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SUBSTANCE
OF
THE SPEECH
OF THE
RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING,
IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
On WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1819,
ON THE
ADDRESS TO THE THRONE,
UPON THE
OPENING OF THE SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1820.



SUBSTANCE
OF
MR. CANNING'S SPEECH,
ON WEDNESDAY, NOV. 24, 1819.

MR. CANNING began by saying, that, unusual as was the course which had been pursued the preceding night, in consenting to the adjournment of a debate on the Address, he could not help congratulating the House on that deviation from the ordinary rules of its proceeding; for, the technical parliamentary difficulty being once gotten over, he felt it to be of the utmost importance that the vote to which they were to come on this occasion, should not have been adopted without the fullest and most patient discussion. They had now before them all the different classes of opinion which prevailed in the House, with respect to the Address and the Amendment; and with respect to the general state of the Country,—a state which, to most persons, appeared alarming, and to all perplexing and difficult. Those Gentlemen who held

cheap the perils described in the Address, would act manfully if they either voted against it, or proposed an Amendment expressive of their opinion; but he could not comprehend the reasoning or the policy of those who were prepared to vote for the Address, and yet to tack to it such an Amendment as that now proposed.

He would ask of those, who were for mixing together sentiments so incongruous,—whether the first necessity of the time were not to put down the revolutionary spirit which had spread throughout the country? If that were admitted, he would ask next, whether the decision of the House upon this night would not go forth with tenfold authority, if unaccompanied by the mitigating appendage proposed by the Right Honourable Gentleman*? Would not the original Address, if voted unanimously, without qualification or addition, carry to the minds of those whose designs it pledged the House to crush, more complete conviction of the serious determination of the House to effect that purpose, than if reinforced by all the denunciations conveyed in the first part of the Amendment, to be afterwards weakened by the vague

* Mr. Tierney.

and unsatisfactory expressions with which the Amendment concluded? It was true, that in the first part of the Amendment, the turbulent and disaffected were rebuked in phrases of even more asperity perhaps than any contained in the original Address; but, in the concluding part, a certain sympathy was expressed, if not with the projects which the disaffected had in view, at least with the principles on which those projects were professed to be framed. Now, refinements were not readily understood by the multitude. Many of the disaffected or of the misled might conceive, however erroneously, that persons who could in any degree approve or countenance their principles, would be ready, if not to lend their assistance towards the accomplishment of their objects, at least to see the accomplishment of them without regret. They might construe any expression, however guarded, of a common feeling, into encouragement if not into co-operation;—especially when they compared what was passing in that House with what had recently taken place elsewhere. For was it not a fact that the *Radicals*, (as he was obliged to call them, though he hoped by some laborious periphrasis to avoid the term in future.)

could boast of having been associated in a public meeting with the first names in the land? that the possessors of those names, blessed with wealth, distinguished by title, elevated by honours, the boast of the country, the ornament of mankind,—had stood side by side with them on the same stage trembling for a hearing, and only obtaining that grace by their intercession? Did not the Radical Reformers recollect all this? and did they not recollect further, that these mighty Aristocrats, in entering upon a discussion in which two distinct topics were involved, on one of which they agreed with the Radical Reformers, while they widely differed from them on the other, had consented, (oh! shame to rank, property, and aristocracy!) for the sake of a little paltry triumph over their political adversaries, to keep out of sight the topic on which they differed from their new allies, and to put forward exclusively that on which they agreed? They agreed that there ought to be an inquiry into the proceedings at Manchester;—a subject unquestionably of great importance, (and regarding which it would be seen in what he should say presently, that he (Mr. C.) felt as deeply and acutely as any man,)—but still a question of insu-

lated importance, of comparatively narrow range and limited consequences:—they disagreed upon the wide subject of Parliamentary Reform. As to the importance of this last subject of difference, what was the sense of those who had moved the proposed Amendment? What were the words of the Amendment, regarding the schemes of the Radical Reformers?—“ That the House express their re-
 “ probation of the attempts which have been made
 “ to persuade the suffering classes of the people
 “ to seek relief from their distress in schemes inju-
 “ rious to themselves, dangerous to the public
 “ quiet, and inconsistent with the security of the
 “ Constitution.” Thus, then, it appeared that those exalted individuals shared the honours of the hustings with men, whom they considered as entertaining projects “ dangerous to the public quiet, and inconsistent with the security of the Constitution;” and that with such men they combined their votes on another question, throwing entirely out of their view that by which the public quiet and the Constitution were, in their opinion, endangered. This conduct was the more extraordinary if compared with the doctrines which had been preached in this debate, regarding the duties

of the great towards the lower orders of the people. "Deal kindly and openly with them (it had been said); endeavour to convince them of their mistakes; argue with them calmly and temperately; and they will, no doubt, listen with patience, and acknowledge and retract their errors." How had these doctrines been reduced to practice? When was there a more golden, a more glorious, opportunity for acting upon them than that afforded by the Yorkshire Meeting? and how had it been employed? Had any attempt been made at that meeting to argue with the Radical Reformers, and to convert them from their heretical tenets? If due advantage had been taken of that happy moment, what a signal service would the Aristocracy of the York meeting have rendered to their contemporaries and to posterity! If they had sacrificed much in feeling, much in dignity, by the mortifying condition in which they had placed themselves; all these sacrifices, and more, if more could be, would have been wisely made and well recompensed, had they seized the opportunity of rendering new laws unnecessary, by the all-powerful effect of reason and eloquence in converting or putting down the misleaders of the people. But they

did no such thing. *They* rebuke, indeed, and lecture the Radical Reformers! No, no. They knew better than to risk such a liberty. They met under a contract, (whether written or tacit he would not affirm,) that the great question on which they fundamentally differed from the Radical Reformers should not be brought into discussion; and there being but two questions for deliberation,—the one Parliamentary Reform, and the other the Calling of Parliament together for the purpose of inquiring into the proceedings at Manchester,—the first they consented entirely to slur over; and, with a most whimsical waste of time, proceeded to debate the second, although the newspapers of the day must have apprized them that Parliament was already called. Surely many of those who supported the Resolutions at York, must now in their consciences believe that the effect of that meeting had been to give encouragement to those very schemes which the Amendment under consideration now rebuked with so wholesome a severity.

Mr. LYTTLETON rose to order, and said, that the imputation of a motive, such as that stated by the Right Honourable Gentleman, was disorderly.

The SPEAKER observed, that to impute a motive was certainly disorderly; but, in his appre-

hension, the Right Honourable Gentleman did not put his argument with that intention.

Mr. CANNING resumed. "Most certainly, Sir, you have taken the just view of the purport of my observation. I said distinctly, the *effect* of the York meeting, not the intention. I say further, or rather I repeat, that I equally believe, that the *effect*, not the intention, of qualifying the Address to the Throne with the proposed Amendment, would be to encourage the hopes of the Radical Reformers, not to damp them; notwithstanding the wholesome rebuke which I have admitted one passage of the Amendment to convey."

The great point of difference, between the Address and the Amendment, was, the notice bestowed by the Amendment upon the late transactions at Manchester. Mr. C. entreated the House, before they suffered themselves to be led away by all the declamation upon this question, to review the course which it had taken before it was brought under the consideration of Parliament. Let every Honourable Member reflect on his own previous feelings on that question, even up to yesterday; and ask himself whether the *legality* of the meeting of the 16th of August were not the point on which he expected the discussion to

turn; and by the decision of which was to be determined—whether or no there were any grounds, either for a parliamentary inquiry, or for any, and what, further proceedings on the subject?

And what was now the state of that question of *legality*? Was it not settled in the mind of every impartial man, in the way directly contrary to that which, before the meeting of Parliament, had been so confidently presumed? As his Honourable and Learned Friend* had this night qualified the opinion which he, (Mr. C.) in common with, he believed, a great majority of the House, understood him to declare in the preceding night's debate, he would not be so discourteous as to dwell on the impression which the first statement of that opinion had produced upon his mind. Undoubtedly, he (Mr. C.) had understood his Honourable and Learned Friend to subscribe to the opinion that the meeting of the 16th of August was *illegal*; and he had congratulated himself on the accession of an authority which, if second, was only second, to that of the Right Hon. and Learned Gentleman over the way †, who had with such clearness and force argued and established

* Mr. Scarlett.

† Mr. Plunkett.

that opinion. But if his Hon. and Learned Friend had not thought fit to give a positive opinion that the meeting was *illegal*, at least, he had not ventured to state an opinion to the contrary. His Honourable and Learned Friend desired to withhold the expression of any opinion at all; and he (Mr. C.) had no right to disturb the tranquil state of neutrality in which his Honourable and Learned Friend had placed himself. But what was to be thought of that neutrality,—what inference but one could be drawn from it,—when, after such an argument as that of the Right Honourable and Learned Gentleman*, corroborated by the opinions of his (Mr. C's.) Honourable and Learned Friends † who sat near him, and not yet denied by any lawyer who had spoken, his Honourable and Learned Friend was satisfied to be silent, and to leave the question without the benefit of his authority either way? The Right Honourable and Learned Gentleman ‡, himself a host, had pledged his authority and his reputation as a lawyer, (pledges of which the House and the United Kingdom know, and posterity will acknowledge, the

* Mr. Plunkett.

† The Attorney and Solicitor General.

‡ Mr. Plunkett.

value,) that the meeting of the 16th of August was an *illegal* meeting. The Honourable and Learned Gentlemen * who sat near him (of whose talents he (Mr. C.) would not speak in the language which they deserved, only because sitting where they did, it might be considered as the language of partiality,) they too had pledged their reputation as lawyers to the same opinion. On the opposite side, not one Learned Gentleman had staked his reputation on the opinion that the meeting was *legal*; not one Learned Gentleman had hinted that he held such an opinion; no not one. If then there were value in authorities, that value, whether taken by weight or by tale, was on the side of the *illegality* of the meeting; while in the opposite scale would be found only a negative quantity, the unexplained hesitation of his Honourable and Learned Friend †. If there were any lawyer in the House who yet lingered, and would not, with the frankness of his Learned Friends, stake his reputation on his opinion, Mr. C. could only say that such Learned Gentlemen (whoever he might be) took as little advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Meeting of Parliament, for cor-

* The Attorney and Solicitor General. † Mr. Scarlett.

recting erroneous doctrines, as the Whigs had taken of the Meeting at York.

Such then was the state of the Manchester Question, as it stood now, after two evenings' discussion, compared with that in which it stood ten, nay, two days ago.

But the necessity of a Parliamentary Inquiry into that matter had been rested on two grounds: first, on the violation of the Constitution, by an illegal dispersion of a legal meeting; and secondly, on the demands of the Country. The first ground the House would, perhaps, think pretty well disposed of; at least until some sage of the law should gather courage to dispute the doctrine, yet unquestioned in this debate, that the meeting was not a legal but an illegal meeting. And what if it should turn out upon examination, that the second ground was in fact identical with the first? Let the House take a view of the Resolutions of some of the principal meetings which had been holden in different parts of the country; and let it be seen on what grounds they had rested this call for Parliamentary Inquiry. - He would, with permission, mention a few of them briefly to the House.

First came the Westminster Meeting, resolving,

that “ the late Meeting at Manchester was a *legal Meeting*,” that “ the people were *lawfully assembled* ;” next, the Common Council of London—“ a Meeting *legally assembled* ;” Halifax, “ *illegal dispersion of a Meeting convened according to law* ;” Lewes, “ the Meeting at Manchester, on the 16th of August, was *strictly legal and constitutional* ;”—Southwark, St. John’s Parish,—“ *perfectly legal and constitutional* ;” Richmond, “ *legal*.”—Carlisle; “ our Countrymen *legally assembled at Manchester*.”—Cumberland; the right of assembling “ in a *legal manner*” appears to have been violated.—York, County, “ a Meeting *legally assembled*.”—Reading; a perfectly *legal and constitutional Meeting*.”—London, St. Leonard’s Parish; “ *legally assembled*.” London, St. Clement’s Parish; “ peaceably assembled for a *legal and constitutional purpose*.”—Durham, County; “ *legally assembled*.”—Durham, City; (more cautiously) “ a meeting *legally, as it seems, assembled*.”—Devon County Club; (more cautiously still) “ we have not yet learnt by what act the people assembled at Manchester had placed themselves *out of the pale of the law*.” Sheffield; (in the like strain) “ *as far as appears to us, conducted legally*.”

Norfolk; (with similar reserve). "a meeting *not proved to be illegal.*" There were abundance of other Resolutions affirming the same opinion with more or less of confidence; but he had troubled the House with instances enough, to shew the general prevalence of the notion, that the meeting at Manchester was a *legal* meeting.

Now allowing all due weight to the authority of those Resolutions, yet, as they turned out to have been founded in mistake, was it not to be fairly presumed that the meetings which passed them had been taken by surprise; and had, under an entire misconception, come to decisions which they themselves would now admit to be no longer maintainable?

But it was not in manners of law only, that the meetings in the country appeared to have been misled. It was impossible to overlook those flagrant misrepresentations of fact, by which the public mind had been worked up to a fearful state of irritation. It had happened to him (Mr. C.) to take the Reports of a part of the daily press on these transactions in the gross; a course of reading which brought exaggerations and contradictions into view, much more clearly than a perusal from

day to day. The first thing that had convinced him of the extreme caution with which the testimony of these records was to be received, was an allegation, that the Magistrates of Manchester were necessarily actuated by hostile feelings towards the people, from the circumstance of their being generally "master-manufacturers." His connexion with Liverpool had given him acquaintance enough with the general state of things in Lancashire, to make him quite sure that, however true such a circumstance might have been in any other County, it could not be so in the County of Lancaster; it being (as he had often heard, and had had some opportunities of knowing) an invariable rule in that County, not to put into the Commission of the Peace persons connected with the manufacturing establishments. No person, who had ever conversed with a Lancashire man, but might have informed himself of this rule; and surely no honest man would have hazarded such an allegation without inquiry. That care, at least, every man was bound to take, before he asserted a fact to the injury of his neighbour; especially when the prejudice excited by the statement was to extend to the remotest verge

of the kingdom, and to hold up those who were the objects of it to abhorrence and detestation. The allegation, however, passed current for some days; then, indeed, came an acknowledgment that it was incorrect; accompanied, however, with the observation, that though the master manufacturers were not in the Commission of the Peace, the argument built on that assumption was not the less true. How many persons must have read the assertion, who, perhaps, to that hour, were not aware of its untruth! How many persons in the country, remained even up to the meeting of Parliament under the influence of that alarming but delusive impression! Was it not obvious that such an impression must materially have influenced the Resolutions of any meeting where it was received as true? In that proportion, therefore, was a deduction to be made from the authority of all such Resolutions.

But was this the only misrepresentation? By no means. At the meeting of the City of York came forward an Honourable Gentleman, (the Member for that City,) for whose general character and conduct he (Mr. C.) entertained the highest respect, and stated, that the sabres of the cavalry

were sharpened, with a view to the conflict of the 16th of August. It was unnecessary to say that this information from such a man came with a weight absolutely overwhelming. Afterwards, the Hon. Gentleman was convinced that he had been led to assert what was not founded on fact ; and, like an honourable and upright man as he was, he publicly retracted it. He could do no more. But, in the mean time, the Resolutions at York had passed ; and who could estimate the share which such an assertion, made when it was made, must have had in producing that temper in the meeting which sanctioned those Resolutions ? Persons who had read the statement might be subsequently disabused by the correction ; and, so far as they were concerned, the mischief might therefore be cured : but could any man calculate the extent, to which such a statement, while it remained uncontradicted, must have acted on the public feeling at many other meetings than that at which it was first promulgated ? Another Honourable Gentleman, the Member for Norfolk, had been led into a like error, purely unintentional, no doubt, but calculated like the former to do extensive mischief, respecting a woman said to have been saved by an officer of

dragoons from the barbarous rage of the yeomanry cavalry. The Honourable Gentleman had taken an opportunity, in this debate, to disavow the authority on which he told this story. He had done rightly. But what might not have been the effect and operation of the story in the mean time?

Deduct, therefore, the amount of the impression made by these, and abundance of other similar fables; deduct the effect of the persuasion, (the assumed, uncontroverted, and unquestioned persuasion) that the Manchester Meeting was a legal meeting; and then judge, whether public meetings, proceeding to discussion under such influences, could have decided with equity and temper; whether we should not do those meetings the greatest possible injustice if we were to imagine that they would, under better information, persevere in decisions so unfairly and surreptitiously obtained? “No, Sir, it is not till all the meetings which assembled during the prevalence of these mistakes and delusions, shall have re-resolved all their Resolutions, with the full knowledge that the Manchester Meeting was *illegal*,—that the Magistrates were *not* “master manufacturers,”—that the

swords of the yeomanry were *not* sharpened with a view to the 16th of August,—and that the horrible stories, of which that related by the Member for Norfolk is a specimen, were *not* true,—that we can have a pretence for granting a Parliamentary inquiry, on the ground that the Country demands it.

“ Undoubtedly, Sir, the Meeting at Manchester, was attended with great and grievous calamities. Much suffering was occasioned by it to all classes of the inhabitants of that place; and the loss of lives which occurred in the dispersion of the assembly must be deplored by every mind that has the smallest tincture of humanity. In deploring those occurrences, I yield to no man living. But I know how cautiously I must deal with matters of this kind. I know well the nature of the artifices too successfully practised by those who endeavour to pervert the public judgment by the slander of individual character. *Experto credite*. The process is of this kind:—An incendiary narrator of what passed at Manchester, affirms, perhaps, that “ one hundred persons were slain.” Suppose, indignant at this extravagant falshood, I answer, “ No, no, not a hundred, the number of sufferers was six only.” “ Six *only!*” is then the

exclamation, "O barbarian! it is thus that you trifle with the sacrifice of human life!" This, Sir, is the common trick. It consists in first putting forth a monstrous exaggeration of calamity, for the express purpose of inviting contradiction; and then holding up to public indignation the man who reduces the exaggeration to the reality, as if he were the unfeeling defender and approver of whatever part of the calamity he does not deny. The trick is at last found out; but it has unhappily too often done its work for the day, before detection. The agents who employ it know their lesson well. The school in which they learned it is that of the French Revolution. It is the old trick of 1794 and 1795; the too-successful expedient of Marat and Robespierre. But, deplorable and extensive as the calamities of the 16th of August were, to whom are they to be attributed? Is it not to those, who, actuated by selfish motives of ambition—(no, I will not say ambition; I will not squander a word often applied to nobler aspirations on such base designs)—is it not to those who seek mischief for mischief's sake;—who would let loose the whirlwind, though with the conscious incapacity to direct it;—who would lay the fabric

of social order in ruin, not so much in the hope of rising upon that ruin, as for the satisfaction of contemplating the havoc and desolation which they had made ;—who, outcasts of society, would revenge themselves upon society by scattering and dissolving the very elements of which it is composed ;—Is it not to such persons,—to the assemblers of those alarming multitudes, under the preposterous pretence of petition or deliberation, but in fact for the purposes of intimidation and disorder,—that are to be justly attributed all the consequences which follow upon assemblages so wantonly congregated, and upon passions so wickedly inflamed? To *them* the widowed mother and orphan child must trace their miseries! On *their* heads be for ever fixed the responsibility of all the blood that has been shed!”

He came now to the speech of his Honourable and Learned Friend*. His Honourable and Learned Friend was far too wise and too wary to pledge himself to an opinion in favour of the *legality* of the meeting of the 16th of August ; he knew well, moreover, that if any excess had been committed in the dispersion of even an illegal

* Sir J. Mackintosh.

meeting, the tribunals of the law were open for redress: but being desirous, at the same time, of making out a case to shew that the proceedings at Manchester ought to be made the subject of Parliamentary inquiry, he had been driven to the most whimsical refinements in support of this proposition. Others had stated the magnitude of the question, as a cogent reason for the intervention of Parliament; but his Learned Friend contended, on the contrary, that the subject was of so subtle a nature, that the searching minuteness of Parliamentary investigation could alone bear upon it with effect. The powers of the House, like the proboscis of an elephant, were now to be expanded, to embrace the largest objects; and again to be contracted, that they might lay hold of the smallest. They were to tear up an oak, or to pick up a pin. Others had charged upon the Magistrates the most atrocious wickedness,—falsehood, treachery, wilful breach of law, and deliberate murder;—and had contended, that the bar of the House of Commons was the only tribunal whose jurisdiction was sufficiently grand and awful to comprehend the enormity of such crimes. His Honourable and Learned Friend, on the contrary,

suggested that the guilt of the magistrates might possibly be no more than a small error in discretion; and it was therefore that *he* thought the bar of the House of Commons the fit tribunal, as being the only one whose touch was fine enough to handle an offence so delicate and evanescent.

Others had contended that the courts of law were incompetent to try the Magistrates; because—he knew not exactly why—the reason had never been very distinctly explained: but whatever it might be, the force of it had been within these few days considerably abated by some blundering fellow, who, not being let into the secret—not being apprized how great an object it was to keep such matters exclusively for the cognizance of the House of Commons,—had actually moved for an Information against the Coventry Magistrates, for the dispersion of the meeting at Coventry; which Motion the Court of King's Bench had entertained. Now, it was quite obvious, that what could be done in the case of Coventry, might be equally done in the case of Manchester; so of that argument—the incompetency of the Courts of Justice—there was happily an end. His Honourable and Learned Friend, however, did not deny the com-

petency of the Court of King's Bench; but he doubted whether that Court would condemn for any thing but misconduct; and he wanted a trial, where error in discretion (if it could be substantiated) might assume the colour, and be visited with the penalties, of guilt; and therefore was he for a trial in the House of Commons. Nay, his Honourable and Learned Friend, and others who had followed him, went further. They thought that even if there were no guilt at all, real or imaginary, substantial or constructive, still a trial in the House of Commons could do the Magistrates no harm. Why should an innocent man fear a trial? What more delightful, what more enviable, than the sensations of virtue under unmerited persecution? His Honourable and Learned Friend had singular notions of happiness. A wise antient had said—

————— “ Dicitur beatus,
“ Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet.”

But his Honourable and Learned Friend had found out, that even in this life a man may be blessed beyond the ordinary lot of humanity. This **excess** of sublunary enjoyment was to be

found (it seems) in a public trial, with a consciousness of innocence. Happy, happy Mr. Hastings! who, for seven long years, continued in uninterrupted fruition of that which is now discovered to be the consummation of human felicity! "These, Sir, are refinements which I confess I do not comprehend. If the Magistrates have sinned against the law, the courts of law are open to try them. If they are innocent, I, for my part, will never consent that an innocent man shall be dragged daily before our bar, amidst the taunts of enemies, and under the misconstruction of the public, with the consciousness of his innocence alone to support him."

It appeared to him (Mr. C.) that even justice ought to be dealt between man and man. In former times, and in other countries, (certainly never in this happy land,) favour and affection had been shewn to the higher, in preference to the lower, classes of society. At present, in consequence perhaps of one of those oscillations in the human mind which succeed each other with reference to every subject of human interest, there appeared to be a prevalent disposition to presume in favour of the lower, against the higher, classes. He by no

means blamed this disposition. If any inequality were allowed to exist, the preponderance ought certainly to be on the side of the weak and unprotected. But equal justice was after all the wisest and honestest course. Now, what kind of equality would be administered between those who assembled the illegal meeting of the 16th of August, and those who dispersed it, if the Amendment proposed by the Right Honourable Gentleman were conceded to by the House? Those who had endeavoured to set the country in a flame, would be allowed to traverse their Indictments, and to go to their trial at the period which might best please them;—the magistrates, who had exerted themselves to defeat these machinations, would be allowed no choice, no challenge, but would be put on their trial without delay. The former, besides being permitted to go to trial when they liked, would have the further advantage, that the witnesses against them would be examined upon oath; while the latter, when brought at a moment's warning to the bar of the House of Commons, would be arraigned on evidence not given under that solemn sanction. And this was what his Honourable and Learned Friend

opposite, with the bandage over his eyes, and the balance in his hand, was prepared to mete out as the award of impartial Justice !

That the House were fully aware of the difference between evidence on oath, and that taken without such sanction, was manifest from the fact, that, in all cases in which the immediate right of their own Members to their seats in that House was involved, the matter was referred to the consideration of a Committee, before whom evidence was given on oath, under all the penalties for false-swearing.

But, to put the injustice of the proceeding recommended to them in a still stronger point of view, let the House contemplate the result of a trial of the Magistrates in the House of Commons, under the alternative either of condemnation or acquittal. Suppose the House, by a vote of the majority, to find that no blame was imputable to the Magistrates of Manchester ; would that vote save them from a prosecution in a Court of Justice ? No. The inquiry would merely furnish evidence against them, disclose their case, and send them prejudged to the legal tribunal. If on the contrary, a majority of the House should find the Magistrates

guilty of the offence with which they were charged, and address the Throne to remove them from the Commission; would that save them from a prosecution in a Court of Justice? No. The decision of the House, upon unsworn testimony, having inflicted a disgrace worse than the severest legal punishment, they would then be called to trial again in another Court, where the previous decision could not but operate to their prejudice, and where even acquittal could not restore their station or their fame. And this was equal justice! Surely, it was impossible for any man, who duly considered the subject, and who wished to follow the great rule of dealing by others as he would wish others to deal by him, to agree to such an Amendment.

There was still another view, however, of the proposed investigation,—its effect on the character of the House of Commons. He did not attribute to the Right Hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment, the design of bringing the House into disgrace: but he must say that, if the Amendment had been proposed by any of the—he was at a loss how to denominate them—the white-hatted gentry, he should suspect that they had a double

game in view. For if, by such evidence as has been described, the House should be surprised into a decision against the Magistrates, then the vengeance of the Radical Reformers would be fully gratified. If, on the contrary, the Magistrates should be discharged of all blame by a vote of the House, there would then be afforded a new ground of clamour against the House of Commons. Either result would be delicious to those gentlemen. In the one event, they would crush the men whose firmness had defeated their machinations, in the other, they would gain a new power for undermining the Constitution. But, as the House itself could not possibly have either of those objects in view, he trusted, that they would not hesitate to put an end to the alternative by rejecting the Amendment.

So great was the inconvenience of involving that House unnecessarily in judicial investigation, that he confessed he could conceive few cases, except those which required the exercise of the power of Impeachment, in which the interposition of the House of Commons was not attended with a risk of interrupting the course of Justice, and of throwing discredit on the ordinary administration of the

Laws. What could be a stronger proof of this tendency, than the sort of use which an Honourable Gentleman had thought himself warranted to make, in the debate of that day, of the short-hand report of an unfinished law proceeding,—the Coroner's Inquest at Oldham? What business had the House of Commons with that proceeding,—which was now under revisal by the proper authority, the Court of King's Bench?—or what advantage could be derived to the cause of law or liberty by the attempt to cast odium on judicial proceedings? The ill example that was sometimes set in that House, was followed but too closely elsewhere. The Coroner's Inquest was, to be sure, a tribunal of secondary dignity: but when, before, was any Magistrate, however inferior in dignity, braved and brow-beaten, day after day, upon the bench? When, before, was the majesty of Justice insulted in her own Temple, as had been lately practised in Courts of still higher—of the highest—authority?—He trusted that there was not in that House, or in the Country, a warmer friend of rational liberty than himself; but amongst the first elements of liberty he had always understood to be the separation of administrative and judicial functions; and

every attempt to unite them in the same hands, must, in his opinion, be attended with danger to the Constitution.

“ But it is not only the Courts of Law, (which may, perhaps, heretofore, have been reviled by those on whom it was their duty to inflict the penalties of justice,—though never before so openly and grossly insulted)—it is not the Courts of Law only that in these days are held up to suspicion and hatred :—but other, the most favourite Institutions of British judicial Administration; Institutions which are peculiar to England, and which excite, beyond all others, the admiration and envy of Foreign Nations. Even the sacred name of Juries has been tainted with insinuation; and the unpaid Magistracy of the Country are attempted to be degraded in the public esteem. As if renouncing the high station which we maintain in Europe, as if anxious to deter those Nations which have followed our steps in victory from imitating (as they are eagerly bent on doing) our example in civil life, we have persons among us who are busily employed in defaming those invaluable institutions which are at once the pride and the safeguard of our civil polity. Depend upon it, Sir, if

these attempts should be successful, the evil which they entail will be altogether irreparable. One of the most beautiful of our moral Poets has said, of the lower classes of the agricultural part of the community—that,

“ Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade;

“ A breath can make them as a breath has made :

“ But a bold Peasantry, their Country's pride,

“ When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.”

“ So say I of the higher ranks of that same portion of the community—the unpaid Magistracy of the Country.—I do not dread the inroads attempted to be made on the constitution of Parliament, with half the horror that I do the efforts to disparage the character of that Magistracy. A new House of Commons might be elected. The Monarch might create new Peers. New Statesmen would be found to conduct the affairs of Government, if the present race of public men were swept from the earth. But once “ destroy ” that which “ can never be supplied,” the voluntary and gratuitous dispensation of justice; once sour the public against that, perhaps the sole, remnant of natural authority; once thoroughly disgust and dishearten that thankless self-devotion, that unbought sacri-

face of time and trouble, that benevolent homage of power and wealth to the interests of the humble and the poor, which characterize the country Magistracy;—let that connecting link between the higher and lower orders of society be once broken,—and by that single blow more will be done to disjoint the State, than could be accomplished by the Radical Reformers, with all their outrageous declarations, and with all their pikes—when they shall use them.”

He would now, with the permission of the House, turn to the main subject, of which the House appeared to have almost lost sight,—the Speech from the Throne. In that Speech, the state of the Country was painted in colours such as those who advised the Crown had seldom before been under the sad necessity of employing. That the picture was not overcharged, however, he had a right to presume, as no imputation of that nature had been uttered from any quarter. With the exception of the Honourable Baronet * opposite, no one who had touched on the meeting at Manchester had spoken of the designs of the movers of that meeting, manifested not only by their own decla-

* Sir Francis Burdett.

rations, but by all their preparations, their emblems and their array, as other than most wicked and indefensible. The Honourable Baronet, indeed, had talked of the flags unfurled on that occasion, as mere matters of parade. But who did not know, that banners, ribbons, and other such devices, might be as clear indications of purpose as words? When, some years ago, an Orange cockade was worn, on particular days, in Ireland, (much more generally than he believed and hoped it was at present,) would it have been an answer to the complaints against such a practice, to say, "What signifies a yellow ribbon?"—Such things had great signification. Who but the Honourable Baronet could doubt, that the flags of the meeting at Manchester meant defiance? What could the inscription "Equal Representation or Death" intend, but that those displaying it were solicitous for that which was incompatible with the Constitution, and that they were ready to purchase it with their blood? Could such a meeting be legal? Was it possible that any one of the contrivers or abettors of it could seriously imagine it to be so? Could it be deemed so, in common sense? The Common Law (as had been truly said by the Right

Hon. and Learned Gentleman*,) was the perfection of common sense: but what law, or what sense, could consider as peaceable and legal, meetings of forty or fifty thousand persons, convened by no known authority, and marching together in military array, at which doctrines subversive of the Constitution were promulgated without disguise, and the determination to carry those doctrines into effect by physical force was audaciously avowed?

He would borrow, on this point, an illustration with which the speech of his Hon. and Learned Friend had furnished him†. His Hon. and Learned Friend had told them, that Lancashire had at different periods been the seat of different kinds of disaffection; of Jacobitism, in the last century, as of Jacobinism at present. Now, he would ask his Hon. and Learned Friend; nay, he would appeal to any one of the Hon. Gentlemen opposite,—to any Whig amongst them,—for an answer to this question,—If, in the year 1715, or in the year 1745, or in any year between those two periods, fifty or twenty or ten thousand Lancashire Jacobites had assembled by beat of drum,

* Mr. Plunkett.

† Sir J. Mackintosh.

on the 10th of June, with white roses in their hats, and with the motto " Legitimate Monarchy" embroidered on their standards, would that have been a legal assembly? If any unfortunate Tory had, after such an occurrence, stood up in Parliament, and protested that those symbols were perfectly innocent of any improper meaning;—that white was no colour—and that the words " Legitimate Monarchy" referred, beyond all question, to the Royal Family just established by law;—would he have been listened to with credulity and complacency by the Whig Powers of that day? Would he not rather have been reviled as a driveller or traitor; and a new Whig Law have been passed for the suppression of such innocent assemblages, at least as strong as the Riot Act itself? And pray, what was the difference between the two proceedings, that of Manchester in August 1819, and that which he had imagined as taking place in the same county, in 1715 or 1745? Why, that the one would have indicated a design of changing the reigning dynasty; while the other was manifestly directed against the whole frame of the Constitution. Any attempt to bring the multitude, and the menaces, and the symbols,

and the array of the Manchester Meeting within the pale of Law, was as fond and as futile as would have been the attempt of a Tory Opposition to assign to the Jacobite mob, the character of loyalty to the Hanover Succession.

“ The Honourable Baronet has adjured the House to consider the necessity of conciliation. If by conciliation be meant the expression of sympathy in the distresses of the people, I do most sincerely declare that that sympathy cannot be more deeply felt by any man or set of men in the House or in the country, than by my colleagues and myself. Indeed can such a declaration be necessary? Even if we had not, like other men, the feelings of human kindness, is it possible that we should be so blind to our own interests, as well as insensible to our duties, as not to feel that the credit as well as the permanency of our administration depends upon the peace and tranquillity of the Kingdom, and therewith on the prosperity and comfort of the labouring classes of the Community? But I apprehend, that what the Honourable Baronet means by conciliation is concession; and concession in the shape of a Parliamentary Reform. And this, Sir, brings me

to the topic which was introduced into this debate by the Right Honourable Gentleman who moved the Amendment, and to which he did me the honour to challenge my particular attention. That challenge has been repeated by the Honourable Baronet. The House will, therefore, see that it is not in my option to decline adverting to this topic; although I could have been well contented to defer it to a more suitable opportunity.

The Honourable Baronet warns me to reconsider my opinions on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. The Right Honourable Gentleman has been pleased to compliment me as the most strenuous opposer of a Reform in Parliament, and as one main obstacle to the success of that project. He tells me that I am as *radical* at one end of the question, as those who are termed "Radicals," are at the other. The Right Hon. Gentleman will pardon me for observing, as I pass, that his metaphor is none of the correctest. I never heard of any plant with a root at both its ends. The root usually tends downwards—*radice in Tartara*;—and I will not dispute that tendency with those who have pre-occupied the title.

But I have no reserve on the subject of Parliamentary Reform ; and, called upon as I have been, I will without the smallest hesitation state my opinions now ; declining, however, to argue them, till the period of more particular discussion shall arrive. I am no bigotted supporter of the present order of things as faultless and perfect, or even as necessarily the best that it may be possible for human wisdom to devise : but what I have always maintained is, that the House of Commons, with all its imperfections on its head, discharges well the functions assigned to it by the Constitution, and is to all practical purposes identified with the people whom it represents. I have always contended, therefore, that any sweeping change—any change not very limited and very well considered,—must be attended with great hazard. To say that some heaven-born Radical Reformer might not by possibility imagine a scheme of a House of Commons, infinitely more beautiful in theory, is a presumption of which I am not guilty. But until I see such a scheme before me in all its scope and in all its detail, I shall feel it my duty to resist any unexplained approaches to Reform ; because such approaches tend to weaken what exists, without

substituting any thing better, or affording any pledge that a preferable substitute can be found.

The course of reasoning, which I think myself entitled—which I think it must be allowed to be most expedient—to pursue on this subject, is as follows :

I claim no other privilege for the existing state of Parliament, than that which is allowed to all existing institutions,—that the burthen of proof that a change in them is necessary shall rest with those who propose the change.

Reformation (I speak not here of partial remedies applied—as this House is in the habit of applying them from time to time—to particular instances of detected corruption, but of a general systematic reformation) must be of one of two sorts. It may be a restoration, upon the original principles of the institution to be reformed, to the state in which it stood at some former time, and from which it is alleged to have degenerated ; or, it may be a re-construction of the institution on principles altogether new.

My first question to the proposer of such general Reformation, therefore, is, “ Which of these two modes have you in view ? ” If the answer be,

“ Restoration to what the House of Commons was in former times ;” I then request that the period may be specified at which the House of Commons was, according to the Reformer, in the perfection to which he wishes to restore it. If, on the other hand, the answer be, that it is intended to re-construct the House on new principles; then, I think, it is not too much to ask that those principles shall be clearly defined, before we are required to take a single practical step towards the abolition of the existing frame of the House of Commons.

Even after all these explanations had been given, I should think myself at liberty to compare the dangers of a change with the advantages of the change specifically proposed. But, without these preliminary explanations, without knowing exactly what is the nature and extent of the change intended, I should think that to countenance any abstract declaration of the expediency of a change, would be madness.

I differ from some Gentlemen who have spoken in this debate, in my belief as to the degree in which the desire for Parliamentary Reform prevails throughout the nation. I very much doubt

whether that desire prevails much beyond the class of determined Reformers,—except, perhaps, among timid and indolent persons, who, untaught by experience, or fearful of exertion, imagine that concession to an invader is the way to peace. With the turbulent description of Reformers, it is agreed on all hands, there can be no dallying or compromise. To attempt to conciliate them would be utterly hopeless. And I repeat, I do not believe the sound part of the community to be at all widely infected by the love of change. To use a figure of Mr. BURKE'S, I will not mistake the importunate chink of a few grasshoppers chirping under a fern bush, for the voice of the lordly oxen that stray in sober tranquillity over the surface of the field.

I must fairly say, however, that if I could once bring myself to admit the premises which the Honourable Baronet lays down, I should acknowledge his conclusion from them to be more logical than that of those who call themselves moderate Reformers. The latter affirm the existence of a wide-spreading corruption as broadly as the Honourable Baronet. But the Honourable Baronet advises a new construction of the House; while

the moderate Reformers profess to be satisfied with some very trifling alteration. Now, if the disease be as great and as malignant as it is described, I could not be satisfied with so partial a remedy. But I do not admit such to be the extent and malignity of the disease. I do not admit, for instance, that the close Boroughs, against which so much has been said, and which are the most obvious and striking anomalies in a plan of representation theoretically considered, are by any means a rotten and gangrened part of the Constitution, to be cut off without mercy or remorse. I think them not only defensible, but serviceable. This opinion, Sir, I hold at least disinterestedly. I can have no fear that Liverpool should be involved in any plan of disfranchisement. And I protest, I believe, that the Administration of which I am a member, would not lose, but would benefit, by the abolition of the close-borough representation. No small proportion of those Boroughs is in the hands of our opponents. If the Boroughs of Knaresborough, of Tavistock, of Horsham, of Winchelsea, of Peterborough, were disfranchised, and the right of election were transferred to more populous places

—to Birmingham, to Manchester, to Sheffield, to Leeds ;—I really do not believe that His Majesty's Ministers would lose numbers in this House ; on the contrary, I believe that they would receive more support than at present. But I should regret very much if, by such a measure, the House should be deprived of so many of the great lights * which I see in the opposite quarter of the horizon.

The House, and the Right Honourable Gentleman, will do me the justice to acknowledge, that I have stated my opinions on this question without prejudice, without passion, without any personal or party bias. I think now, as I always have thought, that the Constitution of the House of Commons is practically beneficial, though I do not pretend that it is conformable to any uniform theory. If I am asked for instance, why 658 is a more proper number of members than 657 or 659 ?—I confess myself at a loss to answer the question. It is the collective character of the House which I regard ; and I maintain that in its

* Mr. Tierney, Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. J. P. Grant, Mr. Brougham, Mr. Scarlett, &c., are among the Representatives for the Boroughs enumerated by Mr. Canning.

aggregate capacity, and in its general operation, it faithfully represents not only the general interests of the Kingdom, but the particular interests of every assignable portion of it; and that it follows, not precipitately, but deliberately and considerately, the real wishes, opinions, and feelings, of the people.

The Gentlemen who oppose the government, contend indeed, on all occasions, that they are right, and that Ministers are wrong; and that the House of Commons, agreeing with the Ministers, are therefore wrong with them, and ought, like them, to be sent about their business. But this is mere assertion; and is, in truth, a very short way of disposing of a very complicated question. Do those Gentlemen who are in a minority in this House, find themselves in a majority in the country? They will not say so; they cannot think so. Take, for example, the question of the late war. Have they any doubt that, through the whole course of that war (to which they now, by the way, attribute all our distresses,) a majority—an immense majority—of the Nation were of the same way of thinking with the majorities of the two Houses of Par-

liament? Do they doubt that, in that glorious war, in which England saved Europe, and with Europe saved herself, her Government was enabled to effect these mighty purposes, not only by a confiding Parliament, but by a concurring people? To say that such a war was, or could be, carried on in contradiction to the wishes of the country,—that it was a war against the people,—is absurd. A war of twenty years! accompanied with privations and sacrifices never before heard of! and all cheerfully borne by a people, reluctant and unconsenting, insensible to the demands of their own security, and deaf to the shouts of triumphant valour!—borne, too, without murmur, or remonstrance!—the statement refutes itself. Gentlemen know that it does so. They know that the war was undertaken for the destruction of tyranny, and for the vindication of the liberties of mankind. They know that the glory acquired to England, and the interest felt in that glory by the people of England, were as great, as the majorities in Parliament were overwhelming; and they know that those parliamentary majorities were but the express image of the sentiments of the nation.

There is another consideration which induces me to distrust the Honourable Baronet's assumption of a general popularity for the doctrines of which he is the champion. It is, that this question of Parliamentary Reform is never eagerly agitated, unless when some poignant, though passing, difficulties assail the country. This was notoriously the case at the first promulgation of the doctrines of Reform, towards the end of the American war. It was the case in 1793, when the desolating principles of the French Revolution, and its tremendous military successes, disquieted sober minds with an apprehension of ruin to the Kingdom. It was the case in 1797, at the period of the Mutiny at the Nore; and again in 1798, during the height of the disturbances in Ireland. In 1810 and 1812, the question of Reform was indeed brought forward, but without exciting much interest, or receiving any material support, either within doors or without; and from the latter period it slept until the year before last, when the Hon. Baronet burst upon us with the elaborate plan of Major Cartwright. To that admirable system, and to the peculiar doctrines of that patriarch of Reform, I consider the Hon. Baronet as inviolably pledged.

He is the undoubted and sole heir of the venerable Major. I hope that when that system and those doctrines shall descend to him by right of inheritance, he will enjoy them to as full a maturity of age and intellect as his predecessor; and that he will finally hand them down unimpaired to some successor, equally gifted with himself, but doomed to be, equally with himself, unsupported and hopeless in the prosecution of them.

Beside this plan of the Honourable Baronet, I am not aware of any specific proposition for Reform now before the Public—except the threatened one, from the other side of the House, for shortening the duration of Parliaments. It is now, Sir, about one hundred years since the Whigs made Parliaments Septennial from Triennial. During the first half century after that change, they monopolized the Administration of the Government. So far, all went well. But for nearly the whole of the last fifty years, the Whigs have been out of office. Are they anxious to try whether they may better their chance by undoing the work of their own hands, and returning to Triennial Parliaments?

Now, Sir, as to Triennial Parliaments, I confess

I object to them—Anti-Reformer as I am:—but if I were a Radical Reformer, I should object to them infinitely more. On my own part I object to them for all the reasons so often urged in debate against the repeal of the Septennial Act, in the course of the twenty years that followed its enactment; reasons, I admit, of expediency rather than of principle. But as a Reformer, I should reject with indignation an attempt to delude me with a specious appearance of regeneration; calculated to aggravate in effect that very inequality of representation of which the Reformers particularly complain. The objects of their strongest antipathy we know are the close boroughs, in defence of which I have ventured to say a few unpopular words; they hold it an abomination, that Tavistock should return by nomination as many Members, as York or Bristol or Liverpool by free election. But what could so much enhance the advantage of Tavistock over York, or Bristol, or Liverpool, as increasing the frequency of elections? The trouble, the anxiety, the expense—the lawful expense, I mean—of a contested election for a populous place, are no light matter: while the quiet sitter for a close borough may be returned by the dash of a pen, without moving out of his

easy chair. This takes place now, once in seven, or, as is the practice, once in about six, years ; Make it to happen once in three years ;—you double the disadvantage against the popular representative ;—and then have the assurance to call this a Reform !

But let not Gentlemen deceive themselves with a foud expectation, that dexterous contrivances such as these, or that any palliatives, however specious, can amuse the real Reformers. It is not with such sacrifices that you can gorge and satisfy the all-devouring monster of Radical Reform. No, no, no. The Reformers mean, and they demand, a strict personal representation ; they mean and they demand a direct expression of the people's will.

“ I can only say, that *if* government be a matter of will, (I thought it had been matter of reason and convention) and *if* the will of the whole nation be once fully represented—these two premises being assumed,—the conclusion that follows from them is to my mind inevitable : it is shortly and plainly this, that the assembly so fully representing the national will, must be, and in sound logic ought to be, the whole Government. There

is no room, no pretence for any other power in the State. Kings and Lords are useless incumbrances: and such a House of Commons all in all.

Such, I say, is the logical, the necessary, the unavoidable inference from the premises, once admitted, of the Honourable Baronet and the Radical Reformers. I content myself for the present with merely stating them, not presuming to find fault with them, nor proceeding to argue them on this occasion. Opportunities will probably occur for that purpose. I should not even have touched upon the subject of Parliamentary Reform to-night, had it not been for the taunting invitation of the Right Honourable Gentleman, and the solemn admonition of the Honourable Baronet. But, so called upon, I could not decline stating my opinions, without appearing to shrink from them. I do not shrink from them. I have stated them, I hope, intelligibly; I am sure without any reserve.

Other warnings are addressed, not to me only, but to the House, as to the lessons to be learned from the French Revolution. Undoubtedly these two lessons are to be learned from the French Revolution; first, that proper changes ought not

to be delayed too long ; secondly, that précipitate changes are subversive of the peace and order and happiness of nations. But can any man look to the history of the ill-fated Louis XVI., and say, that it was his obstinate adherence to the rights of the throne which he inherited, that imbittered the last years of his reign, and finally led him to the scaffold ? Can any man seriously contemplate the course of events which brought that monarchy to ruin, without trembling at the consequences of a too obsequious subservience to temporary popularity ?—without perceiving how easy and how dangerous is the mistake of sacrificing the interests of a whole community to the clamours of a discontented few ? Let not then the lessons of the French Revolution be lost upon us ! When our ears are assailed by clamour for change, let us not be unmindful of the silent apprehensions, the confiding patience of that large portion of the community whom these clamours distract and appal ! Let us not mistake their silence for acquiescence ; nor their confidence for carelessness ! The feeling of alarm is deep, and general, and just. The persons, whose machinations are the subject of this debate, and the cause of our being called to

gether at this season, are valueless as motes in the sun-beam, compared with the loyal, quiet, unmurmuring millions, who look up to Parliament for protection. Let them not look up to you in vain! Let not the claims, and the welfare of those millions,—of the loyal and the good, of the peaceful and the pious,—be disregarded by the House, in deliberating upon the measures which are necessary for the safety of the Country.—“ *Vos ne*
“ *populo Romano deesse videamini providete! Ob-*
“ *sessæ fascibus et telis impiæ conjurationis vobis sup-*
“ *plex manus tendit patria communis. Vobis se, vobis*
“ *vitam omnium civium, vobis arcem et capitolium,*
“ *vobis aras penatium, vobis muros atque urbis tecta,*
“ *vobis templa deorum atque delubra commendat.*”

ADDRESS.

“ THAT an humble Address be presented to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to return the thanks of this House to His Royal Highness for his Most Gracious Speech from the Throne :

“ To express to His Royal Highness the great concern with which we receive the intimation of the continuance of His Majesty’s lamented Indisposition :

“ To assure His Royal Highness that we learn with the deepest regret that the Seditious Practices so long prevalent in some of the Manufacturing Districts of the Country, have been continued with increased activity since we were last assembled in Parliament ; that they have led to proceedings incompatible with the peaceful habits of the industrious classes of the Community ; and that a spirit is now fully manifested utterly hostile to the Constitution of this Kingdom, and aiming not only at the change of those political Institutions which have hitherto constituted the pride and security of this Country ; but at the subversion of the Rights of Property, and of all order in Society :

“ To return our thanks to His Royal Highness for his gracious intention to lay before Parliament the necessary information on this subject ; and to assure His Royal Highness, that we shall not fail to apply our immediate and most anxious attention to the consideration of such measures as may be found requisite for the counteraction and suppression of a system, which, if not effectually checked, must bring confusion and ruin on the Nation :

“ To thank His Royal Highness for having directed the Estimates for the ensuing year to be laid before us :

“ To assure His Royal Highness, that while we regret the necessity of providing for the protection of the lives and property of His Majesty’s loyal subjects by any addition to our Military Force, we shall be happy to find that the arrangements for this purpose have been made in the manner likely to be least burthensome to the Country :

“ To express our satisfaction at being informed, that though the Revenue has undergone some fluctuations, it appears to be again in a course of progressive improvement :

“ That we deeply lament with His Royal Highness the distress experienced by many of our fellow-subjects, in consequence of the depression which still continues to exist in some branches of our Manufactures ; and earnestly join in the hope expressed by His Royal Highness, that it may be found to arise from causes of a temporary nature :

“ That we hear with much satisfaction the friendly disposition of Foreign Powers towards this Country, and gratefully acknowledge His Royal Highness’s anxious wish to take advantage of this season of peace to secure and advance our internal prosperity ; fully sensible, however, that the successful prosecution of this important object must essentially depend on the preservation of domestic tranquillity :

“ To assure His Royal Highness that he may rely with the most perfect confidence on the loyalty of the great body of the people ; but that we are at the same time fully convinced, that it will require our utmost vigilance and exertion, collectively and individually, to check the dissemination of the doctrines of Treason and Impiety, and to impress upon the minds of all classes of His Majesty’s subjects that it is from the cultivation of the Principles of Religion, and from a just subordination to lawful authority, that we can alone expect the continuance of that Divine Favour and Protection which has hitherto been so signally experienced by this Kingdom.”

An Amendment was proposed to be made to this Address, by adding at the end thereof the words,—“ To assure His Royal Highness, that, called together at a season when unexampled distress and extraordinary agitation prevail in some of the most populous districts of the Kingdom, we will immediately proceed to take into our most serious consideration the various matters contained in His Royal Highness’s gracious Speech from the Throne,

“ Humbly to express to His Royal Highness our reprobation of

the attempts which have been made to persuade the suffering classes of the people to seek relief from their distress in schemes injurious to themselves, dangerous to the public quiet, and inconsistent with the security of the Constitution, which it is our duty and determination to maintain against every species of encroachment or attack :

“ To represent to His Royal Highness that while we thus declare our determined resolution firmly to uphold the just authority of the Laws, we feel that we are called upon by a sense of duty, so to conduct ourselves as to satisfy the people that their complaints will at all times receive from us that just attention, and their rights that ready protection, which is indispensable to their safety and freedom :

“ That this seems to us more particularly necessary, in order to maintain that confidence in the public institutions of the Country, which constitutes the best safeguard of all Law and Government :

“ That we have seen with deep regret the events which took place at Manchester on the 16th of August last ; and that, without pronouncing any opinion on the circumstances which occurred on that melancholy occasion, we feel that they will demand our earliest attention, in order to dissipate the alarm to which they have given birth, by a diligent and impartial inquiry, which may shew that the measures of extraordinary severity, then resorted to, were the result of the most urgent and unavoidable necessity : or prove that an important Constitutional Privilege cannot be violated, and the lives of His Majesty's subjects sacrificed with impunity.”

The numbers on the division were—

For the Amendment,..... 150

Against it,..... 381

Majority for the original Address, 231

THE END.

1. *Pharmaceutical Innovation and the Public Good*
 2. *The Role of Intellectual Property Rights*
 3. *Patent Law and the Balance of Interests*
 4. *The Impact of Patent Term Extensions*
 5. *Generic Entry and Market Competition*
 6. *Public Health and Access to Medicines*
 7. *The Challenge of Off-Patent Sales*
 8. *Regulatory Hurdles and Market Entry*
 9. *The Role of Government in Drug Pricing*
 10. *Global Perspectives on Patent Law*
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 12. *Conclusion: A Call for Balanced Policy*

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