

## PREFACE.

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I AM no politician, and still less can I be said to be a party-man : but I have a hatred of tyranny, and a contempt for its tools ; and this feeling I have expressed as often and as strongly as I could. I cannot sit quietly down under the claims of barefaced power, and I have tried to expose the little arts of sophistry by which they are defended. I have no mind to have my person made a property of, nor my understanding made a dupe of. I deny that liberty and slavery are convertible terms, that right and wrong, truth and falsehood, plenty and famine, the comforts or wretchedness of a people, are matters of perfect indifference. That is all I know of the matter ; but on these points I am likely to remain incorrigible, in spite of any arguments that I have seen used to the contrary. It needs no sagacity to discover that two and two make four ; but to persist in maintaining this obvious position, if all the fashion, authority, hypocrisy, and venality of mankind were arrayed against it, would require a considerable effort of personal courage, and would soon leave a man in a

very formidable minority. Again, I am no believer in the doctrine of *divine right*, either as it regards the Stuarts or the Bourbons; nor can I bring myself to approve of the enormous waste of blood and treasure wilfully incurred by a family that supplanted the one in this country to restore the others in France. It is to my mind a piece of sheer impudence. The question between natural liberty and hereditary slavery, whether men are born free or slaves, whether kings are the servants of the people, or the people the property of kings (whatever we may think of it in the abstract, or debate about it in the schools)—in this country, in Old England, and under the succession of the House of Hanover, is not a question of theory, but has been long since decided by certain facts and feelings, to call which in question would be equally inconsistent with proper respect to the people, or common decency towards the throne. An English subject cannot call this principle in question without renouncing his country; an English prince cannot call it in question without disclaiming his title to the crown, which was placed by our ancestors on the head of his ancestors, on no other ground and for no other possible purpose than to vindicate this sacred principle in their own persons, and to hold it out as an example to posterity and to the world. An Elector of Hanover, called over here to be made king of England, in contempt and to the exclusion of the claims of the old, hereditary possessors and pretenders to the throne, on any other plea except that of his

being the chosen representative and appointed guardian of the rights and liberties of the people (the consequent pledge and guarantee of the rights and liberties of other nations) would indeed be a solecism more absurd and contemptible than any to be found in history. What! Send for a petty Elector of a petty foreign state to reign over us from respect to *his* right to the throne of these realms, in defiance of the legitimate heir to the crown, and "in contempt of the choice of the people!" Oh monstrous fiction! Miss Flora Mac Ivor would not have heard of such a thing: the author of *Waverley* has well answered Mr. Burke's "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs."\*

\* Mr. Burke pretends in this Jesuitical Appeal, that a nation has a right to insist upon and revert to old establishments and prescriptive privileges, but not to lay claim to new ones; in a word, to change its governors, if refractory, but not its form of government, however bad. Thus he says we had a right to cashier James II., because he wished to alter the laws and religion as they were then established. By what right did we emancipate ourselves from popery and arbitrary power a century before? He defends his consistency in advocating the American Revolution, though the rebels, in getting rid of the reigning branch of the Royal Family, did not send for the next of kin to rule over them "in contempt of their choice," but prevented all such equivocations by passing at once from a viceroyalty to a republic. He also extols the Polish Revolution as a monument of wisdom and virtue (I suppose because it had not succeeded), though this also was a total and absolute change in the frame and principles of the government, to which the people were in this case bound by no feudal tenure or divine right. But he insists that the French Revolution was stark-naught, because the people here did the same thing, passed from slavery to liberty, from an arbitrary to a constitutional government, to which they had, it seems, no prescriptive right, and therefore, according to the appellant, no right at all. Oh

Let not our respect for our ancestors, who fought and bled for their own freedom, and to aid (not to stifle) the cause of freedom in other nations, suffer us to believe this poor idiot calumny of them. Let not our shame at having been inveigled into crusades and Holy Alliances against the freedom of mankind, suffer us to be made the dupes of it ourselves, in thought, in word, or deed. The question of genuine liberty or of naked slavery, if put in words, should be answered by Englishmen with scorn: if put in any other shape than words, it must be answered in a different way, unless they would lose the name of Englishmen! An Englishman has no distinguishing virtue but honesty: he has and can have no privilege or advantage over other nations but liberty. If he is not free, he is the worst of slaves, for he is nothing else. If he feels that he has wrongs and dare not say so, he is the meanest of hypocrites; for it is certain that he cannot be contented under them.—This was once a free, a proud, and happy country, when under a constitutional monarchy and a Whig king, it had just broken the chains of tyranny that were prepared for it, and successfully set at defiance the menaces

nice professor of humanity! We had a right to turn off James II. because he broke a compact with the people. The French had no right to turn off Louis XVI. because he broke no compact with them, for he had none to break; in other words, because he was an arbitrary despot, tied to no laws, and they a herd of slaves, and therefore they were bound, by every law divine and human, always to remain so, in perpetuity and by the grace of God! Oh unanswerable logician!

of an hereditary pretender ; when the monarch still felt what he owed to himself and the people, and in the opposite claims which were set up to it, saw the real tenure on which he held his crown ; when civil and religious liberty were the watch-words by which good men and true subjects were known to one another, not by the cant of legitimacy ; when the reigning sovereign stood between you and the polluted touch of a bigot and a despot who stood ready to seize upon you and yours as his lawful prey ; when liberty and loyalty went hand in hand, and the Tory principles of passive obedience and non-resistance were more unfashionable at court than in the country ; when to uphold the authority of the throne, it was not thought necessary to undermine the privileges or break the spirit of the nation ; when an Englishman felt that his name was another name for independence, “ the envy of less happier lands,” when it was his pride to be born, and his wish that other nations might become free ; before a sophist and an apostate had dared to tell him that he had no share, no merit, no free agency, in the glorious Revolution of 1688, and that he was bound to lend a helping hand to crush all others, that implied a right in the people to chuse their own form of government ; before he was become sworn brother to the Pope, familiar to the Holy Inquisition, an encourager of the massacres of his Protestant brethren, a patron of the Bourbons, and jailor to the liberties of mankind ! Ah, John Bull ! John Bull ! thou art not what thou wert in the days of thy

friend, Arbuthnot! Thou wert an honest fellow then: now thou art turned bully and coward.

This is the only politics I know; the only patriotism I feel. The question with me is, whether I and all mankind are born slaves or free. That is the one thing necessary to know and to make good: the rest is *flocchi, nauci, nihili, pili*. Secure this point, and all is safe: lose this, and all is lost. There are people who cannot understand a principle; nor perceive how a cause can be connected with an individual, even in spite of himself, nor how the salvation of mankind can be bound up with the success of one man. It is in vain that I address to them what follows.—“One fate attends the altar and the throne.” So sings Mr. Southey. I say, that one fate attends the people and the assertor of the people’s rights against those who say they have no rights, that they are their property, their goods, their chattels, the live-stock on the estate of Legitimacy. This is what kings at present tell us with their swords, and poets with their pens. He who tells me this deprives me not only of the right, but of the very heart and will to be free, takes the breath out of the body of liberty, and leaves it a dead and helpless corse, destroys “at one fell swoop” the dearest hopes, and blasts the fairest prospects of mankind through all ages and nations, sanctifies slavery, binds it as a spell on the understanding, and makes freedom a mockery, and the name a by-word. The poor wretch immured in the dungeons of the Inquisition may breathe a sigh to liberty, may

repeat its name, may think of it as a blessing, if not to himself, to others; but the wretch imprisoned in the dungeon of Legitimacy, the very tomb of freedom, that "painted sepulchre, white without, but full of ravening and all uncleanness within," must not even think of it, must not so much as dream of it, but as a thing forbid: it is a profanation to his lips, an impiety to his thoughts; his very imagination is enthralled, and he can only look forward to the never-ending flight of future years, and see the same gloomy prospect of abject wretchedness and hopeless desolation spread out for himself and his species. They who bow to thrones and hate mankind may here feast their eyes with blight, mildew, the blue pestilence and glittering poison of slavery, "bogs, dens, and shades of death—a universe of death." This is that true moral atheism, the equal blasphemy against God and man, the sin against the Holy Ghost, that lowest deep of debasement and despair to which there is no lower deep. He who saves me from this conclusion, who makes a mock of this doctrine, and sets at nought its power, is to me not less than the God of my idolatry, for he has left one drop of comfort in my soul. The plague-spot has not tainted me quite; I am not leprous all over, the lie of Legitimacy does not fix its mortal sting in my inmost soul, nor, like an ugly spider, entangle me in its slimy folds; but is kept off from me, and broods on its own poison. He who did this for me, and for the rest of the world, and who alone could do it, was Buonaparte. He

withstood the inroads of this new Jaggernaut, this foul Blatant Beast, as it strode forward to its prey over the bodies and minds of a whole people, and put a ring in its nostrils, breathing flame and blood, and led it in triumph, and played with its crowns and sceptres, and wore them in its stead, and tamed its crested pride, and made it a laughing-stock and a mockery to the nations. He, one man, did this, and as long as he did this, (how, or for what end, is nothing to the magnitude of this mighty question) he saved the human race from the last ignominy, and that foul stain that had so long been intended, and was at last, in an evil hour and by evil hands, inflicted on it. He put his foot upon the neck of kings, who would have put their yoke upon the necks of the people: he scattered before him with fiery execution, millions of hired slaves, who came at the bidding of their masters to deny the right of others to be free. The monument of greatness and of glory he erected, was raised on ground forfeited again and again to humanity—it reared its majestic front on the ruins of the shattered hopes and broken faith of the common enemies of mankind. If he could not secure the freedom, peace, and happiness of his country, he made her a terror to those who by sowing civil dissension and exciting foreign wars, would not let her enjoy those blessings. They who had trampled upon Liberty could not at least triumph in her shame and her despair, but themselves became objects of pity and derision. Their determination to persist in extremity of wrong only



brought on themselves repeated defeat, disaster, and dismay : the accumulated aggressions their infuriated pride and disappointed malice meditated against others, returned in just and aggravated punishment upon themselves : they heaped coals of fire upon their own heads ; they drank deep and long, in gall and bitterness, of the poisoned chalice they had prepared for others : the destruction with which they had threatened a people daring to call itself free, hung suspended over their heads, like a precipice, ready to fall upon and crush them. "Awhile they stood abashed," abstracted from their evil purposes, and felt how awful freedom is, its power how dreadful. Shrunken from the boasted pomp of royal state into their littleness as men, defeated of their revenge, balked of their prey, their schemes stripped of their bloated pride, and with nothing left but the deformity of their malice, not daring to utter a syllable or move a finger, the lords of the earth, who had looked upon men as of an inferior species, born for their use, and devoted to be their slaves, turned an imploring eye to the people, and with coward hearts and hollow tongues invoked the name of Liberty, thus to get the people once more within their unhallowed gripe, and to stifle the name of Liberty for ever. I never joined the vile and treacherous cry of spurious humanity in favour of those who have from the beginning of time, and will to the end of it, make a butt of humanity, and its distresses their sport. I knew that shameful was this new alliance between kings and people ; fatal this pretended

league: that "never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep." I was right in this respect. I knew my friends from my foes. So did Lord Castlereagh: so did not Benjamin Constant. Did any of the Princes of Europe ever regard Buonaparte as any thing more than the child and champion of Jacobinism? Why then should I: for on that point I bow to their judgments as infallible. Passion speaks truer than reason. If Buonaparte was a conqueror, he conquered the grand conspiracy of kings against the abstract right of the human race to be free; and I, as a man, could not be indifferent which side to take. If he was ambitious, his greatness was not founded on the unconditional, avowed surrender of the rights of human nature. But with him, the state of man rose exalted too. If he was arbitrary and a tyrant, first, France as a country was in a state of military blockade, on garrison-duty, and not to be defended by mere paper bullets of the brain; secondly, but chief, he was not, nor he could not become, a tyrant by right divine. Tyranny in him was not sacred: it was not eternal: it was not instinctively bound in league of amity with other tyrannies; it was not sanctioned by all the laws of religion and morality. There was an end of it with the individual: there was an end of it with the temporary causes, which gave it birth, and of which it was only the too necessary reaction. But there are persons of that low and inordinate appetite for servility, that they cannot be satisfied with any thing

short of that sort of tyranny that has lasted for ever, and is likely to last for ever; that is strengthened and made desperate by the superstitions and prejudices of ages; that is enshrined in traditions, in laws, in usages, in the outward symbols of power, in the very idioms of language; that has struck its roots into the human heart, and clung round the human understanding like a nightshade; that overawes the imagination, and disarms the will to resist it, by the very enormity of the evil; that is cemented with gold and blood; guarded by reverence, guarded by power; linked in endless succession to the principle by which life is transmitted to the generations of tyrants and slaves, and destroying liberty with the first breath of life; that is absolute, unceasing, unerring, fatal, unutterable, abominable, monstrous. These true devotees of superstition and despotism cried out Liberty and Humanity in their desperate phrenzy at Buonaparte's sudden elevation and incredible successes against their favourite idol, "that Harlot old, the same that is, that was, and is to be," but we have heard no more of their triumph of Liberty and their *douce humanité*, since they clapped down the hatches upon us again, like wretches in a slave-ship who have had their chains struck off and pardon promised them to fight the common enemy; and the poor Reformers who were taken in to join the cry, because they are as fastidious in their love of liberty as their opponents are inveterate in their devotion to despotism, continue in vain to reproach them with their

temporary professions, woeful grimaces, and vows made in pain, which ease has recanted; but to these reproaches the legitimate professors of Liberty and Humanity do not even deign to return the answer of a smile at their credulity and folly. Those who did not see this result at the time were, I think, weak; those who do not acknowledge it now are, I am sure, hypocrites.—To this pass have we been brought by the joint endeavours of Tories, Whigs, and Reformers; and as they have all had a hand in it, I shall here endeavour to ascribe to each their share of merit in this goodly piece of work. It is, perhaps, a delicate point, but it is of no inconsiderable importance, that the friends of Freedom should know the strength of their enemies, and their own weakness as well; for

——— “ At this day,  
 When a Tartarean darkness overspreads  
 The groaning nations; when the impious rule,  
 By will or by established ordinance,  
 Their own dire agents, and constrain the good  
 To acts which they abhor; though I bewail  
 This triumph, yet the pity of my heart  
 Prevents me not from owning that the law  
 By which mankind now suffers, is most just.  
 For by superior energies; more strict  
 Affiance to each other; faith more firm  
 In their unhallowed principles; the bad  
 Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,  
 The vacillating, inconsistent good.”

A Reformer is not a gregarious animal. Speculative opinion leads men different ways, each according

to his particular fancy :—it is prejudice or interest that drives before it the herd of mankind. That *which is*, with all its confirmed abuses and “ tickling commodities,” is alone solid and certain : that *which may be or ought to be*, has a thousand shapes and colours, according to the eye that sees it, is infinitely variable and evanescent in its effects. Talk of mobs as we will, the only true mob is that incorrigible mass of knaves and fools in every country, who never think at all, and who never feel for any one but themselves. I call any assembly of people a mob (be it the House of Lords or House of Commons) where each person’s opinion on any question is governed by what others say of it, and by what he can get by it. The only instance of successful resistance in the House of Commons to Ministers for many years was in the case of the Income-Tax ; which touched their own pockets nearly. This was “ a feeling disputation,” in which selfishness got the better of servility, while reason and humanity might have pleaded in vain. The exception proved the rule ; and this evidence was alone wanting to establish their character for independence and disinterestedness. When some years ago Mr. Robson brought forward in the House the case of an Exchequer Bill for 3*l.* 16*s.* which had been refused payment at the Bank, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (then Mr. Addington, now Lord Sidmouth) rose, and in a tone of indignation, severely reprimanded Mr. Robson for having prematurely brought forward a fact which he knew to be

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impossible; and the House cheered the Minister, and scouted Mr. Robson and his motion for inquiry. The next day, Mr. Robson repeated his charge, and Mr. Addington rose, and in the same tone of official authority, brow-beat Mr. Robson for having brought forward, as something reprehensible and extraordinary, what he said happened every day, though the day before he had undertaken of his own accord to pronounce it impossible; and the House cheered the Minister, and scouted Mr. Robson and his motion for inquiry. What was it to them whether Mr. Robson was right or wrong? It was their cue (I speak this of the House of Commons of 1803) to support the Minister, whether right or wrong! Every corporate body, or casual concourse of people, is nothing more than a collection of prejudices, and the only arguments current with them, a collection of watch-words. You may ring the changes for ever on the terms Bribery and Corruption with the people in Palace-yard, as they do in the Room over the way on Religion, Loyalty, Public Credit, and Social Order. There is no difference whatever in this respect between the Great Vulgar and the Small, who are managed just in the same way by their different leaders. To procure unanimity, to get men to act in *corps*, we must appeal for the most part to gross and obvious motives, to authority and passion, to their vices, not their virtues: we must discard plain truth and abstract justice as doubtful and inefficient pleas, retaining only the names and the pretext as a

convenient salvo for hypocrisy! He is the best leader of a party who can find out the greatest number of common-places faced with the public good; and he will be the stoutest partisan who can best turn the lining to account.—Tory sticks to Tory: Whig sticks to Whig: the Reformer sticks neither to himself nor to any body else. It is no wonder he comes to the ground with all his schemes and castle-building. A house divided against itself cannot stand. It is a pity, but it cannot be helped. A Reformer is necessarily and naturally a Marplot, for the foregoing and the following reasons. First, he does not very well know what he would be at. Secondly, if he did, he does not care very much about it. Thirdly, he is governed habitually by a spirit of contradiction, and is always wise beyond what is practicable. He is a bad tool to work with; a part of a machine that never fits its place; he cannot be trained to discipline, for he follows his own idle humours, or drilled into an obedience to orders, for the first principle of his mind is the supremacy of conscience, and the independent right of private judgment. A man to be a Reformer must be more influenced by imagination and reason than by received opinions or sensible impressions. With him ideas bear sway over things; the possible is of more value than the real; that which is not, is better than that which is. He is by the supposition a speculative (and somewhat fantastical) character; but there is no end of possible speculations, of imaginary questions, and nice dis-



tinctions; or if there were, he would not willingly come to it; he would still prefer living in the world of his own ideas, be for raising some new objection, and starting some new chimera, and never be satisfied with any plan that he found he could realise. Bring him to a fixed point, and his occupation would be gone. A Reformer never is—but always to be blest, in the accomplishment of his airy hopes and shifting schemes of progressive perfectibility. Let him have the plaything of his fancy, and he will spoil it, like the child that makes a hole in its drum: set some brilliant illusion before his streaming eyes, and he will lay violent hands upon it, like little wanton boys that play with air-bubbles. Give him one thing, and he asks for another; like the dog in the fable, he loses the substance for the shadow: offer him a great good, and he will not stretch out his hand to take it, unless it were the greatest possible good. And then who is to determine what is the greatest possible good? Among a thousand pragmatistical speculators, there will be a thousand opinions on this subject; and the more they differ, the less will they be inclined to give way or compromise the matter. With each of these, his self-opinion is the first thing to be attended to; his understanding must be satisfied in the first place, or he will not budge an inch; he cannot for the world give up a principle to a party. He would rather have slavery than liberty, unless it is a liberty precisely after his own fashion: he would sooner have the Bourbons than Buonaparte; for he truly is for a

Republic, and if he cannot have that, is indifferent about the rest. So (to compare great things with small) Mr. Place, of Charing-Cross, chose rather that Mr. Hobhouse should lose his Election than that it should not be accompanied with his Resolutions; so he published his Resolutions, and lost Mr. Hobhouse his Election. That is, a patriot of this stamp is really indifferent about every thing but what he cannot have; instead of making his option between two things, a good or an evil, within his reach, our exquisite Sir sets up a third thing as the object of his choice, with some impossible condition annexed to it,—to dream, to talk, to write, to be meddlesome and troublesome about, to serve him for a topic of captious discontent or vague declamation, and which if he saw any hopes of cordial agreement or practical co-operation to carry it into effect, he would instantly contrive to mar, and split it into a thousand fractions, doubts, and scruples, to make it an impossibility for any thing ever to be done for the good of mankind, which is merely the plaything of his theoretical imbecility and active impertinence! The Goddess of his idolatry is and will always remain a cloud, instead of a Juno. One of these virtuosos, these Nicolas Gimcracks of Reform, full of intolerable and vain conceit, sits smiling in the baby-house of his imagination, “pleased with a feather, tickled with a straw,” trimming the balance of power in the looking-glass of his own self-complacency, having every thing his own way at a word’s speaking, making

the "giant-mass" of things only a reflection of his personal pretensions, approving every thing that is right, condemning every thing that is wrong, in compliment to his own character, considering how what he says will affect not the cause, but himself; keeping himself aloof from party-spirit, and from every thing that can cast a shade on the fancied delicacy of his own breast, and thus letting the cause of Liberty slip through his fingers, and be spilt like water on the ground:—while another, more bold than he, in a spirit of envy and ignorance, quarrels with all those who are labouring at the same oar, lays about him like mad, runs a-muck at every one who has done, or is likely to do, any thing to promote the common object, and with his desperate club dashes out his neighbour's brains, and thinks he has done a good piece of service to the cause, because he has glutted his own ill-humour and self-will, which he mistakes for the love of liberty and a zeal for truth! Others, not able to do mischief enough singly, club their senseless contradictions and unmanageable humours together, turn their attention to cabal and chicane, get into committees, make speeches, move or second resolutions, dictate to their followers, set up for the heads of a party, in opposition to another party; abuse, vilify, expose, betray, counteract and undermine each other in every way, and throw the game into the hands of the common enemy, who laughs in his sleeve, and watches them and their little perverse, pettifogging passions at work for him, from the high

tower of his pride and strength! If an honest and able man arises among them, they grow jealous of him, and would rather, in the petty ostracism of their minds, that their cause should fail, than that another should have the credit of bringing it to a triumphant conclusion. They criticise his conduct, carp at his talents, denounce his friends, suspect his motives, and do not rest, till by completely disgusting him with the name of Reform and Reformers, they have made him what they wish, a traitor and deserter from a cause that no man can serve! This is just what they like—they satisfy their malice, they have to find out a new leader, and the cause is to begin again! So it was, and so it will be, while man remains the little, busy, mischievous animal described in Gulliver's Travels!—A pretty hopeful set to make head against their opponents—a rope of sand against a rock of marble—with no centre of gravity, but a collection of atoms whirled about in empty space by their own levity, or jostling together by numberless points of repulsion, and tossed with all their officious projects and airy predictions, by the first breath of caprice or shock of power, into that Limbo of Vanity, where embryo statesmen and drivelling legislators dance the hays of Reform, “perpetual circle, multiform and mix, and hinder all things,” proud of the exclusive purity of their own motives, and the unattainable perfection of their own plans!—How different from the self-centred, well-knit, inseparable phalanx of power and authority opposed to their

impotent and abortive designs! A Tory is one who is governed by sense and habit alone. He considers not what is possible, but what is real; he gives might the preference over right. He cries Long Life to the conqueror, and is ever strong upon the stronger side—the side of corruption and prerogative. He says what others say; he does as he is prompted by his own advantage. He knows on which side his bread is buttered, and that St. Peter is well at Rome. He is for going with Sancho to Camacho's wedding, and not for wandering with Don Quixote in the desert, after the mad lover. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to Reform, but broad is the way that leadeth to Corruption, and multitudes there are that walk therein. The Tory is sure to be in the thickest of them. His principle is to follow the leader; and this is the infallible rule to have numbers and success on your side, to be on the side of success and numbers. Power is the rock of his salvation; priestcraft is the second article of his implicit creed. He does not trouble himself to inquire which is the best form of government—but he knows that the reigning monarch is “the best of kings.” He does not, like a fool, contest for modes of faith; but like a wise man, swears by that which is by law established. He has no principles himself, nor does he profess to have any, but will cut your throat for differing with any of his bigotted dogmas, or for objecting to any act of power that he supposes necessary to his interest. He will take his Bible-oath that

black is white, and that whatever is, is right, if it is for his convenience. He is for having a slice in the loan, a share in a borough, a situation in the church or state, or for standing well with those who have. He is not for empty speculations, but for full pockets. He is for having plenty of beef and pudding, a good coat to his back, a good house over his head, and for cutting a respectable figure in the world. He is *Epicuri de grege porcus*—not a man but a beast. He is styed in his prejudices—he wallows in the mire of his senses—he cannot get beyond the trough of his sordid appetites, whether it is of gold or wood. Truth and falsehood are, to him, something to buy and sell; principle and conscience, something to eat and drink. He tramples on the plea of Humanity, and lives, like a caterpillar, on the decay of public good. Beast as he is, he knows that the King is the fountain of honour, that there are good things to be had in the Church, treats the cloth with respect, bows to a magistrate, lies to the tax-gatherer, nicknames the Reformers, and “blesses the Regent and the Duke of York.” He treads the primrose path of preferment; “when a great wheel goes up a hill, holds fast by it, and when it rolls down, lets it go.” He is not an enthusiast, a Utopian philosopher or a Theophilanthropist, but a man of business and the world, who minds the main chance, does as other people do, and takes his wife’s advice to get on in the world, and set up a coach for her to ride in, as fast as possible. This fellow is in the right, and

“wiser in his generation than the children of the light.” The “servile slaves” of wealth and power have a considerable advantage over the independent and the free. How much easier is it to smell out a job than to hit upon a scheme for the good of mankind! How much safer is it to be the tool of the oppressor than the advocate of the oppressed! How much more fashionable to fall in with the opinion of the world, to bow the knee to Baal, than to seek for obscure and obnoxious truth! How strong are the ties that bind men together for their own advantage, compared with those that bind them to the good of their country or of their kind! For as the Reformer has no guide to his conclusions but speculative reason, which is a source not of unanimity or certainty, but of endless doubt and disagreement, so he has no ground of attachment to them but a speculative interest, which is too often liable to be warped by sinister motives, and is a flimsy barrier against the whole weight of worldly and practical interests opposed to it. He either tires and grows lukewarm after the first gloss of novelty is over, and is thrown into the hands of the adverse party, or to keep alive an interest in it, he makes it the stalking-horse of his ambition, of his personal enmity, of his conceit or love of gossiping; as we have seen. An opinion backed by power and prejudice, rivetted and mortised to the throne, is of more force and validity than all the abstract reason in the world, without power and prejudice. A cause centred in an individual,

which is strengthened by all the ties of passion and self-interest, as in the case of a king against a whole people, is more likely to prevail than that of a scattered multitude, who have only a common and divided interest to hold them together, and "screw their courage to the sticking-place," against an influence, that is never distracted or dissipated; that neither slumbers nor sleeps; that is never lulled into security, nor tamed by adversity; that is intoxicated with the insolence of success, and infuriated with the rage of disappointment; that eyes its one sole object of personal aggrandisement, moves unremittingly to it, and carries after it millions of its slaves and train-bearers. Can you persuade a king to hear reason, to submit his pretensions to the tribunal of the people, to give up the most absurd and mischievous of his prerogatives? No: he is always true to himself, he grasps at power and hugs it close, as it is exorbitant or invidious, or likely to be torn from him; and his followers stick to him, and never boggle at any lengths they are forced to go, because they know what they have to trust to in the good faith of kings to themselves and one another. Power then is fixed and immoveable, for this reason, because it is lodged in an individual who is driven to madness by the undisputed possession, or apprehended loss of it; his self-will is the key-stone that supports the tottering arch of corruption, steadfast as it leans on him:—liberty is vacillating, transient, and hunted through the world, because it is entrusted to the



breasts of many, who care little about it, and quarrel in the execution of their trust. Too many cooks spoil the broth. The principle of tyranny is in fact identified with a man's pride and the servility of others in the highest degree; the principle of liberty abstracts him from himself, and has to contend in its feeble course with all his own passions, prejudices, interests, and those of the world and of his own party; the cavils of Reformers, the threats of Tories, and the sneers of Whigs.\*

A modern Whig is but the fag-end of a Tory. The old Whigs were in principle what the modern Jacobins are, Anti-Jacobites, that is, opposers of the doctrine of divine right, the one in the soil of England, the other by parity of reasoning in the soil of France. But the Opposition have pressed so long against the Ministry without effect, that being the

\* There is none of this perplexity and jarring of different objects in the tools of power. Their jealousies, heart-burnings, love of precedence, or scruples of conscience, are made subservient to the great cause in which they are embarked; they leave the amicable division of the spoil to the powers that be; all angry disputes are hushed in the presence of the throne, and the corrosive, fretful particles of human nature fly off, and are softened by the influence of a court atmosphere. Courtiers hang together like a swarm of bees about a honeycomb. Not so the Reformers; for they have no honey-comb to attract them. It has been said that Reformers are often indifferent characters. The reason is, that the ties which bind most men to their duties—habit, example, regard to appearances—are relaxed in them; and other and better principles are, as yet, weak and unconfirmed.

softer substance, and made of more yielding materials, they have been moulded into their image and superscription, spelt backwards, or they differ as concave and convex, or they go together like substantive and adjective, or like man and wife, they two have become one flesh. A Tory is the indispensable prop to the doubtful sense of self-importance, and peevish irritability of negative success, which mark the life of a Whig leader or underling. They "are subdued even to the very quality" of the Lords of the Treasury Bench, and have quarrelled so long that they would be quite at a loss without the ordinary food of political contention. To interfere between them is as dangerous as to interfere in a matrimonial squabble. To overturn the one is to trip up the heels of the other. Their hostility is not directed against things at all, nor to effectual and decisive opposition to men, but to that sort of petty warfare and parliamentary *tracasserie*, of which there is neither end nor use, except making the parties concerned of consequence in their own eyes, and contemptible in those of the nation. They will not allow Ministers to be severely handled by any one but themselves, nor even that: but they say civil things of them in the House of Commons, and whisper scandal against them at Holland House. This shews gentlemanly refinement and good breeding; while my Lord Erskine "calls us untaught knaves, unmannerly to come betwixt the wind and his nobility." But the leaden bullets and steel bayonets, the *ultima ratio regum*, by which

these questions are practically decided, do their business in another-guess manner; they do not stand on the same ceremony. Soft words and hard blows are a losing game to play at: and this, one would think, the Opposition, if they were sincere, must have found out long ago. But they rather wish to screen the Ministry, as their *locum tenens* in the receipt of the perquisites of office and the abuse of power, of which they themselves expect the reversion.

“Strange that such difference should be  
Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.”

The distinction between a great Whig and Tory Lord is laughable. For Whigs to Tories “nearly are allied, and thin partitions do their bounds divide.” So I cannot find out the different drift (as far as politics are concerned) of the \*\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* Reviews, which remind one of Opposition coaches, that raise a great dust or spatter one another with mud, but both travel the same road and arrive at the same destination. When the Editor of a respectable Morning Paper reproached me with having called Mr. Gifford a cat’s-paw, I did not tell him that he was a glove upon that cat’s-paw. I might have done so. There is a difference between a sword and a foil. The Whigs do not at all relish that ugly thing, a knock-down blow; which is so different from their endless see-saw way of going about a question. They are alarmed, “lest the courtiers offended should be:” for they are so afraid of their adversaries,

that they dread the reaction even of successful opposition to them, and will neither attempt it themselves, nor stand by any one that does. Any writer who is not agreeable to the Tories, becomes obnoxious to the Whigs; he is disclaimed by them as a dangerous colleague, merely for having "done the cause some service;" is considered as having the malicious design to make a breach of the peace, and to interrupt with most admired disorder the harmony and mutual good understanding which subsists between Ministers and the Opposition, and on the adherence to which they are alone suffered to exist, or to have a shadow of importance in the state. They are, in fact, a convenient medium to break the force of popular feeling, and to transmit the rays of popular indignation against the influence and power of the crown, blunted and neutralized by as many qualifications and refractions as possible. A Whig is properly what is called a Trimmer—that is, a coward to both sides of a question, who dare not be a knave nor an honest man, but is a sort of whiffling, shuffling, cunning, silly, contemptible, unmeaning negation of the two. He is a poor purblind creature, who halts between two opinions, and complains that he cannot get any two people to think alike. He is a cloak for corruption, and a mar-plot to freedom. He will neither do any thing himself, nor let any one else do it. He is on bad terms with the Government, and not on good ones with the people. He is an impertinence and a contradiction in the state. If he has a casting

weight, for fear of overdoing the mark, he throws it into the wrong scale. He is a person of equally feeble understanding and passions. He has some notion of what is right, just enough to hinder him from pursuing his own interest: he has selfish and worldly prudence enough, not to let him embark in any bold or decided measure for the advancement of truth and justice. He is afraid of his own conscience, which will not let him lend his unqualified support to arbitrary measures; he stands in awe of the opinion of the world, which will not let him express his opposition to those measures with warmth and effect. His politics are a strange mixture of cross-purposes. He is wedded to forms and appearances, impeded by every petty obstacle and pretext of difficulty, more tenacious of the means than the end—anxious to secure all suffrages, by which he secures none—hampered not only by the ties of friendship to his actual associates, but to all those that he thinks may become so; and unwilling to offer arguments to convince the reason of his opponents lest he should offend their prejudices, by shewing them how much they are in the wrong; “letting I dare not wait upon I would, like the poor cat in the adage;” stickling for the letter of the Constitution, with the affectation of a prude, and abandoning its principles with the effrontery of a prostitute to any shabby Coalition he can patch up with its deadly enemies. This is very pitiful work; and, I believe, the public with me are tolerably sick of the character. At the same time, he

hurls up his cap with a foolish face of wonder and incredulity at the restoration of the Bourbons, and affects to chuckle with secret satisfaction over the last act of the Revolution, which reduced him to perfect insignificance. We need not wonder at the results, when it comes to the push between parties so differently constituted and unequally matched. We have seen what those results are. I cannot do justice to the picture, but I find it done to my hands in those prophetic lines of Pope, where he describes the last Triumph of Corruption :—

“ But 'tis the fall degrades her to a whore :  
 Let greatness own her, and she's mean no more.  
 Her birth, her beauty, crowds and courts confess ;  
 Chaste matrons praise her, and grave bishops bless :  
 In golden chains the willing world she draws,  
 And her's the Gospel is, and her's the Laws ;  
 Mounts the tribunal, lifts her scarlet head,  
 And sees pale virtue carted in her stead.  
 Lo ! at the wheels of her triumphal car,  
 Old England's genius, rough with many a scar,  
 Dragg'd in the dust ! his arms hang idly round,  
 His flag inverted trails along the ground ;  
 Our youth, all liveried o'er with foreign gold,  
 Before her dance, behind her crawl the old !  
 See thronging millions to the Pagod run,  
 And offer country, parent, wife, or son !  
 Hear her black trumpet thro' the land proclaim,  
 That *not to be corrupted is the shame.*  
 In soldier, churchman, patriot, man in power,  
 'Tis avarice all, ambition is no more !  
 See all our nobles begging to be slaves !  
 See all our fools aspiring to be knaves !

All, all look up with reverential awe  
At crimes that 'scape or triumph o'er the law ;  
While truth, worth, wisdom daily they decry :  
' Nothing is sacred now but villainy.'  
Yet may this verse (if such a verse remain)  
Shew there was one who held it in disdain."