

OBSERVATIONS
ON
EUROPEAN COURTS,

AND
Outlines of their Politics,

&c. &c.

BY
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OF AMERICA;

DURING A RESIDENCE OF FIFTEEN YEARS IN EUROPE, AND UPON HIS
RETURN TO AMERICA.

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OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

A MAN who, from his earliest years, has been constantly occupied with important business, and is unaccustomed either to idleness or dissipation, will always find something to employ his mind; and he will naturally endeavour to make the object to which he turns his attention of some utility to mankind.

Circumstances of a personal nature having, for some time past, suspended my active exertions as a commercial man; if I have been an idle spectator of the important events that have occurred, I have at least not been altogether inattentive. About to visit America after an absence of fifteen years, a country which, by distance, by the nature of its government, by the habits, interests, and situation of the people, is estranged from those political struggles that, for these last seventeen years, have convulsed Europe, I have thought that my observations may not be entirely useless to those I am about to

quit, nor unacceptable to those I am about to visit.

Unconnected with all parties, and no farther interested than as a general well-wisher to mankind, perhaps my observations may be free from those partialities that are generally found amongst political men.

Whether my readers will find me deserving to be classed amongst those whose remarks are useful or not, is a point not for me to determine; but the only plea I have to offer for calling their attention is, my impartiality.

The state of Europe has gradually been becoming more interesting ever since the French revolution put a period to that order of things that had existed in it after the abolition of the feudal system; I mean, ever since each kingdom became a united body, subject to one monarch, unoppressed by those petty tyrants called feudal lords, who, at one time, resisted their sovereigns, and at another oppressed their vassals; making war occasionally on each other, and constantly occupied in disturbing the repose of all.

A new order of things, originating in France, has been gradually extending over the rest of Europe; the career is not yet stopped; and the ultimate consequences are not known. Will

mankind, in the end, be the better, or will they be the worse for these changes? These are important questions, which it does not become me to discuss, and into which I do not mean to enter: but no object appears to me more worthy attention, than the character and conduct of those persons who are active either in promoting, or in opposing, so important and so great a change.

France and England are the two leading nations in this contest; and those who have the conduct of their affairs are, therefore, the principal objects of observation. It is scarcely possible for a man of common intelligence, who is not connected with the personages who figure on that stage, not to make some remarks that may be useful.

The French revolution has already changed its character several times. After abolishing the mildest of what were termed arbitrary monarchies, democracy was carried to its most extreme point; and as excess of every sort is bad, and attended with much evil, those misfortunes that were brought on the whole nation by the violence of the partisans of the new system, soon occasioned a change.

From a republic we see France converted into an empire; and to the ragged jacobinical

government has succeeded the most splendid imperial pomp. From a wild system of equality has sprung up a most powerful military monarchy, more absolute than any hitherto in existence.

The terror excited at first by the progress of democracy amongst other nations, had given way to that species of apathy that was the great failing of all the ancient governments of Europe, before any symptoms of stability were perceivable in the new French empire.

All allowed that the republican government was terrible; but its short duration, its perpetual convulsions, and the alternate triumph and massacre of its chiefs were certain proofs that no nation, however powerful, could long be formidable to its neighbours, whilst it exerted so much energy in the work of interior devastation, and in ruining itself. The bravery and irresistible fury of the republican armies were not disputed; but then they were considered as an earthquake, a storm, or some of those terrible, but passing phenomena of nature that seldom occur, and are never of long duration.

When the imperial mantle was assumed by the present chief of France; when those internal factions, and that counteracting and wasting power in the interior of that country were silenced,

matters assumed a more permanent and durable form; but then, said the rulers of other nations, "The government of France will now lose its energy; we cannot now hope for its destruction, but we need not fear its power: the armies of Bonaparte will soon be like the armies of other sovereigns, and his conduct and politics will by degrees be assimilated to those of other courts."

In this consists the great error of European powers, considering them as the enemies of Bonaparte. They do not see, or they will not see, that, while that wonderful man has suppressed whatever was most destructive in the Jacobin system, he has carefully preserved what rendered it energetic, powerful, and formidable.

Bonaparte has given another direction to the energy of his people, but he has not crushed it; and his enemies will find, when it will be too late, in what his great merit and his great force consist.

While order is enforced with rigour, and while great expences are incurred; while the court of St. Cloud is more brilliant and expensive than that of Versailles, all places are open to merit and energy; every drone is most mercilessly driven from the hive; useful talents are respected, encouraged, rewarded, and flattered; and by that means the French emperor is surrounded by men whose energetic efforts and success astonish the world.

The plan of favouritism, the habits of indolence, and that sort of regardlessness of men of talents, so conspicuous under the ancient monarchies of Europe, were entirely exploded by the first of the revolutionists, and Bonaparte has proscribed them from his presence for ever. The consequences of this are very many, and incalculably great; but those that are the most visible and evident are, that it awakens energy and exertion, and excites and encourages merit, so that all those who have either talents or zeal are attached to the new government. Those who have neither talents nor zeal are the malcontents of France; but what are such men? they are any thing but formidable; and therefore, while no sovereign has such armies, such negotiators, or such ministers as the Emperor of France, no sovereign has a right so completely to despise the factions in the interior of his country. They may be numerous, but they never can be formidable.

Such is the character of the present French government; let us now look at the character of others.

The great general feature of all the ancient governments of Europe was, that of encouraging the nobles and men of ancient family, rank and hereditary honours were always, in state affairs,

preferred to meritorious acquirements or personal abilities.—In this part I exclude England; of that government I shall speak separately.

A general system of favouritism prevailed in France and in every court of Europe, and the way to obtain the smiles of the sovereign was, by contributing to his amusement or his pleasure: such, therefore, was the ambition of those individuals who approached the throne. As to their employment, their exertions, their serious business, they consisted in cabal, intrigue, and supplanting each other with their royal master.

The malcontents in those countries were naturally the men of the most merit. There is a principle of justice never to be eradicated from the human mind, on which many evils have been engrafted, but nevertheless the principle itself remains pure. It is indeed the grand rule of action in all the dealings of man with man, though not with governments; and the violation of that principle has done more harm to the peace of mankind than perhaps any other circumstance to be met with in history.

That every man who receives a reward should have performed a service, is a maxim of prudence; but, in point of justice, it is an immutable law, and in private affairs it is strictly adhered to—and almost as constantly violated by the go-

vernments of Europe. It is to this deviation from moral principle and from sound policy that we may trace those discontents that break out in those revolutions that overturn dynasties, and change the form of governments.

It is in vain to suppose that men will ever transgress against justice, equity, or sound policy, without feeling severely the consequences: unfortunately the struggle for redress often only increases the evils under which the people labour, yet that struggle will never cease till the cause shall be removed from which it sprung.

Next in turpitude and folly to the giving favours and rewards to those who have not earned, and who do not merit them, is the neglect of men who possess merit, and have evinced an inclination to employ it in the service of their country; but when the greater error is committed the less follows of course, as the shadow does the substance. The gay, idle, and indolent courtiers who humour a sovereign, may show their taste in painting, in music, or architecture, and they may encourage and protect men of merit who can never be their rivals; but they will never become the protectors of men whose exertions are directed towards the service of the state, and who, by their talents, may displace them in the good graces of their sovereign.

Thus, as if by an intentional plan, laid with the most deliberate design, have men of frivolous accomplishment surrounded and guided the sovereigns of Europe, whilst they have banished, as it were, or rather persecuted and chased away, all those who, by their merit and talents, might have been serviceable to their king or country.

If at any time, by accidental circumstances, a man of merit has made his way into the presence of his sovereign, and obtained his favour in spite of courtiers, then the cabals and intrigues of the court were all turned against this intruding stranger, who had broken through the circle, and approached too near the person of his sovereign.

Such generally, nay almost universally, were the courts of Europe: such are they still for the most part, and therefore there is no stamina, no power of resistance against the able and energetic attacks of the French. This is the cause of the uninterrupted career of victory, and this will perhaps establish French power on as solid and durable a basis as that of the Romans. Superior knowledge and discipline were the sources of the greatness of ancient Rome. In the present times, knowledge is more generally distributed, the means of communicating it are more easy, prompt, and better known; but, if the will to

employ those powers does not exist, their possession is of little utility.

Having described the grand fundamental difference between the new French government and the other governments of Europe, I must be permitted to say, that unless a revolution had broken to pieces the old order of things in that country, the present manner of conducting matters could never have been adopted to any great extent; for those courtiers who have neither talents nor disposition to serve their country, are extremely formidable in intrigue, and would never have let go their hold. It is scarcely possible to conceive how they excel in counter-acting and overturning measures that are opposed to their interest.

It is but justice, however, to the sovereigns themselves to say, and to assert as a truth, that they are in general, and have been at all times, more virtuous and better intentioned than the majority of those with whom they have been surrounded. Let us see how this matter stands. Louis XIV. and Louis XV. were both better men, even with all their foibles and vices, than those who surrounded them. Whilst they launched deeply into pleasures and expences, they always showed a desire to render the nation happy: but the courtiers seemed occupied as much in

contriving how to oppress the people as they were in courting the favour of the sovereign.

As to Louis XVI. he was one of the most virtuous and moral men that ever existed. Amongst men he was an example, amongst kings a prodigy, and in the midst of the French court totally out of his place. With excellent intentions and strong natural parts, he was the dupe of all around him, who had neither sufficient patriotism nor virtue to turn his disposition to advantage, though they had sufficient industry and intrigue to keep him ill-informed, inactive, and to render him an object of contempt to his subjects, to whom, if properly known, he would have been an object of love and admiration*.

* There are a thousand anecdotes that prove that the head and heart of Louis XVI. were excellent. His steady, able, and temperate conduct, when called to the bar of an insolent assembly to defend himself, prove his readiness to answer. He had neither time to reflect nor a friend to advise, yet his conduct was perhaps the best possible; at any rate it would be difficult to conceive how he could have acted with more dignity and propriety. His last will and testament is a standing model of composition of its sort, and it is an eternal testimony of his piety, his virtue, and his good sense. Of his love for his subjects, his humanity, his displeasure with the expences and vices of the court, there are thousands of instances; but all those good qualities only served as a motive for his frivolous and wicked courtiers to render him ridiculous in the eyes of his people. The king was feared and hated as a severe judge, and every thing carefully

It was a studied art at Versailles to deceive the king, and the unfortunate, amiable, but misled Antoinette had too great a share in the business*. The whole court seemed to unite in this one act, and it is clear the courtiers were com-

concealed from him. It is curious enough, that even his dissipated grandfather, at the age of seventy, though a powerful king, was afraid of his grandson, a young man of great modesty, of no ambition, and without any power: such is the difference between vice and virtue. The old king had one day, after a hunting party, determined to give a dinner to Madame du Barré and a number of his courtiers at Marly, when suddenly, just before dinner, the Dauphin was announced as coming to dine with his grandfather. All was confusion: this disconcerted every thing. The favourite mistress durst not appear, the old debauched king attempted to be cheerful, the courtiers were disappointed, and the repast was soon over.

* Having mentioned in this manner the name of a most unfortunate princess, I think it proper to say that her virtue as a wife is not meant to be impeached. In that respect she appears to have been the victim of anonymous slander; for, when rewards and honours were sure to follow any accusation against her for infidelity, not a person could be found that was bold enough publicly to assert that falsehood, though the cruelty and indignity with which the queen and the whole family were treated, proved that humanity, or respect for fallen greatness, could not be the cause. The faults of the queen were levity and expensiveness: she was generous and gay, and being young, beautiful, and accomplished, gave the ton to every thing. Amongst others, she excited the French youth, Lafayette and others, to volunteer in the cause of America in its dispute with England, and was at the head of the party that opposed the British government.

pletely ignorant of the fast-approaching consequences. The malcontents were then different from what I have described them to be now: they included all the men of merit, talents, and energy in the nation, I wish I could add virtue; but of that there seems to have been very little on either side.

The other courts of the European continent, modeled after that of France, scarcely deserve a particular description. At Vienna the court was less frivolous, but its composition was intrinsically the same, and there also the monarchs were far superior in patriotism and virtue to the courtiers with whom they were surrounded. The house of Austria is, perhaps, as free from vicious characters as any royal house that ever existed. The Empress Maria Theresa was great: her son Joseph was well-intentioned; though unfortunate Leopold was the same, and Francis seems destined to drink up the dregs of their misfortune: he is a prince void of energy, and, like the other princes of whom I have spoken, he is surrounded by sycophants, who render him worse than he otherwise would be.

Of the king of Spain it is useless to speak. That nation, which, at one time, gave law, as well as manners, to Europe, has now fallen into a degree of insignificance for which it is

difficult to account, but into the description of which I have no intention to enter*.

The Prussian court was the most opposite of any to that of France during the reign of Frederick the Great and his predecessors; but this was owing to circumstances, for scarcely was that great monarch in his grave, when the court of

* Spain, until the time of Louis XIII. led the taste in Europe, as France has done since. The change took place by degrees: it began soon after the French interest yielded to Henry IV. in France, and the Armada to Queen Elizabeth of England. The splendour of Louis XIV. completed the change, and though the Spaniards have preserved their ancient dress and manners, they have long had no imitators. At the same period, when wealth and power began to quit Spain, her authority, in matters of taste, and fashion, fell off, and scarcely any remnants are now left of either. An anecdote, little known, of the great Duc de Sully, will prove the fact of this change, and determine the period when it took place beyond a doubt. Sully retired from court after the unfortunate death of his royal master, and lived to a great age. Louis XIII. wishing to consult him on some affair of great importance, requested him to come to court. The old duke arrived in the midst of the court, all the courtiers dressed something in what has since been termed the French style. Sully was still in his Spanish dress, and his antique appearance excited a sort of ridicule amongst the young courtiers, which he observing, said, with great gravity, "Sire, when the great Henry, of glorious memory, did me the honour to consult with me, he always ordered every buffoon out of his presence." Louis XIII. followed the hint immediately, to the great mortification of the young fashionables of that day.

Berlin imitated, to an extreme degree, that of Paris, with this exception, that the monarch still affected to keep up that military character and reputation which his uncle had established.

How badly this military reputation has since been supported, and how completely the court was frenchified, according to the old interpretation of that word, has been seen in the last disastrous campaign; but still even the system of Frederick II. would not, if persevered in, have enabled a state of equal numbers to cope with the French of the present day*.

Though merit was encouraged at Berlin in the days of its great monarch, yet the encouragement was neither liberal nor general; besides, rank and wealth often usurped its place, and it was a system only pursued partially; neither did

* As the Prussian monarchy had only attained its 103d year previous to the battle of Auerstadt, and was continually aggrandising itself in consequence of the quarrels of its neighbours, the court could not from circumstances imitate old established and powerful monarchies. It could not so soon lose the energy necessary for its rise at first, and afterwards for its preservation; but after the death of Frederick it quickly degenerated. His brilliant achievements during the seven years' war, his great reputation, and large military establishment had made other powers respect Prussia, and the courtiers thought it could relax like other great monarchies. The battle of Auerstadt, and one week of real war destroyed the chimera.

it go down to the lower ranks, which is absolutely necessary, in order to produce the full effect intended. No rank in a nation should be below the power of rising; but most particularly the common soldier should not be excluded. When the common soldier can rise, the army is a lottery, where the hope of obtaining a prize excites a general interest: this is the case in France; but in Prussia the life of a soldier was far worse than that of a slave in a West India plantation. Thus, though the weakness of the Prussian monarchy did not exactly resemble in feature that of other European monarchies, yet it was, from its constitution and nature, far inferior in strength to France. As for its extent it was still more so; and nothing but that artificial system of a balance of power, to which the Prussian monarchy originally owed its existence, could have enabled it to maintain the rank that it supported for nearly a whole century.

Of the other continental courts, Russia is the only one necessary to speak.

That immense country, but lately civilized, under a succession of able sovereigns, has not yet fallen into the careless apathy, the indolence, or sloth of the more ancient establishments. The Russians, less civilized than other nations, are likewise less addicted to vice, but much more subject

to violent revolutions, occasioned by the efforts of men who, unaccustomed to the slow and silent intrigues of effeminate courtiers, openly, and by violence, seek superiority. We speak of the virtues of the northern nations, and deplore the depravity of the Italians and Portuguese; but, though, in private life, the crimes of the southern may far exceed those of the northern people, we have no late examples of such revolutions as those to which Russia has been subjected in half a century in the person of the monarch. Russia is, however, a very great and rising power. It is not yet contaminated, so as to prefer birth to personal merit, or frivolous accomplishments to useful knowledge; it is of course the only nation that, on the continent of Europe, is any way on an equality with France; and it is probable that, if it were farther advanced in civilization, and equally uncorrupted, it might be a full match for it; but it is only a century since Russia became one of the powers of Europe, according to the common acceptation of that term; and, though its improvement has been very rapid, yet it has not attained that general state of intelligence and of civilization that renders every private soldier in the French armies a military character, so that, insulated and alone, he is still formidable. The Russians resemble machines, and can only act

when all the parts are combined. This lays them open to derangement, discomfiture, and defeat, in many cases, where the others, by their general intelligence and readiness, avoid disaster, and sometimes convert it into victory.

The other courts of Europe do not merit attention in the present view, which is not intended to be laboured or minute*. England alone is an

* In the year 1504, only 303 years ago, the master of the ceremonies of Pope Julius II. ranked the powers of Europe as under. This was the rule of precedence for the ambassadors.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Emperor of Germany. | 13 Bohemia. |
| 2 King of the Romans. | 14 Poland. |
| 3 France. | 15 Denmark. |
| 4 Spain. | 16 Republic of Venice. |
| 5 Arragon. | 17 Duke of Brittany. |
| 6 Portugal. | 18 Duke of Burgundy. |
| 7 England. | 19 Elector of Bavaria. |
| 8 Sicily. | 20 Elector of Brandenburg. |
| 9 Scotland. | 21 Elector of Saxony. |
| 10 Hungary. | 22 Archduke of Austria. |
| 11 Navarre. | 23 Duke of Savoy. |
| 12 Cyprus. | 24 Grand Duke of Florence. |

Neither Russia nor Prussia appear on this list; but how many in return have disappeared, and of those that remain how have they changed rank and importance!! Of the papal court, that thus dictated to others, what are we to say now? unless it be what Brutus said over the inanimate body of Cæsar:

..... "But yesterday
His word might have been weigh'd 'gainst half the world.
Now none so low as do him reverence."
Such is the mutability of human greatness.

exception, and but a partial one to the description I have given of the governments of Europe. Here indeed the system of favouritism does not prevail. Here wealth and honours are not to be obtained by courting the good graces of the monarch, and by court intrigue; but parliamentary interest produces the same end by a road not very different.

On the continent the monarch dispenses his favours according to his will and pleasure; in England ministers do the same thing according to their interest; so that the broad and general road to preferment is as much shut to merit in England as in any other country. Wealth is the road to parliamentary influence, and, when a man has once obtained that, a little oratory and spirit of political intrigue are all he wants, if his talents and ambition have that direction; but no man, who does not take care first to secure wealth, can ever expect to rise by merit. Merit, indeed, allied to wealth, will do every thing, but without it nothing: united, in England, they are irresistible. Even the sovereign generally gives way. It is not so on the continent; for there, though wealth is a powerful appendant to merit, it does not enable it to force its way in courts. In France wealth alone can effect nothing;

but merit, if possessed in any great degree, is certain to procure wealth.

Unfortunately for England, one of the modes in which wealth and merit act most frequently and most successfully, is in opposition to government: this is a prodigious injury to the country, greatly augmenting its expence, and diminishing its energy.

Having now taken a view of the nature of the governments, I shall pass to the recent transactions of England and France.

The battle of Austerlitz and the death of Mr. Pitt, to whom England had looked up for twenty years, took place nearly at the same time; about the beginning of 1806.

The fatal battle of Austerlitz made Bonaparte master of Germany, and gave him complete possession of Italy; while the death of the English minister lessened that dependance which the courts that still remained unsubdued on the continent had on the subsidies of England.

The new administration, with Mr. Fox at its head, was composed of men most of whom had at one time been admirers of the French revolution, and many of whom had actually visited the French metropolis, and bowed at the imperial court.

Mr. Fox, the chief of the party, had never recanted his approbation of the revolution, and was

known to glory in the fact, that the opposition of England to the aggrandisement of France was much abated. Those who did not go quite so far as Fox, imagined that one of the causes of hostility was at an end; for it was a pretty general, though probably very erroneous opinion, that a personal animosity existed between Bonaparte and the English minister. This was therefore, they thought, removed by the death of the latter.

If Mr. Fox had not himself been deluded or mistaken, or if he had meant to continue the delusion, he would not have tried to negotiate a peace with France; for, from the very beginning, it was evident that none could be concluded at that time.

The designs of Bonaparte on the Continent were not yet all executed, and England was not yet prepared for the sacrifices that were expected. The death of Mr. Fox, that so soon followed that of his rival, put an end to the attempts to treat, and certainly England gained neither honour nor advantage by the abortive negotiation.

The death of Mr. Fox put an end also to the ties that had held together the ministry, composed of men of very different principles, all of them assuming talents superior to those commonly possessed. The administration was composed of Lord Grenville and some of his friends, who had

long acted with Mr. Pitt, and had, at one time, been the most bitter enemies of the French revolution, and of the opponents of Mr. Fox and his party. A coalition had, however, taken place between Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville, on what principle is unknown; nor is it of any great importance to enquire, as it is certain, that power and place were the objects of both, and their stipulations and mutual concessions could never be of a nature fit to be disclosed.

On the main political questions that agitate Europe, the members of the new administration had been absolute opponents to each other. Which of the two sacrificed party principle to interest, signifies little; or whether both yielded something, meeting cheerfully half way to divide the loaves and fishes of the people. In either of the possible cases there was a shameful dereliction of principle, disgraceful to the whole. If Grenville gave up his opinions to Fox, he must meet with the contempt of the man to whose principles he thus adapted his own, and we can have no very high opinion of Fox, who would become the coadjutor of a degraded man, even though the degradation was in favour of himself.

When Lord North and Fox coalesced after the American war, their conduct was reprobated

by all honourable men, and never vindicated even by their friends; but it was much less disgraceful than that which has lately taken place. North and Fox coalesced innocently, though not honourably, to share the good things that were going, after the bone of contention, namely, the freedom of America, was removed. They had used Billingsgate language enough; but, like two barristers, when the trial was over, they sat down, as is the custom at the country assizes, at the table of my lord judge, in order to share his roast-beef and claret; but here the case is different—the cause of contention was not over, and yet the opposite parties meet, and shake hands in open court, in defiance of all decency or regard to public opinion.

Mr. Fox is dead, and I think it is probable that he made no concessions. I only speak my own opinion; and I will give my reasons—first, because his mind was of a more manly nature than any opposed to him; and, in the next place, because the admitting him into administration seems to have been a matter of necessity after the death of Mr. Pitt. He had therefore no occasion to make a compromise when his assistance was indispensable. It would require much to convince me that Lord Grenville did not give up a

great deal in coalescing with a man he had so long and so violently opposed.

As the last ministers had no common tie, each had his own hobby-horse, and each rode it his own way; it seemed to have been settled that they should mutually yield, in order that each might be gratified.

Innovation and change was the view of every one; but as there was likewise a personal motive, namely, a reputation for talents, every measure was to originate with some particular member, and the rest were to acquiesce. In a word, the cabinet was no longer like a sheet of polished glass, reflecting one image; as in the time of Mr. Pitt it was like a mirror that had been cracked, and lost its truth, reflecting as many faces as there were pieces of glass.

Mr. Fox was to have the credit of peace with France, Lord Grenville of the abolition of the slave trade, Lord Howick of the Catholic bill, Mr. Windham of the new regulations of the army, and Lord Henry Petty of that system of finance that was to lighten the present burthens, and lay the load heavy on the shoulders of posterity, and Lord Erskine was to change the courts of law in Scotland. Thus were the labours of the cabinet divided; but the misfortune was, that each minister was uncontrouled, and the general opinion

of the cabinet yielded, or rather there was a complete acquiescence on the part of the whole to the individual member. As this was mutual, it was all very fair and equal, as amongst themselves, but what effect it might have had on the affairs of the country we had hardly time to know, when the Catholic Bill, as it is called, blew up the broad-bottomed administration.

Lord North applied the term of broad-bottomed to his coalition administration with Fox, implying that it contained all the principal men of weight and talents at that time. The public gave to the new coalition the title of broad-bottomed, in imitation; and the ministers assumed to themselves with much modesty, but I cannot say with what degree of truth, the character of a great combination of talents*.

That there was a great disposition in the late ministers to distinguish themselves by innovation and change, is beyond a doubt; but still there were no great marks of patriotism or public virtue, such as they professed. No ministry ever, in so

* It is not true that the late ministers pretended to possess ALL the talents of the country; for even Mr. Fox said that as Mr. Canning was not a member, of course there were some talents left out. This was a flattering compliment to Mr. Canning, who possesses great talents; but that he alone of the excluded members possessed them, was a very unfair inference.

short a time, gave such sums in augmentations of pensions, in gratuities, or in new appointments. In parliamentary harangues, they did speak of economy, but in the estimates for the year, when the chancellor of the exchequer counted with great care and minuteness every resource, not a single shilling credit was taken for any expected reforms in expenditure!! This might not be altogether a proof of insincerity; but it is a clear proof that the work of economy was not seriously begun, whatever might be intended.

That an economy of several millions sterling a year might be made, is no way doubtful, were the intention serious; yet, for a deficiency of less than £3,000,000, Lord Henry Petty proposed to mortgage taxes to the amount of £18,000 a year for the sums in future to be borrowed*.

But the impetuosity of those who had deter-

* The future loans were to be paid at compound interest, by a very complicated scheme, though in fact the minister stated that eleven millions was all he wanted to borrow; that he paid off by the sinking fund considerably more than eight millions; and that, of consequence, about two millions seven hundred thousand pounds was the real increase of debt annually to take place. A little serious attention to economy in an expenditure of fifty millions would very easily have covered this deficiency, and then the national debt of England would have increased no more. Had this been done, they might have claimed *talents*, with the addition of *good intentions*.

mined to make some alteration in regard to the Dissenters from the established church, called improperly the Catholic Bill, overturned the career of the new ministers; and as this has made a great noise, and each party states it in a different way, I shall endeavour to explain it as shortly and candidly as I am able.

The reign of his present majesty has been remarkable for the tolerating principles, extended towards different religion; but still it must not be forgotten, that the present family reigns on the express condition of preferring the protestant religion. The oath taken by the sovereign, in assuming the reins of government, implies an obligation to *keep down popery*; and though it is more according with the spirit of the times in which it was first administered, and to the circumstances by which it was occasioned, than to those of the present day, still it is an oath, and surely those who claim liberty of conscience for themselves, will never say that any man is to be compelled to violate a sacred engagement*.

I have had occasion to remark that most of the sovereigns of Europe were better men than the ma-

* It may be proper to explain that the Catholics, as well as Dissenters, of every denomination, have full liberty of conscience, and are never interrupted in the duties of their religion. This is all that liberality and right require. They are, however,

jority of those by whom they were surrounded, and to none does this apply more completely than to the king of England. No man in any situation of life has ever attended with a more scrupulous punctuality to his duty than the present king; few menial servants would submit to the rigorous exactness with which every duty is performed by him. He is a man of steady conduct and adherence to principle, and free from the vices and follies of the age, possessing most unalterable firmness when a resolution has once been taken.

The king, it would appear, had resolved not any farther to enlarge the privileges of the Roman Catholics, and those who know him were well persuaded that even if his determination was wrong, still it was too deeply rooted to be altered. Mr. Pitt certainly, when he came last into administration, acted as if he knew this; and it is believed that Mr. Fox would have done the same, and his successors would have been prudent if they had never attempted to do otherwise.

This matter has been stated so differently, that

debarred from certain offices and military rank; but this is not at all a question of RIGHT, but of POLICY; it is therefore a question not to be discussed on general principles, which the friends of the Catholics, as they term themselves, always strive to do.

I shall endeavour to confine myself to what is allowed by all parties.

It is admitted that, under the appearance of extending military service more generally, some advantages were to be granted to Roman Catholics, and that the king gave his assent with difficulty, but saying he would not go a step farther. Without frankly acknowledging to the monarch that it was intended to go farther, some alterations were made to that purpose; and as his majesty had no idea that his ministers would go contrary to his known and declared opinion, he did not examine the papers laid before him in every stage of the business. The general principle had been settled, and every fair, honest man, who has a paper to sign, will expect that the men of business, employed to prepare and put it in form, will adhere to the intention. It however has been clearly proved, that some alterations were made* without information being given to his majesty, that the cabinet ministers themselves were not unanimous with respect to those alterations†, and

* Both Lords Howick and Grenville allow that there was an alteration made; but they sent the papers, so altered, to the king, in the usual formality. Had they meant him to make the alteration, they ought to have informed him, and discovered his opinion on the subject.

† It appeared, in discussing the business in Parliament, that

that there is every appearance of an intention to have extended the measure with as little notice given as possible. This is the mildest way of expressing what I mean. My opinion is, that if this silent mode of conducting the business should fail, those who were the movers of the measure

some of the members of the cabinet had not been summoned to consider the Catholic Bill in its altered state. This was irregular, and does not look well; if it was an accident, it was an ugly accident. I was present in the House of Lords on the Marquis of Stafford's motion, and heard Lord Sidmouth declare that, when the cabinet was formed, he assured both Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, that no consideration should prevent or controul his determined opposition to granting further religious privileges to the Catholics than was granted in 1793; and that, when Lord Grenville informed him that there had been a meeting of the cabinet council, to which he had not been summoned, and that it was agreed to grant further privileges to the Catholics, and that the minutes of the council had been sent to the king, and returned without any objection, he, Lord Sidmouth, went immediately to the king, and tendered his resignation. The change has been attributed to various causes, particularly to the influence of a royal duke, who is constantly with his majesty; but Lord Sidmouth's resignation I have no doubt was the cause, and the only cause of the change of ministers: when Lord Sidmouth tendered his resignation, it is but reasonable to suppose the king would ask his reason for resigning: it was his reason which informed his majesty the extent his ministers intended to go, and then instantly his mind was made up to require a pledge from the ministers, that they would never bring forward the measure again.

thought they had sufficient authority to obtain it otherwise.

In short, it appears to me that they thought, supported, as they supposed they were, by public opinion, by the manner of thinking of the age, the plea of augmenting the army and navy, having carried the abolition of the slave trade, and having obtained lucrative employment for many persons; they could succeed in this case; but they were grievously mistaken. The king, as soon as he was informed of what was intended, was PLAIN, OPEN, DECIDED, and DETERMINED. The plan of sliding in the measure privately had utterly failed, and the firm resolution of the monarch, when he considered conscience engaged, left little hope. The measure could not be modified; it was therefore abandoned, and those who had proposed it thought they might still continue in office and, at some future day, return to the charge. It was however very clear, that men who had attempted clandestinely to pass a measure, could not be entirely trusted. A promise was demanded, that no such attempt should in future be made. This was natural: even in private life, an attempt to make a man do what he was known never to have intended, destroys confidence. The promise was refused, and the debates and arguments, in consequence of that, have been loud and long. Into them I shall

not enter ; but I think, after what they had done, they could no longer expect to enjoy the confidence of the sovereign.

The ministers that have succeeded are the men who acted in a subordinate manner during the time of Mr. Pitt ; they are said not to possess the talents of those who are gone ; but if by talents is here meant business talents, I am not yet inclined to lend an ear to the accusation. As for talents for forming new plans, or for carrying on a vigorous opposition to government, I do believe them much inferior. But I shall for a moment leave this personal squabble, and take the thing on a broader basis.

Why do ministers always speak of their own talents, as if they had a monopoly of all that are in the nation ? That they have them not is certain ; that they should have them, would be *very extraordinary*, considering that they become ministers by power and influence, and are not chosen for talents ; for, if we except that of oratory in the house, none other gives the least claim or chance to the ministerial station.

But if this squabble about talents is absurd in itself, being, in some manner, like two nations fighting for what neither does nor can possess, it is rendered still more so by the circumstance, that talents in men in inferior situations, may be ren-

dered more useful than in the members of the cabinet, because they may receive that direction their superiors chuse to give them. When the result of the exertion of an inferior is useful, it may be adopted, and when doubtful, set aside ; whereas, a minister who has plans, forces their adoption, or splits the cabinet.

It is in this case that a lesson may be taken from Bonaparte—yes, and from other successful rulers, recorded in history : Bonaparte monopolizes all the talents he can procure, because he rewards them liberally ; he hears their advice, receives their plans, but he follows his own opinion in their adoption.

The ins and the outs in England are nearly upon a level as to liberality, to men of genius and talent, as well as to wisdom in adopting new systems, fitted to the circumstances of the times ; so that, with more wealth than any country ever did possess, the dangers that threaten England from a perseverance in the old plan of favouritism and parliamentary influence are great in the extreme.

I have lived fifteen years in England, and studied something both of English history and English character ; and both show me that, when difficulties come to be serious, it is a great and an energetic nation. It is to that energy and that genius that I look for the safety of England, at a

crisis which appears to me to be at no very great distance.

France was the first in establishing standing armies, and, by that measure, humbling the power of the feudal barons. All Europe was obliged to follow the example, otherwise the standing armies of France would have subdued the rude levies of all Europe, in the same way that the king subdued his own barons, (which he was not always able to do till standing armies were established.) The French have now adopted a new system, both in military tactics and in military promotion, that gives their armies as great a superiority over those of other nations, as the standing armies formerly had over the levies of the feudal chiefs*. To change the plan is therefore become necessary in other nations; but, strange to tell, other nations will not follow the example.

As a commercial man, I must now take some notice of the state of the trade and manufactures of England, which are the astonishment of all nations, and the envy of not a few, The Eng-

* I do not mean here to say that the individual French soldiers are superior to those of other nations; to those of England they certainly are not; but they can raise much greater numbers, and have officers with more knowledge, energy, and enterprize, than any other power.

lish people are the only that I know whose manners and ways of thinking, and whose government are favourable to commerce.

Had I returned a short time ago, I should have left Europe under an impression that there was a greater degree of commercial enterprize and disposition to enter into wild speculations in the American character than in that of the English; but the capture of Buenos Ayres has entirely changed my opinion. I do not think there ever was a greater disposition to speculate shown by the Americans than was by the English when that place was captured; there was no article, however absurd, but was conceived by some to be an article calculated to make their fortune by sending it there. As near as I can calculate, there was property to the amount of three millions sent within three months; and, whatever the result of possessing that country may be, I have no doubt that its being recaptured by the Spaniards has been a most fortunate circumstance for the commercial part of this country; for, if they had been allowed sufficient time, it is impossible to say to what extent they would not have sent property.

The trade to the United States and the West India islands is the chief support of British manufactures, and that to America is increasing with a prospect of becoming immense. As America

augments in population, even though manufactures are establishing every day, yet agriculture will long be the chief occupation of the inhabitants, as it will be the most profitable; besides luxury is increasing, which will make up for the supply obtained at home; so that it is probable that America may take, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, as great a quantity of manufactured British goods as it does now; in which case the trade will become immense, as it will increase as fast as the population.

America is the only country supplied with British manufactures, where the wages of labour are higher than in England; or, in other words, where money is of less value; so that the increased taxation, and continued depreciation of money, which tend to shut out English manufactures, by making them too dear for the nations on the Continent of Europe, will not prevent them from being sent to America.

The continental trade of Europe is now in a very precarious state; but it has long been changing its nature. Fewer of the manufactures, and more of the colonial and East India produce, have been sent. With America it is quite the contrary: England sends neither India goods nor colonial produce, but it sends its own manufactures, which

is the greatest advantage of any, in proportion to the extent.

The exports* of England are above three times what they were at the end of the war with America; about double what they were before that war begun, and full one-half more than they were before the revolutionary war with France; but they are not so great by one-third as they were immediately previous to the last peace.

The great falling off, however, has been principally in colonial and India goods—British manufactures are increasing still.

The imports have always been three or four millions a-year less than the exports; though, for the last seventeen years, immense sums (near fifty millions) have been paid for grain from other countries.

Before the French war broke out, the importation from the British West Indies never amounted to four millions in a year; but, before the peace of Amiens, it had risen one year to above ten millions. The East India imports augmented nearly in the same proportion as those of the West; but

	£
* Exports of England in 1774..	17,000,000
1782..	11,000,000
1792..	22,000,000
1802..	45,000,000
1806..	33,000,000

it was not so with the exports to that country, which bear no proportion to the imports.

The great wealth of England, I am convinced, arises from her manufactures and active industry, protected by good laws, and supported by large capitals, rather than from her commerce with foreign nations; for the balance of trade is not much in her favour. As this is an important subject, I shall try, as briefly as possible, to explain how this arises.

If any nation, either by invention or industry, can manufacture great quantities of goods, it is clear that it may afford to consume great quantities, and the circumstance of its changing what is made in the country for what comes from another, only alters the quality and nature of articles consumed, but not their value. If the consumers were not first possessed of the articles they give in exchange, they could not obtain the foreign produce. It is therefore the creating these articles that makes the people rich in income.

There is work done by the force of steam alone equal to the power of about three millions of men; and, according to the expence, the labour of each does not cost twopence. Suppose, then, that it is only worth one shilling, there is a gain of three millions of tenpences, or French livres, per day, which make one hundred and twenty-six

thousand pounds a-day, or about thirty-eight million pounds sterling a-year. The manufactured articles exported amount to about twenty-three millions, and the average balance, in favour of England, is not four millions. England, in fact, either consumes or employs, as materials, nearly as much foreign produce as she sells of her own manufactures. The envy excited against the wealth of this country does not seem to be quite fair; for, if it arises, as I think it does, from industry and invention chiefly, and not from monopolizing the trade of other countries, nothing can be more honourable.

Again; as to the carrying trade, that will always fall chiefly into the hand of those who have the most capital. It is clear, for example, that if the cloths of Silesia are wanted in America, and the Americans do not chuse to pay in ready money, at the same time the Silesians do not give credit, some intermediate persons must be found that have the means of giving the manufacturers their money, and allowing the credit. The English can do this more easily than any other nation, therefore they have more trade. While the Dutch could command more capital than any other nation, they had more trade. To be mere carriers does not require so much capital as to be manufacturers, but to be simply carriers would

be no great advantage. The nation that is rich buys cheap and sells dear, and naturally secures also the advantage of the carrying to its own ships; but it is not from the carrying that the wealth arises, it is from the buying and selling.

Commerce has been the cause of many quarrels amongst nations, and particularly between the English and French. Yet I do not see any good reason for this. The chief exports of France were wines and brandies, even in her most commercial days; now England is a great consumer of both, and produces either—so that they have no occasion to be rivals in that way; and if the French would cultivate industry, and protect invention, like the English, they would be a much richer nation; but they do not seem to have a disposition for that regular, well-arranged, and well-followed-up industry that has raised England so high, and that formerly did the same for the Dutch.

The East and West Indies are considered as sources of great wealth to Britain, but I think they are much overrated. The India Company loses money every year, and though the fortunes amassed by individuals are immense, yet it is considered as a matter of much doubt whether they do not operate against the general interests of the country.

The affairs of the India Company are ill and

unprofitably conducted now; but that is not a complete proof that they might not be turned to advantage without destroying the company. On this a great deal might be said, but the discussion would be much too tedious and intricate for this place; it is sufficient to observe that, far from the India possessions being now a source of real wealth or a cause of envy to Great Britain, they are the direct contrary. The splendid establishments, while they augment debts, excite envy, and while individuals are enriched the nation at large gets more deeply involved. This matter undoubtedly will, and must, soon be altered; that it may be so, to the advantage of all that are at present interested, I have no doubt; how it will be done I shall not venture to predict: observing, however, that the general opinion is for laying the trade open, and indeed if it is not to be new modeled and changed, it would be much better that it were laid open to all the commercial men in England.

Neutral nations find the present situation of the English company very beneficial to them, and though the word monopoly has been applied, it will be found that the real monopoly will begin when the present nominal one is done away.

I have often thought it would be well to compare the amount of foreign trade with the interior

riches of the country; but it is not easily to be done. Some little light, however, may be thrown on the subject by the following observations.

In the ordinary course of trade, the whole exports of the country do not amount to much more than the price of the single article of bread, consumed by the inhabitants; and the balance in favour of the country with foreign nations would not do more than pay for the consumption of bread for one month. Though bread is certainly the chief article of food, it is not by any means the most expensive part of living; so that the exports, compared with the produce of internal industry, are but very small; and in those years, when provisions were much dearer than at present, the disproportion was very great indeed.

The sums levied in taxes are equal to the amount of the exports, and if to the taxes we add what is borrowed in time of war, the sum is much greater. The public expences, including the expence of the poor and revenues of the clergy, are in time of war more than double the amount of the exports; yet the whole of those revenues go to persons who create nothing, most of whom do nothing of any sort, and not one of whom labours so as to increase the wealth of the country, and yet England is rich, and in it no industrious man wants employment.

Since I have been in England, (with the exception of a very short period,) war has been carried on with great expence. The taxes have been more than doubled, the foreign trade has been doubled, and the depreciation of money has been equal to between 40 and 50 per cent. The wages of labour and the necessaries of life are nearly one half dearer than they were fifteen years ago.

How long this rapid progression can go on it may be difficult exactly to determine; but it is certain the term cannot be of any very great length, because the affairs of England would lose all due proportion to those of other nations when its trade must fall off, and then the rest must follow.

How happy ought the inhabitants of America be, when they compare their situation with that of the most flourishing nation on this side of the Atlantic. In this old world, where they are employed in paying the debts of their fathers, and in augmenting those to be borne by their children! the trade of the United States is more than half of that of the British dominions, and, as the population is not yet half so great, it is, proportion considered, greater than that of Britain and Ireland, and more than twice as great as it was fifteen years ago.

As to taxes and public burthens in America, they do not amount to one-tenth of what they do in England, where the mendicants, the idle, the infirm (in one word, the poor*) alone, cost more than the whole government of the United States. Under such circumstances, public works and buildings, canals, docks, agricultural improvements, new manufactories, and foreign establishments go on with unexampled rapidity, and capital is never wanted where the object for employing it is approved of: so that whilst 30 millions a year have been expended on war, establishments of every sort have been carried on with greater vigour than at any former period even of peace†; but here I must be contented to state the effect without entering into an enquiry respecting the cause of such a very extraordinary state of things.

The people of England have at all periods

* In the year ending Easter 1803, the sum raised in England by the poor and other parish rates was £5,348,205 : 9 : 3 $\frac{3}{4}$, of which £4,267,265 : 9 : 2 were expended in relieving the poor, 1,040,716 persons belonging to parishes, 194,052 vagrants were relieved.

† During all former wars private enterprize languished. The building of houses not only was discontinued, but those half finished were abandoned; trade generally fell off, and no public works were undertaken to any considerable extent: all this is true, but all this is inexplicable, and a matter of astonishment.

complained of the public expences, and those writers who have represented the country on the brink of ruin have always been very popular; but, of late, the discontents seem to have risen beyond their usual degree, and the people have lost the confidence in their rulers that is necessary to the prosperity of every country, whilst those rulers seem to be too much engaged in party intrigue and personal objects to give a serious attention to the affairs of the nation*.

In ordinary times, all this might be of little importance; but, at a time when England has the most able, the most determined enemy she ever had, it is a subject for very serious consideration, particularly as I have observed that the military

* Perhaps it is not possible to see the same men in such different situations as they appear in this country, as members of parliament and as candidates on the hustings for a seat in parliament: I have sat with pleasure, delight, and astonishment in the House of Commons for twelve hours together, hearing the manly eloquence of Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and others, (and Burke towards the end of his career,) and I have afterwards seen and heard some of them on the hustings at the time of an election; but a more disgusting scene, a more complete contrast, no man would wish to witness,—making assertions which they do not believe, professions which they do not mean to keep, and smiling at abuse and reproach that ought to excite indignation. One of the first declarations they make is, that, if they are elected, they will not accept a place or pension: in what way they construe their meaning I have never been able to learn, al-

tactics are changed*, and the energies of people of all ranks called forth in every public capacity, in a way that gives France a great superiority over every nation that adheres to the old system.

The French are very attentive to the discovery of what is going on in other nations. As an instance: Upon my arrival at Calais, in August, 1801, from Germany by the way of

though I well know the end they mean to answer. I have often thought I should like to ask one of those gentlemen if they mean to say, that if their sovereign thought they had abilities sufficient, and was to call upon them for their services, they would refuse to serve him, I hope not: I hope that, in all countries, and under all regular governments, every good man would be ready to render his services to carry into effect the operations of the laws which protect his person and property. On the hustings, a reward for their services appears to be a thing which they wish to make the public believe they would not accept; I should like to know if they have merit sufficient to deserve places and pensions why they ought not to have them. Who so properly deserves them as those that are instrumental in protecting the laws and happiness of the subjects of one of the most industrious and thriving kingdoms in the world? As candidates, they promise a great deal too much; and, as members of the house, they perform far too little. This conduct, often repeated, has laid the foundation for mistrust, and confidence no longer subsists; though, for all this, in all serious cases, the representatives of the people have been found attentive to their duty.

* So long as the system termed the balance of power existed, every state counted for something, however small; for, by its union with one or other of the powerful nations, it added some strength: but since France has contrived to separate this league, they are, politically speaking, of no importance.

Paris, just after Lord Nelson had made his first attack on the flotilla at Boulogne, I discovered the French were in possession of all the plans of St. James's respecting the attack. When I called on Monsieur Mango, the prefect, for a passport, he immediately informed me, that Lord Nelson was going to make another attack, and, until that was made, he would not permit me to embark; at the same time he observed, that there was an order in England which would prevent my landing at Dover, as several persons had been sent back. I then stated that my presence was requisite in London, on account of commercial business. As several persons had been waiting at Calais for weeks, I asked him to say candidly whether he would advise me to return immediately to Ham-
burgh, and embark from thence. He advised me by all means to remain, as he did not think I could travel one hundred leagues before he would give me a passport*. Finding that there were several neutrals in the harbour, with clearances from or to any port, I called on Monsieur Mango the next day, but found him gone to Boulogne, to arrange matters for the reception of Lord Nelson. I made all the interest I could with Madame Mango

* On leaving Monsieur Mango, Madame Mango sent a servant to say she would make use of her influence. I had been the bearer of a fashionable cap for the lady from Paris.

and others, and immediately proceeded to Boulogne. As Lord Nelson was to make the second attack next night, I could not see him that day; but when I did see him, he gave me leave to embark in a neutral for a neutral port. I left Boulogne just as Lord Nelson's fleet was returning, arrived at Calais, chartered a neutral vessel to take me from Calais to Rotterdam, or, in case I changed my mind, to land me at Gravesend. I embarked about four o'clock in the afternoon, and was landed at Gravesend about twelve o'clock the next day; where Mrs. Medford and I dined and slept at Shooter's-hill, without ever being asked a question, although, from travelling a good deal, we had not a little luggage. I found, by the London papers, it was stated to be impossible to pass to or from France but *via* Hamburgh, although I well knew, if my business had made it requisite, if the wind was fair, I could be in France in twenty-four hours at any time.

Advice has been received, since I have finished these observations, that there is a cessation of hostilities on the Continent, and that the chiefs of the contending powers have had an interview. The battle that preceded that interview, so far as intelligence has yet arrived, confirms what I have already said about the individual superiority of

the French, and the strength of the Russians, who can only act powerfully in large bodies.

The fate of the continent and of Europe is now decided, but it is too soon to know what will be the consequences. Further coalitions against France are neither probable nor possible. Peace with England is unlikely; but we live at a period so productive of novelty in every way, that there is no looking forward to any distance with any degree of certainty; of one thing only are we certain, that great changes will yet take place before mankind will enjoy that tranquillity and repose, that have been banished ever since the French revolution.

It seems also certain, that the old order of things will not return in France, and therefore it very probably will be done away in other countries. The very system that Bonaparte pursues, of mixing his soldiers with those of other nations, will, as it is termed, revolutionize their armies, and then they will be upon a par with those of the French, as they were before either was revolutionized. This will gradually make way for the independance of different nations; for, though subdued by France at present, it is not likely they can remain always subjugated: and, as to their being united as one nation, that is more unlikely still; so that a long scene of troubles may be ex-

pected before Europe enjoys any thing like permanent repose.

If it were possible to conceive that the French would fall back into the old system of advancing men through favour, and not from merit, then indeed she would soon fall from her high situation; but it appears to me much more likely that she will persist in her present system until the other powers find it necessary to adopt the same system.

The most evident and certain result of all this is, the aggrandisement of the United States of America. We have already seen how they have increased in wealth, population, and in the cultivation of commerce and the arts within the last fifteen years. To her own energy and the nature of things, much of this may be ascribed; but still a great deal is owing to the disturbances that have taken place in Europe.

*O. Grosvenor Street, King's Road,
July 23, 1807.*

THE END.

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