

The wisest justice on the banks of Trent.

These worthies, the dignitaries of the empire, resent such flights as liberties taken with them; and always say, when others force them to praise—"Well, well—but it was out of place. We have nothing to do with King Priam here—or with a heathen god, such as Æolus;—those kind of folks are very well in Pope's Homer and Dryden's Virgil;—but, as I said to Sir Robert, who sat next me, What have you or I to do with them matters? I like a good, plain man of business, like young Mr. Jenkinson—a man of the pen and the desk, like his father before him—and who never speaks when he is not wanted: let me tell you, Mr. Canning speaks too much, by half. Time is short—there are only twenty-four hours in the day, you know."

It may further be observed, that, with the exception of the Queen's Case, there was no violent or profligate act of the Government, nor any unfortunate or unpopular measure, which could not, with some colour of justice, be fixed upon some of Lord Liverpool's colleagues, in ease of himself, if men were thus favourably disposed. Lord Castlereagh was foreign minister, and had conducted our negotiations while abroad in person. He was, therefore, alone, held accountable for all the mistakes of that department; and especially for the countenance given to the designs of the Holy Allies. So, notwithstanding his known liberality upon Irish questions, and his equally certain opposition to the cruelties by

which the history of the Government during the rebellion of 1798 was disfigured, he had committed the sin, never by Irishmen to be forgiven or forgotten,—the carrying through of the Union, and abating the greatest public nuisance of modern times, the profligate, shameless, and corrupt Irish Parliament. Hence, all the faults and all the omissions of the Ministry, in respect of Irish affairs, were laid upon his single head by every true Irishman; while Lord Liverpool, himself a party to the worst policy of past times, was, in his own person, as head of the Government for so many years, the main obstacle to the repeal of the Penal Code; and yet he escaped all censure in the perspicacious and equitable distribution of Irish justice. For obstructing all Law Reform, and for delay in the administration of justice in practice, Lord Eldon offered a convenient object of attack; and on him all the hostile fire was directed, being thus drawn off from the favourite premier. Even the blunders committed in finance, though belonging to the peculiar department of the First Lord of the Treasury, were never marked in connexion with any name but Mr. Vansittart's. The boast of prosperity,—the schemes of Bank discount which accompanied it, exacerbating the malady of speculation one year, and the misery of panic the next,—were as much Lord Liverpool's as Mr. Robinson's; but the latter alone was blamed, or ever named in reference to these great calamities. Nay, even the violent revolution suddenly effected in the currency, and effected without the least precaution to guard against the country repaying twenty-five shillings for every twenty shillings borrowed,—was reck-

oned exclusively the work of Mr. Peel, as if he, being out of office altogether, had been at the head of the Government; while the Whigs stept in to claim their share of the public gratitude and applause for this great, but not very well-considered, operation.

It was curious to observe the care with which, all the while, these selections were made of parties on whom to lay the blame. No popular outcry ever assailed Lord Liverpool. While others were the objects of alternate execration and scorn, he was generally respected, never assailed. The fate that befel him was that which might have mortified others but well suited his tastes, to be little thought of, less talked about—or if, in debate, any measure was to be exposed—any minister to be attacked—means were ever found, nay, pains were taken to "assure the House that nothing was meant against the respected nobleman at the head of His Majesty's Government, for whom we all entertain feelings of *et cetera*, and of *et cetera*, and of *et cetera*."

Such was the happy lot of Lord Liverpool; such are the comforts which a respectable mediocrity of talents, with its almost constant companion, an extreme measure of discretion in the use of them, confers upon its possessor in lieu of brilliant reputation, with its attendant detraction and hate. While the conqueror mounts his triumphal car, and hears the air rent with the shouts of his name, he hears, too, the malignant whisper appointed to remind him, that the trumpet of fame blunts not the tooth of calumny; nay, he descends from his eminence when the splendid day is over, to be made the victim of never-ending envy, and of slander which is immortal, as

the price of that day's delirious enjoyment: and all the time safety and peace is the lot of the humbler companion, who shared his labours without partaking of his renown, and who, if he has enjoyed little, has paid and suffered less.

Accordingly, it is fit that one thing should be added to what has been recorded of the general forbearance exercised towards this fortunate minister: it was nearly akin to neglect or indifference, though certainly not at all savouring of contempt. There was nothing striking or shining in his qualities, which were the solid, useful, well-wearing ones of business-like habits and information. While great measures were executed, no one thought of Lord Liverpool. When men came to reflect, they found he was still Prime Minister; but he retired so much from public view that he was seldom thought of. Thus, if he had no blame when faults were committed, or things went wrong, so he had no praise for what was well done, or gratitude for many signal successes. He was, in truth, hardly ever considered in the matter.

He was a plain, every-day kind of speaker, who never rose above the range either of his audience or his topic; and chose his topic so as to require no strength of persuasion beyond what he possessed. He was clear and distinct enough, without even, in that first essential of business speaking, being distinguished for his excellence above almost any one who is accustomed to state a case or take part in a debate. His diction was on a level with his matter: it had nothing rare, or adorned, or happy; but though plain enough, it was not pure, or more pure than the sources from which he derived it

—the Parliamentary debates, the official dispatches, and the newspapers of the day. If, adopting the middle style, or even the *humile genus dicendi*, he had maintained in his language the standard purity, he would have passed, and justly, for a considerable artist in that kind;—as Swift is always praised for being a model of one style of writing. But it would be very wide, indeed, of the truth to say that the threefold nature of Mr. Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Liverpool, ever presented a model of any thing, except perhaps safe mediocrity: of a pure or correct style, he assuredly was no sample. He "met the question"—when "on his legs" he would take upon himself "to assert, as he had caught the Speaker's eye" that no "influential person" of "his Majesty's actual government," had ever "advocated liberalism," less than "the humble individual who now addressed them," and whose duty it was "to justify the proposed bill." In short, he showed plainly enough that a man might avoid lofty flights, and stick to his native earth, without habitually walking in clean places; and that he who is not bold enough to face the perils of the deep, may hug the shore too close, and make shipwreck upon its inequalities.

In council he was safe if not fertile of expedient. He seldom roused his courage up to bold measures; and was one of the narrow minds whom Lord Wellesley quitted, when he found them resolved neither to make peace nor to wage war with any reasonable chance of success; and whom the prodigious achievements of his illustrious brother, contrary to all probability, and beyond every rational hope, united, with the madness of

Napoleon and the severity of a northern winter, to rescue from the position which their puny councils had so well earned, and so richly deserved. He had not the spirit or the political courage required for great emergencies; yet could he be driven, by the fear of losing office, to patronise the most disgraceful attempt ever made in this country by Royal caprice; and thus encountered the imminent peril of civil war. This is, indeed, the darkest spot in his history; and another is connected with it. He lost his head entirely when the people had defeated a body of the troops at the Queen's funeral; and is understood to have given orders for resorting to extremities—orders to which the cooler courage of the military commanders happily postponed their obedience.

The candour which he ever displayed in debate has been already marked. It was a part of the natural honesty of his character, which power had not corrupted, and no eagerness of Parliamentary warfare could interrupt. His general worth as a man was always acknowledged; and this added very justly to the prevailing good opinion which he enjoyed among his countrymen, almost without distinction of party. It may be gathered from our former observations that we regard this good opinion to have been somewhat overdone; and that justice did not at all sanction the distribution of praise and of blame which the country made between him and his colleagues.

MR. TIERNEY

AMONG the supporters of the Addington ministry, though never a member of it, was one who though far enough from filling a first-rate place among statesmen was still farther from being an inconsiderable person in debate, where he had his own particular line, and in that eminently excelled, Mr. Tierney. He had been bred to the law, was called to the bar, and for a short time frequented the Western circuit, on which he succeeded Mr. Pitt in the office of Recorder, or keeper of the circuit books and funds; a situation filled by the youngest member of the profession on the several circuits each successive year. He soon, however, like his illustrious predecessor, left the hard and dull, and for many years cheerless path, which ends in the highest places in the State, and the most important functions of the Constitution; and devoted himself to the more inviting, but more thorny and even more precarious pursuit of politics; in which merit, if it never fails of earning fame and distinction, very often secures nothing more solid to its possessor; and which has the further disadvantage of leading to power, or to disappointment, according to the conduct of the caprice of others, as much as of the candidate himself. No man more than Mr. Tierney lived to experience the truth of this remark; and no man more constantly advised his younger friends to avoid the fascinations which concealed such snares and led to those rocks. In truth, no one had a better right

to give this warning; for his talents were peculiarly fitted for the contentions of the legal profession, and must have secured him great eminence had he remained at the bar; but they were accompanied with some defects which proved exceedingly injurious to his success as a statesman. He possessed sufficient industry to master any subject, and, until his health failed, to undergo any labour. His understanding was of that plain and solid description which wears well, and is always more at the command of its possessor than the brilliant qualities that dazzle the vulgar. To any extraordinary quickness of apprehension he laid no claim; but he saw with perfect clearness, and if he did not take a very wide range, yet, within his appointed scope, his ideas were strongly formed, and, when he stated them, luminously expressed. Every thing refined he habitually rejected; partly as above his comprehension, partly as beneath his regard; and he was wont to value the efforts of fancy still lower than the feats of subtilty; so that there was something extremely comical in witnessing the contrast of his homely and somewhat literal understanding with the imaginative nature of Erskine, when they chanced to meet in conversation. But if refinement and fancy, when tried upon him apart, met with this indifferent reception, their combination in any thing romantic, especially when it was propounded as a guide of conduct, fared still worse at his hands; and if he ever found such views erected into a test or standard for deciding either on public or on private affairs, he was apt to treat the fabric rather as the work of an unsound mind, than as a structure to be seriously exposed and taken to pieces by argument.

Nevertheless, with all this shunning of fanciful mat-

ter, no one's mind was more accessible to groundless imaginations; provided they entered by one quarter, on which certainly lay his weak side as a politician. A man undeniably of cool personal courage; a debater of as unquestioned boldness and vigour—he was timid in council; always saw the gloomy side of things; could scarcely ever be induced to look at any other aspect; and tormented both himself and others with endless doubts and difficulties, and apprehensions of events barely possible, as if in human affairs, from the crossing of a street to the governing of a kingdom, men were not compelled either to stand stock-still, or to expose themselves to innumerable risks,—acting, of course, only on probabilities, and these often not very high ones. It was a singular thing to observe how complete a change the same individual had undergone in passing from the consultation to the debate. The difference was not greater between Erskine out of Court and in his professional garb. He was firm in the line once taken, against which he had raised a host of objections, and around which he had thrown a cloud of doubts; he was as bold in meeting real enemies as he had been timid in conjuring up imaginary risks; prompt, vigorous, determined, he carried on the debate; and he who in a distant view of it could only descry difficulties and create confusion, when the tug of war approached, and he came to close quarters, displayed an abundance of resources which astonished all who had been harassed with his hesitation, or confounded by his perplexities, or vexed with his apprehensions: He was now found to have no eyes but for the adversary whom his whole soul was bent upon meeting; nor any circumspection

but for the possibility of a reply which he was resolved to cut off.

It is probable, however, that this defect in his character as a politician had greatly increased as he grew older. In early times he was among the more forward of the Reformers. When he quitted the bar he offered himself as candidate for several vacant seats and was unsuccessful. He attended the debates at the East India House as a proprietor; and took an active part in them. He was an assiduous member of the 'Society of Friends of the People,' and drew up the much and justly celebrated petition in which that usefulbody laid before the House of Commons all the more striking particulars of its defective title to the office of representing the people, which that House then, as now, but with far less reason, assumed. He contested the borough of Southwark more than once, and was seated ultimately in 1796, and by a Committee before which he conducted his own case with an ability so striking, that all who witnessed it at once augured most favourably of his prospects in the House, and confessed that his leaving the bar had alone prevented him from filling the highest place among the ornaments of Westminster Hall. In that contest, his acuteness, his plain and homely sense, his power of exposing a sophism, of ridiculing a refinement, shone conspicuous; and his inimitable manner,—a manner above all others suited to his style of speaking and thinking, and singularly calculated to affect a popular audience,—was added to the other qualities which he showed himself possessed of, and by which he won and kept hold of the committee's undivided attention.

His entry into the House of Commons was made at a sufficiently remarkable period of time. The Whig Opposition had just taken the most absurd and inconsistent, as well as most unjustifiable step which ever party or public men resorted to, in order to show the bitterness of their disappointment, to justify their enemies in deducing all their actions from selfish motives, and to lend the doctrine some plausibility, which the enemies of all party connexion hold, when they deny its use and regard it as a mere association for interested purposes, not dictated by any public principle, but dressing itself falsely and fraudulently in that decent garb. They had retired or seceded from their attendance in Parliament, upon the very grounds which should have chained them faster to their seats; namely, that the Government was ruining the interests and trampling upon the liberties of the country; and that the people were not sufficiently alive to the situation of their affairs. If any thing could add to the folly as well as impropriety of this measure, it was the incompleteness of the secession; for instead of leaving Parliament, and thus enabling the people to choose more faithful guardians of their interests, those men all retained their seats, kept fast hold of their personal privileges, and preserved the option of returning upon any fitting or temporary occasion, to the places which they left empty but open. The Irish Parliament afforded, upon this occasion, one of the two instances of its superiority to our own, which the whole history of that bad and corrupt assembly presents.* The Oppo-

* The other was on the Regency, 1788–9.

sition there, with Mr. Grattan at its head, vacated their seats and remained out of Parliament for some years. Strange that the place where political purity was the most rare,—where true patriotism was ever at its lowest ebb,—where the whole machinery of corruption, all that men call jobbing and factious, was proverbially hereditary and constitutional,—and where it has always been so usual to expect as little correctness of reasoning as consistency and purity of conduct,—an example should have been afforded of just and rational conduct, and self-denial, upon the point of jobbing itself, which the patriots of England were neither wise enough nor disinterested enough to follow! This phenomenon, otherwise hard to be explained, is accounted for by the character of the illustrious man whom we have named as leader of the Irish Whigs.

The absence of the regular chiefs of the Opposition and their followers from Parliament gave Mr. Tierney a ready opening to distinction upon his entering the House of Commons;—an opening of which far less sagacity and resources than he possessed might have taken advantage. He became at once, and from the necessity of the case, in some sort the leader of Opposition. The subject to which he mainly directed himself was the financial department, but without at all confining his exertions to questions of this description. The clearness of his understanding, however, and his business-like habits, gave him a peculiar advantage upon such matters; and he retained his hold over it, and, as it were, an almost exclusive possession of it during the whole of his Parliamentary life. It seems strange to look back upon the hands out of which he took this

branch of Opposition business. Mr. Sheridan was the person to whom he succeeded, and who really may be admitted to have been, in every respect, as moderately qualified for performing it as any one of his great abilities could well be. But it must not be supposed that the secession of the regular party left all finance questions, or all questions of any kind, in the hands of him whom they considered as an officious unwelcome substitute, and affected to look down upon as an indifferent makeshift in the hands of the Ministers, ever ready to catch at any semblance of a regular opposing party, for the convenience which it affords in conducting the public business. When the Irish Rebellion, and still more when the Union, and soon after the failure of the Dutch Expedition seemed to afford a chance of "doing something," they came down and joined in the debate. To Mr. Tierney was left the wearisome and painful but not unimportant duty of watching daily the proceedings of the Government, and of the House in which it now ruled with an absolute sway. Whatever was most irksome and laborious, most thankless and obscure in the drudgery of daily attendance, and the discomfiture of small divisions, fell to his share. It was only when the reward of such toils and vexations appeared in view, upon some great occasion presenting itself for assaulting a Minister invincible in Parliament, but defeated with discredit in his schemes, and assailing him with the support of the country as well as of fortune, that Mr. Tierney was quickly nor yet very gently put on one side, to make way for the greater men who had been engaged in any pursuit rather than that of their country's favour, and doing any service but that which

they owed to their constituents. With what front they could have offered themselves again to those constituents had a general election befallen them before some change had happened in their policy, it would be difficult to conjecture. But fortunately for them as for the country, the administration of Mr. Addington afforded a fair opportunity, perhaps a pretext, of which they were desirous, for resuming their attendance in Parliament; and no one has ever since, in a tone more audible than a whisper, ventured to mention the experiment of secession, as among the ways and means for bettering the condition of a party. It must, however, be added, that when the Election of 1802 came, the people, by shewing an entire forgetfulness of the greatest violation of public duty ever committed by their representatives, and never once mentioning the secession on any one occasion, exhibited an inconstancy and neglect of their own best interests, truly painful to those who deem them not only the object, but the origin of all political power; and who, moreover, hold it to be impossible that any power bestowed upon men can be well or safely executed without a continuance of wholesome popular control. The comfort which we now have under this unpleasant recollection, is derived from an assurance that such never could be the case in the present times. No man, or class of men, dare now leave their Parliamentary post, without at the same time throwing up their delegated trust; and whoever should attempt to repeat the game of 1797 in our times, would find the doors of Parliament closed against him, should he be rash enough again to seek admission through any place having a real body of electors.

In the times of which we have been speaking, Mr. Tierney was one of those Whigs who, partly through hostility to Mr. Pitt, and partly from a sincere gratitude for the peace abroad, and the mild and constitutional government at home, obtained for the country by Mr. Addington, first supported, and afterwards formally joined that Minister, upon his rupture with his patron and predecessor. It was unfortunate that Mr. Tierney should have taken office almost on the eve of his new leader committing as great an error, and as fatal as ever could be imputed to his warlike adversary. Mr. Addington having been joined by Mr. Tierney late in 1802, plunged the country, early in 1803, again into war; for reasons, which, if they had any force, should have prevented him from making peace the year before; and even if Napoleon was desirous of breaking the treaty, care was taken by the manner of the quarrel which we fastened upon him, to give him every appearance, in the eyes of the world, of having been reluctantly forced into a renewal of hostilities.

The removal of Mr. Tierney from the Opposition to the Ministerial benches was not attended with any increase either of his weight in the country, or of his powers in debate. No man certainly had a right to charge him with any violation of party duty; for he had never been connected with the regular Whig Opposition, and had been treated upon all occasions with little respect by their leaders. Yet in his opinions he agreed with them; they had always professed the same principles upon those great questions, whether of foreign or domestic policy, which divided public men; and he was now in office with statesmen who only differed from

those whom he had always opposed, in the inferiority of their capacity—in having done their patrons' bidding by restoring peace and the Constitution, both of which he had suspended,—and in refusing to go out and let him in again when that turn was served. There was little ground then for drawing any distinction between the two classes of Pittites; upon principle none; only a personal difference divided them; and to that difference Mr. Tierney was wholly a stranger, until he chose to take a part in it by taking office upon it. But, as has often happened to men who thus place themselves in what our French neighbours term "a false position," his weight in the House was not more remarkably lessened than his gift of debating was impaired. He never seemed to be thoroughly possessed of himself, or to feel at home, after taking his seat on the Treasury Bench, among the Jenkinsons, the Bragges, the Yorkes, the Percevals, and the other supporters of Mr. Addington's somewhat feeble, though certainly very useful, administration. It was drolly said of the latter—in reference to the rather useless acquisition which he appeared to have made—that he resembled the worthy but not very acute Lord who bought Punch. Upon more than one occasion, words of a graver character were heard from the great master of sarcasm to convey the same idea. When, in an attempt to defend the naval administration of the Government against Mr. Pitt's unmeasured attacks, their new champion, with signal infelicity, adventured upon some personal jeers*

* If we mention the nature of these attempts, it must be after a very distinct and peremptory protest against being understood to give them as samples of the humour, and indeed wit, in which Mr. Tierney

at their assailant's expense, the latter remarked in very good humour, "That he had not found him quite so formidable an antagonist in his novel situation, though he nowise questioned his capacity for Ministerial exertions, and should wait until his infant aptitudes had expanded to their destined fulness." The overthrow of the Addington Ministry soon restored Mr. Tierney to the ranks of opposition; and his union with the Whigs afterwards became so complete, that he acted for some years after the death of Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Ponsonby as their real leader in the Commons; and during one session was installed formally as their chief.

The instances to which we have just adverted, may truly be said to be the only failures in Mr. Tierney's whole parliamentary career. For he was one of the surest and most equal speakers that ever mingled in debate; and his style of speaking was very enviable in this particular. It seemed so easy and so natural to the man as to be always completely at his command; depending

peculiarly excelled—for they were exceptions to it, and were his only failures. He spoke of Mr. Pitt's motion as "smelling of a contract" —and even called him "The Right Hon. Shipwright"—in allusion to his proposal to build men-of-war in the Merchants' Yards. On one occasion he fell by a less illustrious hand, but yet the hand of a wit. When alluding to the difficulties the Foxites and Pittites had of passing over to join each other in attacking the Addington Ministry, Mr. Tierney (forgetting at the moment how easily he had himself overcome a like difficulty in joining that Ministry) alluded to the puzzle of the Fox and the Goose, and did not clearly expound his idea. Whereupon Mr. Dudley North said:—"It's himself he means—who left the Fox to go over to the Goose, and put the bag of oats in his pocket." His failures are told in three lines; but a volume would not hold the successful efforts of his drollery both in debate and in society.

on no happy and almost involuntary flights of fancy, or moods of mind, or any of the other incidents that affect and limit the inspirations of genius;—hardly even upon fire caught from an adversary's speech, or an accident in the debate, and which is wont to kindle the eloquence of the greater orators. Whoever heard him upon any occasion, had the impression that such he would be upon all; and that whenever he chose it, he could make as good a speech, and of the same kind. 'Nor was that excellence small, or that description of oratory contemptible. It was very effective at all times; at some times of great force indeed. His power of plain and lucid statement was not easily to be surpassed; and this served him in special stead upon questions of finance and trade, which he so often handled. His reasoning was equally plain and distinct. He was as argumentative a speaker as any one could be who set so little value upon subtilty of all sorts; and who always greatly preferred the shorter roads towards a conclusion, to laboured ratiocination, and quick retorts suggested by the course of the discussion, to anything elaborate or long. In these retorts, whether of allusion, or repartee, or personal attack, his excellence was very great. When occasion required it, he could rise into a strain of effective and striking declamation; and although never attempting any flight of a lofty kind, yet he never once failed to reach whatever he aimed at. His wit, or his humour, or his drollery, it would be very difficult to describe—nor easy to say how it should be classed. Perhaps, of the three words we have used, in order to be sure of comprehending or hitting it, the second is the most appropriate. He had the great re-

qüisites of a powerful debater,—quickness in taking his ground and boldness in holding it; and could instantly perceive an enemy's weakness and his own course to take advantage of it. But we now speak of him when on his legs; for the defect in his character, of which we before made mention, followed him into the House of Commons, and he was wanting in decision and vigour there also, until he rose, when a new man seemed to stand before you.

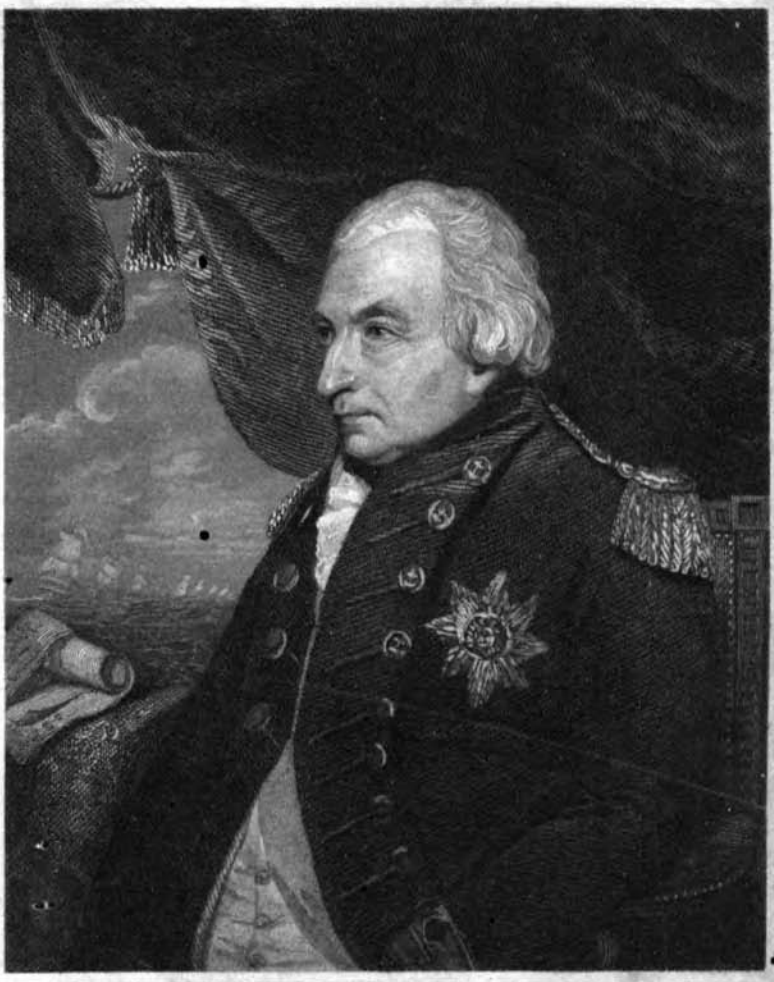
It remains to be said, that no man's private character stood higher in all respects; and, beside the most amiable domestic affections, he showed a very touching patience, and even cheerfulness, in sustaining the distressing attacks of the illness under which he laboured for many of the latter years of his life. He was of strictly religious habits, although without anything of either austerity or fanaticism; and is said to have left some devotional compositions, which prove how deeply impressed his mind was by the feelings connected with the most important of all subjects. It must not be forgotten, in speaking of Mr. Tierney's adherence to the liberal party, during their long and all but hopeless exclusion from office, that he was neither sustained in his independent and honest course by any enthusiasm or fervour of character, nor placed in circumstances which made the emoluments of place indifferent to the comforts of his life. A person of his very moderate fortune, and plain, practical, even somewhat cold habits of thinking, upon questions which warm so many minds into the glow of romantic patriotism, has double merit in perseveringly discharging his public duties, and turning a deaf ear to all the allurements of power.

LORD ST. VINCENT—LORD NELSON.

As it is difficult to find a more correct representation of the Addington ministry than the noble person of whom we have recently been speaking,* so the popularity of that government was, like his, very much owing to the moderation of both its talents and its principles. After the somewhat violent and overbearing, as well as warlike and arbitrary administration of Mr. Pitt, they who both made peace with France, composed the internal dissensions of the country, and restored its free constitution, presented at the same time to its confidence only second-rate genius in every department save two; —a genius diluted and lowered to the moderate standard which suits the public taste. These two exceptions were the Law and the Navy. Of Lord Eldon we have already spoken; the present sketches would be imperfect if Lord St. Vincent were passed over in silence; for he was almost as distinguished among the statesmen as the warriors of his age.

This great captain, indeed, presented a union as rare as it was admirable, of the brightest qualities which can adorn both civil and military life. He early distinguished himself in the naval profession; and was associated with Wolfe in those operations against Quebec, which crowned our arms with imperishable glory, and loaded our policy with a burden not yet shaken off, though, as Lord St. Vincent early foresaw,

* Lord Liverpool.



Engraved by H. Wallis

LORD Sᵀ VINCENT.

From a Print by Barnard after a
Picture by Keenan

becoming every day more difficult to bear. An action which he soon after fought with the *Foudroyant* line-of-battle ship, was the most extraordinary display of both valour and skill witnessed in that war, so fertile in great exploits; and it at once raised his renown to the highest pitch. The peace then came; and it was succeeded by a war, the only one in which the fleets of England reaped no laurels; until just before its close the bravery and seamanship of Rodney retrieved our naval honour. For near twenty years Sir John Jervis was thus unemployed; and in part this neglect must certainly be ascribed to the side in politics which he took,—being a Whig of Lord Shelburne's school,—highly prized and unreservedly trusted by that able, sagacious, and consistent statesman; than whom none ever entered into the combats of public life with an ampler provision of combined capacity and information, and none ever sustained the useful part which he acted, with more unsullied honour. This tribute to truth and justice is due from Whigs to one whom it suited the policy of 1783 to run down by every species of slander, partly in the prose of pamphlets, partly in the verse of pasquinades, partly in the mixed fiction and prose of speeches,—merely because, not belonging to the party, he was audacious enough to act for himself, instead of making himself a tool of those who boasted that they never had confided in him, at the moment they were complaining of his deserting their councils.

While Sir John Jervis remained during this long and eventful period on shore, and unemployed in any branch of the public service, he accomplished himself by constant reading, by much reflection, by the inter-

course in which he ever delighted with men of learning and talents, as a statesman of profound views, and of penetration hardly equalled by any other man of his time. His natural acuteness no obstacle could impede; his shrewdness was never to be lulled asleep; his sagacity no man ever found at fault; while his provident anticipations of future events seemed often beyond the reach of human penetration. We shall give a remarkable example of this in a matter of deep interest at the present moment. When Lord Shelburne's peace (1783) was signed, and before the terms were made public, he sent for the Admiral, and, showing them, asked his opinion. "I like them very well," said he, "but there is a great omission." "In what?" "In leaving Canada as a British province." "How could we possibly give it up?" inquired Lord Shelburne. "How can you hope to keep it?" replied the veteran warrior. "With an English republic just established in the sight of Canada, and with a population of a handful of English settled among a body of hereditary Frenchmen.—It is impossible; and rely on it you only retain a running sore, the source of endless disquiet and expense." "Would the country bear it? Have you forgotten Wolfe and Quebec?" asked his Lordship. "Forgotten Wolfe and Quebec? No; it is because I remember both. I served with Wolfe at Quebec; having lived so long I have had full time for reflection on this matter; and my clear opinion is, that if this fair occasion for giving up Canada is neglected, nothing but difficulty, in either keeping or resigning it, will ever after be known." We give the substance of this remarkable conversation as we have it from more sources

of information than one; and the recollection of the parties is confirmed by the tone of the Earl's letters in 1813, which we have seen. There was then no question of a surrender; but he plainly shows the greatest distrust of our being suffered to retain the colony.

When the war broke out in 1793, Admiral Jervis was soon employed on the Mediterranean and Lisbon stations. What wonders he effected with an inadequate force are well known to the profession. All the world is aware of his glorious victory over the Spanish fleet in February 1797, when he defeated an enemy of nearly three times his force. Nor is there any one who has not heard of the steady determination of purpose, so characteristic of the man, by which his fleet was made ready to sail from the Tagus in as many hours as all but himself said days would be required for the preparation, after overland advices had arrived at Lisbon of the enemy having put to sea. But the consummate vigour and wisdom of his proceedings during the dreadful period of the Mutiny are no less a theme of wonder and of praise. It was the practice to dispatch mutinous vessels to serve under his orders, and he soon, by his masterly operations of combined mercy and justice, reduced them to order, restoring discipline by such examples as should be most striking, without being more numerous than absolute necessity required. The humane ingenuity of his contrivance, to make one execution produce the effect of many, by ordering it on an unusual day (Sunday morning) is well known. His prompt measures of needful, and no more than the needful severity, were as effectual to quell a formidable mutiny which broke out in the fleet that had just returned from

foreign service, and was suddenly ordered to the West Indies to watch the French expedition there. The revolt was at once subdued; the fleet set sail; and there never again was heard the whisper of discontent respecting the painful disappointment to which the men were thus subjected.

When the Addington ministry was formed, he was placed at the head of the Admiralty; and now shone forth in all its lustre that great capacity for affairs with which he was endued by nature, and which ample experience of men, habits of command, and an extended life of deep reflection had matured. He laid the foundation of a system of economical administration which has since been extended from the navy to all the departments of the state. But it was bottomed on a searching scrutiny into the abuses of the existing system. The celebrated "Commission of Naval Inquiry" was his own work, and it both led to numberless discoveries of abuse and extravagance, and gave the example to all the similar inquiries which soon after followed. It did more: it introduced the whole subject of Economical Reform, and made it become, both in and out of Parliament, the principal object for many years of all our patriotic statesmen;—an object which alone they carried through in spite of those ministerial majorities, omnipotent upon every other controversy among the parties in Parliament. It is impossible to calculate what would have been the saving effected to the revenues of this country had Lord St. Vincent presided over any great department of national affairs from the beginning of the war, instead of coming to our assistance after its close. But in proportion to his services

in this line of reformation, was the clamour which his operations excited against him. His unsparing rigour, his inflexible justice, his fixed determination to expose delinquents how high soever—to dispense with useless services, how many hands soever might be flung out of the superfluous and costly employment,—raised against this great and honest statesman a host of enemies, numerous in exact proportion to the magnitude of the objects he had in view, and exasperated in proportion to the unjust gains of which he was depriving them: in other words, the hostility to which he was exposed was in an exact proportion to his merits. Nor did the gratitude of the country, whom his courage and disinterestedness was thus serving so essentially, at all keep pace with the great benefits which he bestowed. The spirit of party interposed with its baleful influence; and when the Pitt and the Fox parties combined to forget their animosities, for the purpose of unseating Mr. Addington, the ground chosen by the new allies upon which to celebrate their union, and to commence their joint operations, was an attack upon the naval administration of the only great man whom the ministers could boast of having among their number;—the illustrious warrior who, after defeating the enemies of his country by his arms, had waged a yet more successful war against her internal foes by his vigour as a reformer, his irreconcilable enmity to all abuses, and his resistless energy in putting them down.

It is hardly necessary to add, that of eloquence, or debating power, Lord St. Vincent had nothing whatever; nor to such accomplishments did he lay any claim. Indeed he held the arts of rhetoric in supreme

contempt; always contenting himself with delivering his own opinion when required, in the plainest language—and often expressing what he felt in sufficiently unceremonious terms. Not that he had anything at all of the roughness often found in the members of the naval profession. On the contrary, his manners were those of a highly polished gentleman; and no man had more of the finished courtier in all his outward appearance and demeanour. His extreme courtesy, his admirable address in managing men, the delicacy with which he could convey his pleasure to inferiors, or his dissent to equals, or his remonstrance to superiors, being the external covering of as firm a determination as ever guided a human being, were truly remarkable; and gained for him with persons of superficial observation, or imperfectly acquainted with his character, the reputation of being cunning and insincere; when, in truth, it only arose from a good-natured desire of giving as little needless uneasiness as possible, and raising as few difficulties as he could upon matters foreign to his main purpose. When he went to the Tagus at the head of the expedition and the commission in 1806, the object being, in case Portugal proved indefensible against the threatened French invasion, to make the royal family and principal nobility transfer the seat of government to the Brazils, the proceedings of this Chief, in his twofold capacity of captain and statesman, were justly remarked for the great talents and address which they exhibited. He began by cutting off all communication between his fleet and the land; this he effected by proclaiming an eight days' quarantine. His colleagues in the Commission having joined him, he still prevented