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JEM GUDGEON,

OR

RADICAL CONDUCT.

BY

A REFORMER.



—◆—
BEING A CONTINUATION OF

"WILL WAVER, OR RADICAL PRINCIPLES."

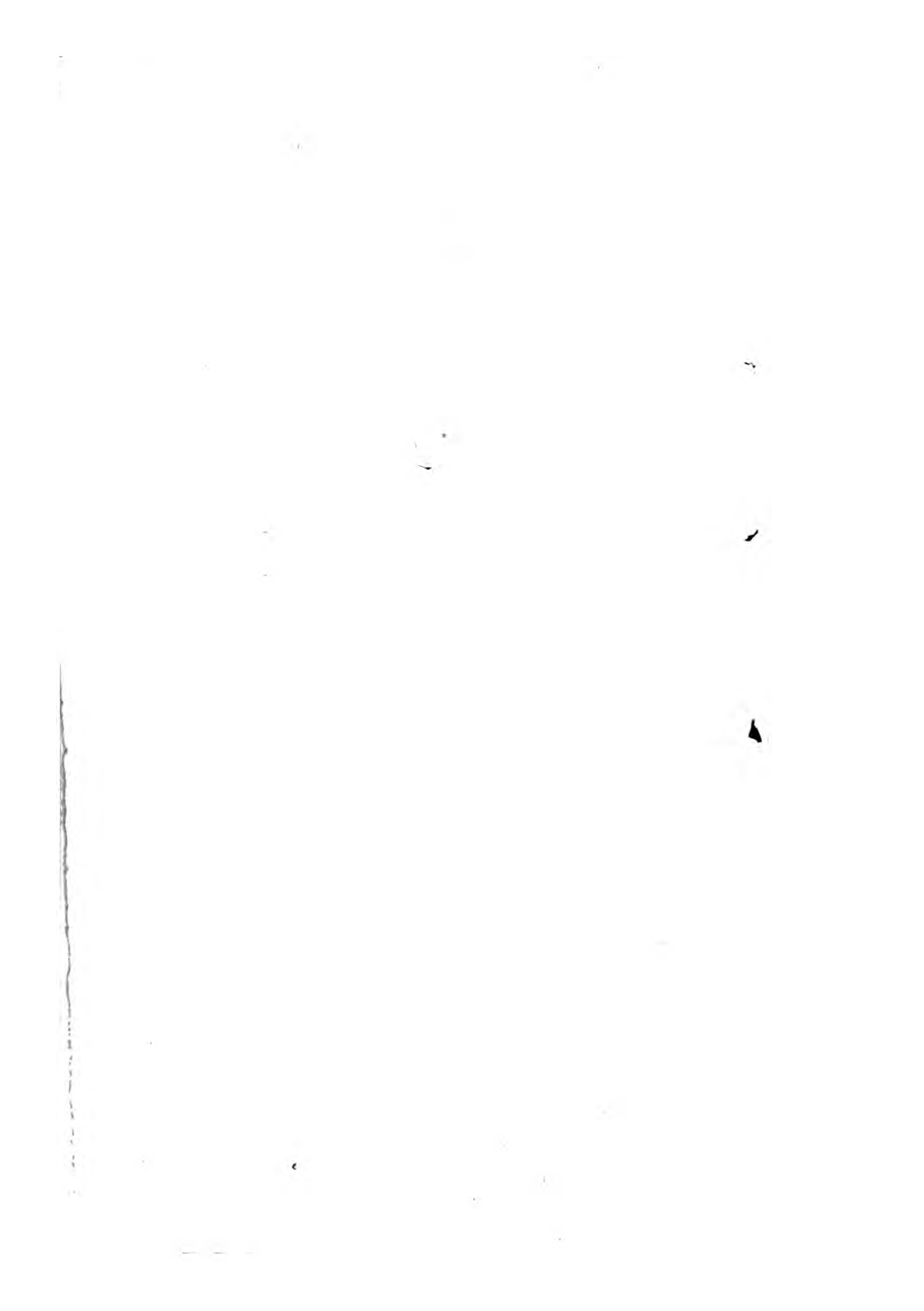
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OXFORD,

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1821.



TO
THE AUTHOR
OF
JOHN WILDGOOSE,

A TALE

IN WHICH THE EVILS OF LOOSE COMPANY AND CONTEMPT
OF THE LAWS ARE FORCIBLY EXEMPLIFIED,

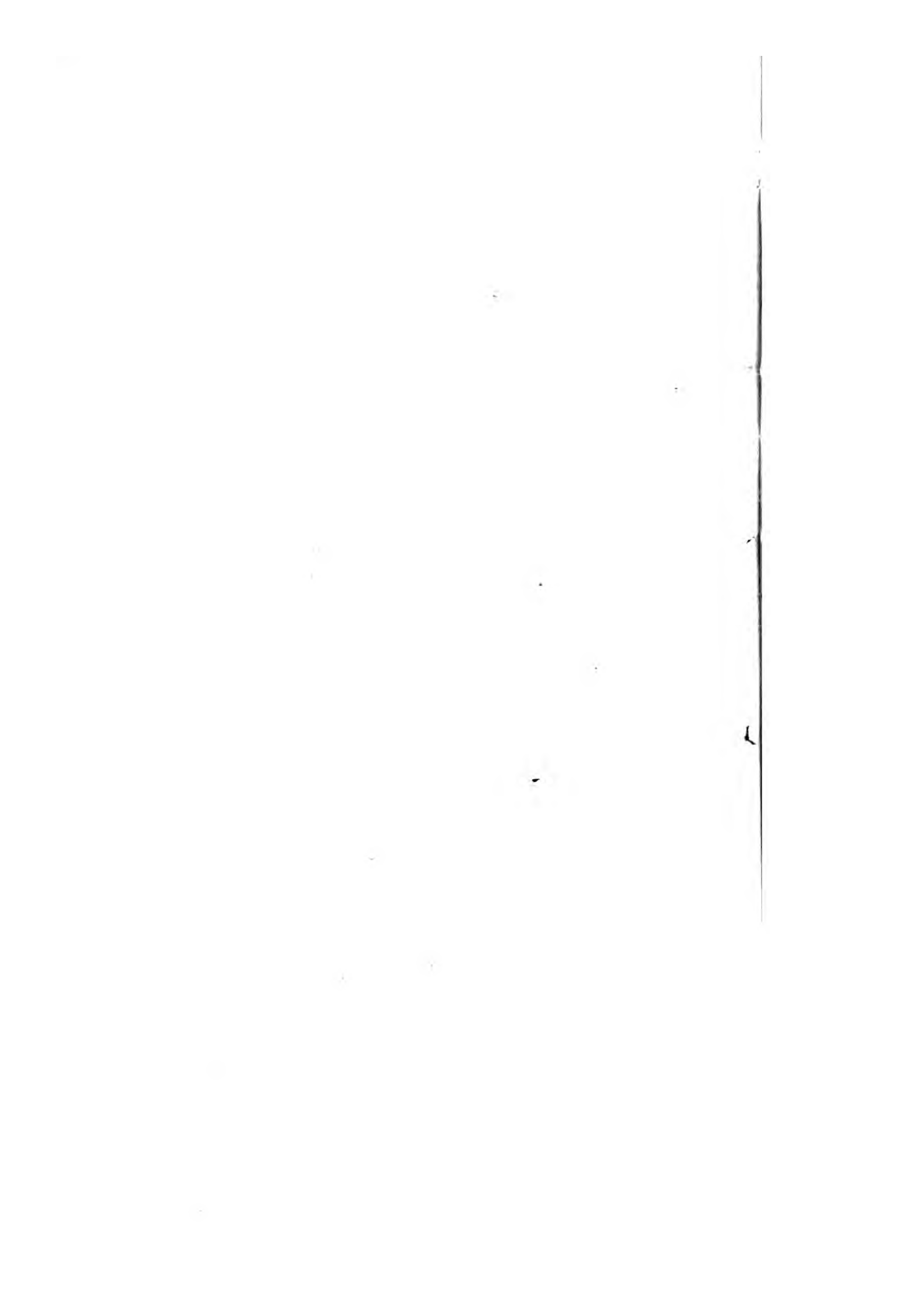
This little Volume

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.



CHAP. I.

Violent feelings and violent words lead to violent actions.

WILL Waver was just that good-natured sort of a fellow, that had rather do what is wrong and likely to do harm to themselves and others, than say boldly the thing is not right, and so do not ask me to do it.

Will Waver was moreover sadly afraid of being laughed at. He could bear to know that wise and good men thought him wrong, better than to hear a number of silly talkative fellows laugh at him for being right.

In a word, he was exactly the sort of man to be led by the nose. And this the Radical leaders had found out. They had asked him to stand by his brethren in the good cause of liberty, and he could not find it in his heart to say no, though these men, who called themselves his brethren, were such as he could not in his conscience approve, and though the good cause of liberty as they called it was likely to end in all sort of wickedness.

Though Mr. Alworthy had made it clear to his mind what he ought to do, he could not bring himself to do it, for fear of what Gudgeon and Newk would say of him. And in this state of doubt he was walking home from the rectory, when he perceived a number of people coming towards him. They were the servants

of Squire Oldcastle, and were carrying what looked at a distance to be a sick or dying person on a hurdle. As they drew nearer to him, Will saw that it was the Squire himself. He seemed to be quite lifeless, for his eyes were closed, and his face was deadly pale. A bloody handkerchief was held to his side by an old servant who supported his head.

A mist came over Waver's eyes. He remembered the words of Tom Nework at the last Radical meeting, "Let him look to himself." He knew how Squire Oldcastle had been hated by the club for the steady execution of the laws, and he could hardly force himself to say in a choked voice to one of the bearers, Who has done this? It was the steward who answered him sternly, "Those who would mend the laws by committing murder. It is well for you that you have had no hand in this work." They passed on. My God! said Waver to himself, I thank thee! That poor man whom they have murdered had a wife and children, who are now a widow and orphans. Thank God, thank God, I had no hand in this work!

He hurried on to the village. Every person he met looked fearful and suspicious. A crowd was gathered round the door of Gudgeon's cottage. Some one seemed struggling on the ground. It is Gudgeon, it is the murderer, said Waver to himself, as he pressed through the crowd. But it was the mother of that unhappy man, in strong convulsions on the floor of her son's cottage. When she saw Waver, she

broke from those who held her, and rushed towards him with the look of a maniac. Where is my child! give me my child! or— She was again seized with strong convulsions, and would have fallen on the ground, had she not been supported by her friends, who carried her into her bed-room by force.

Will Waver could not stand this; he was turning to leave the house, when Gudgeon's youngest child clung to his knees. Do not go away, William, said the child, crying. Grandmother's very bad, and mother's out, and father will not come to his supper. See, it is ready for him, but he will not come home, as he used to do, and play with me and Bet. He can never come home again, thought Will, as the tears run down his cheeks. A murderer has no home. He kissed the child as he set it down, and was turning to go, when Goodman came in.

Where is Gudgeon? said the old man, suspiciously looking round as he crossed the threshold.

Was he the murderer? said Will.

He is much suspected, answered Goodman, and no one can find him. Nework too is gone off.

Where was it done? said Will.

Down in the hollow way at the road's turn, Our Squire had been over to the Sessions, and was riding along at a slow pace. I met him at the top of the hill myself, and spoke to him. He asked kindly after my daughter, and said, half in earnest and half in joke, that she was too

good for a Radical. But, says he, I do not think ill of William Waver. He is not bad at heart. He does not wish to do wrong, but is only misled by those who do. I wish him no worse than to marry Sarah, and to take my cottage next to your little farm. Times will mend, and if he works hard, and lays by, he may be the honest and happy master of a family, instead of spending his time in envy and grumbling, which in the very worst of times is the worst of trades. Those were his words, poor gentleman! I was thinking to myself, that man has the real good of us all more at heart than these noisy Radicals, when I heard a shot fired, and saw him fall off his horse just in the hollow way. I ran to him, and as I was raising him, I saw two men creep out of the copse hard by, and I knew one of them to be Gudgeon. He had a gun in his hand, so I fear he was the murderer. I raised the poor gentleman up, and put my knee under his head to steady him. He was in great pain, and the blood flowed very fast from his side. He said in a faint voice, Send for constables, and let those men be secured if possible. I have done my duty to the public, and have given days and nights to doing justice equally. This is the reward which I receive from bad men. But God knows that my duty has always— Here he fainted from loss of blood, and at that moment up came all the servants, and the steward; for a boy who had seen it at a distance had given the alarm. Those that came up first would have seized me, because I was all covered

with the blood of the poor Squire ; but the steward said handsomely, Leave him alone, there is not a man in the country who can be less suspected of this wicked action than John Goodman. No man better knows how to value our poor master, or would sooner have stood up for him, than John Goodman. So they let me go, to help those who were beginning to look after the murderers. In the copse hard by I saw the marks of two men's feet. Opposite to the larger foot-marks the twigs in the hedge were broken, as if by a shot. And considering where the blood lay, that shot must have passed straight from the place where the man in the larger shoes stood. Whoever owned those marks was the murderer, without doubt. And this powder flask most likely was his, for I found it close by.

Goodman pulled out a small flask, and gave it to Waver. The latter turned pale when he saw it, and said faintly, It is Gudgeon's. He bought it at the last fair. Here is his name, which he made me cut on it, as he sat by my fire-side one evening.

Stay, said Goodman, let us go and take measure of those foot-marks. I will lay my life that the larger foot-marks were the murderer's. This must be looked to.

Do not take father's flask, said the child. Mr. Nework took it from father before they went out, and said he should not have it again. And now you have got it.

What, said Goodman, did Nework take your

father out? Yes, said the child, he asked father to take his gun, for there was a weasel down in the lane that must be killed. Well, said Goodman, and what did your father say? Why he said, answered the child, that he had not time to go after the weasel then. But Mr. Nework made him go, and took the gun from him, and the flask; and so father went.

This evidence must be put down in writing, said Goodman. Do you take the child to Justice Lloyd's, whilst I go and measure the foot-marks. Goodman went out, and in his way called on John Smith the carpenter, and got him to go with him to the ground. They measured the larger foot-marks, and found them to be eleven inches and a half in length; the smaller were only ten inches long.

CHAP. II.

Crime must produce misery of mind.

I WISH that every man, whose course of life is at all likely to lead him to lift his hand against a fellow-creature, could have seen all the consequences of the murder of Squire Oldcastle.

On receiving the news of his death, his poor lady was seized with violent convulsions, which ended in her being light-headed for some days. Though she recovered her senses, she was never altogether herself again. She seemed to have lost all pleasure in her children, who were now left to the care of servants. She left off visiting the old and the sick, who had always found her their best friend in distress. Indeed she seemed to shudder whenever any person of the village came near her. The workmen, who had been used to have many a cup of ale after days of hard work, were ordered by the steward never to come to the hall on any pretence.

The steward himself seemed an altered person. In the time of the Squire he had indeed been reckoned rather a hard man. But he had never been able to injure the tenants, because Squire Oldcastle looked to his own affairs. But now he had it all his own way. He ran up the rents to the highest farthing. He never would wait a day for his money, but distrained the goods of the poor tenant, however unfortunate

he had been. The wages of the work people were often due long before they were paid, which caused them to run in debt, and live without looking to their means. In a word, the estate was ill managed.

Besides this, a plan for draining the East Marsh, which had been begun by the Squire, was now left off, and this threw many poor people out of work.

As for the village, there was no end to the suspicious and scandalous reports which owed their rise to this wicked action. Some said, that Jem Gudgeon's mother was as deep in the plot as her son, and thought that her taking on so was only pretence. Some said that Waver had used threatening language about the Squire, and were very near having him taken up on suspicion. Though his general good character, and the testimony of Mr. Alworthy, were in his favour, and though not a single proof was ever fairly brought against him beyond his having kept company with Gudgeon, yet it was a long time before he ceased to be suspected. No, said Mr. Simpkins, I cannot think of hiring William Waver to be my gardener; I know he was connected with those fellows that murdered the poor Squire. I only hope he had no hand in that bad piece of work.

All this grieved Sarah Goodman and Waver sadly. And the latter often declared, that a man does not know what he is about, when he allows himself to mix with mischievous men. It is well for him if he loses nothing more than his

character, though it is a sad evil to lose that. It is well if he does not lose all sense of right and wrong when he finds himself suspected; for many people will stick at nothing, when they have lost their good fame.

For a week all search after Nework and Gudgeon was in vain. But at the end of that time a letter came by the post from Liverpool to Waver. It was as follows.

“ Dear William,

“ This is a sad piece of business. I shall never be happy again in this world, for I cannot get it out of my head. I see him at my bed’s head every night standing and pointing to his bleeding side, and looking at me so with his pale face. But it was not I that did it neither. Tom Nework had told me that it was a weasel he wanted to kill, and so we kept looking for it in the copse till the Squire came near; and when the Squire saw us, he asked Nework what he was doing with that gun in his preserve. At which Nework spoke saucily to him, and swore that the pheasants belonged as much to one man as another, and that he would have his share of them; and so went on till he had worked himself into a passion. At last the Squire said that he would not talk any longer with him, but that if he did not leave the preserve before the constable got down there, he would have him taken up. At which words Nework swore on oath, that he had already put him in prison for the last time; and before I knew what he was going

to do, pointed the gun at the Squire, and shot him. O it was a wicked action! To be sure, he hated the Squire mortally, and good cause he had for it. Before you will have this, we shall be on board a foreign vessel, and leave old England for good. Nework has got a large sum of money, and says we shall do better in America, where we are to take a farm together, than in this land of slavery. My poor wife goes with us, and bears it all better than one would think. I cannot say that I am happy; but Tom laughs at me, and says I am afraid of ghosts and of the devil. I hope he is right in laughing at such things, but I cannot say but I have my misgivings about it sadly. However, I know I was more happy when I lived in peace with all men, and feared God, than I am now. But when men are free, Tom says that there will be an end of such notions to plague a man, and that every man will live as happy as he can. To be sure he is a kind friend, and is very good to my wife and me. I hope you will be good to my poor mother and children, and God will reward you for it, if I cannot. I do not know whether I should like my children to be brought up to laugh at religion or not. For may be they would not be so likely to assist their old grandmother, if they did not think that God would bless them for it. My mind is all in a work, and I cannot tell what is right or wrong. But I hope my children will be happier than their father. Love to dear mother and the dear children, from your dear friend,

JAMES GUDGEON.

William Waver immediately went, and gave this letter to the Justice.

But who shall tell the vexation and anger of the club, when they found that Nework had carried off all the money which they had subscribed for reform? It was now seen, that this clever cunning man had stirred them up by all the means in his power, till he had got them to subscribe for secret purposes, of which they knew nothing, and that when he had got a good sum together, he had run away with it in this manner, after having taken his revenge on a magistrate, who had offended him in the course of his duty. But why he should hamper himself with Gudgeon and his wife was what no one could explain. However this discovery removed a deal of suspicion which had fallen on the club. Two of their number, who had been seen last in the company of Nework, and had been put in prison on suspicion of being accomplices, were now set free.

Those who could make a joke of a serious subject, were never tired of jeering these men about the strong box of reform, which was, they said, so strong, that when a man once put his money into it, he could never get at it again. They were always asking them, how much they might have made of their money, if they had happened to put it into the Savings Bank, instead of the Radical Bank. For their part, they said, legal interest was enough for them, and they thought the interest which the Radical leaders allowed was such as must ruin their

bank in the end, though it made the folks that put their money there so desperate rich.

In a word, nobody was sorry for the Radical Gulls, who had been cheated with their eyes open.

CHAP. III.

The wicked punish one another, and are forced to confess that there can be no peace in wickedness.

AS soon as Justice Lloyd had read Gudgeon's letter, he directed a constable to set out immediately to Liverpool, and desired William Waver to accompany him, that the persons of Gudgeon and Nework might be sworn to, if the ship in which they were to sail did not leave port before the constable could reach Liverpool.

Waver would have been glad not to go on such an errand; but as he knew that if he did not, others would who might be less tender of his friend, he made no objection.

On arriving at Liverpool, they found that an American vessel had sailed the day before, but whether Gudgeon and Nework had gone by it they could not find out. They went to the captains of all the other American vessels in port without success, and were thinking of giving up all farther search, when they read the following advertisement in the Liverpool Paper.

“ If any of the friends of the poor deranged man, who was lodged in the Lunatic Asylum on Tuesday last, will apply at the office of the Asylum, they may be admitted to see and converse with him. The aforesaid poor creature was found in a frantic state near to the docks. He

talks in a rambling manner of his wife having run away from him, and says that he will follow her to America. He will not tell his name. Some papers and seven shillings in money, which were found on him, will be delivered to whoever can swear to his person, and will take charge of him. He stands five feet nine inches high, is of a thin bony make. His eyes are black, as is his hair and beard. He had on a white straw hat, an old blue coat, and leather breeches, with worsted stockings."

The constable and Waver agreed that this man might be Gudgeon. They immediately went to the office of the Asylum, and told their suspicions to the head-keeper of the house. On giving him a description of Gudgeon, which they had brought with them, the keeper said, that it answered exactly to the poor man who was under his care, but that if either of them knew his hand-writing, they might satisfy themselves at once, as he had some papers of his in his pocket-book. Saying so, he drew out a small packet of papers, which Waver looked over.

The first paper was very dirty, and seemed to have been read often. On the back of it was written, Proofs that religion is all a lie. The second paper consisted of Parodies of the Scripture. The third paper contained Proofs that all kings are tyrants, and that men's consciences are their best governors.

Poor man, said Waver, he has found to his cost, that the conscience of many men would

not hinder them from following their lusts and passions, and that good men must stand together in support of the laws, or bad men will make them miserable.

The last paper was, Proofs that there is no future state to be hoped or feared. It seemed to have been written only a few days, and was in the hand-writing of Nework. Besides these papers, there was a short letter from Nework to Gudgeon, in these words.

“ Dear Gudgeon,

“ I hope you are too wise to find any fault with me for running away with your wife. You cannot be so unjust as to want to make a free woman your slave, by forcing her to live with you against her inclinations. And as for talking about her marriage-vow to you, we all know that is only priestcraft, which the age of reason will soon put an end to. I know you will get to your old notions, and tell me that I shall suffer for this hereafter. But do not be fooled with such nonsense. Let every man do the best he can for himself here, and a fig for hereafter. Give my service to the Radicals, and tell them that I would have served them if it happened to have been my interest; but in this age of reason they cannot be so foolish as to expect me not to do the best for myself. I advise you to look to your safety, but never dream you will find out

Your dear friend,

THOMAS NEWORK.

When Waver had looked over these papers, and sworn to each of them, the keeper said that there could be no doubt of the poor man being the person they enquired for, but that it would be necessary to prove this to the satisfaction of a committee of the gentlemen who subscribed to the charity, before he could be given up to them.

The time has been, said Waver, when I should have called this a tyrannical action of our betters, to hinder men from receiving their friends in this way, and to cause them expence and trouble by the delay. But I am ready to believe now that there may be some good in it, though I cannot understand what.

There is great good in it, said the keeper. Suppose the poor man had a large fortune, and you were his next of kin. If he were to be given up to you in this state without enquiry, might you not take him away to some private mad house, confine him for life, although he perhaps got well in a fortnight, and take all his property? Or, suppose you had driven him mad by cruel usage, might you not take him away and do just the same again till you had killed him? But by our taking care to find out who you are, and where you come from, and so on, it is next to impossible for you to do such things, if you were ever so desirous.

This shall be a lesson to me, said Waver, not to be inclined to grumble at laws, because I do not quite understand their use. You are quite right, Mr. Keeper.

The keeper now took down the keys of the rooms in which the deranged persons were confined. You will need a stout heart not to be frightened, said he, and you must have a hard one, if you can see and hear our poor wretches without pity. Saying these words, he opened a door, led them through a court yard into a long dark passage, unbarred a strong door which turned heavily on its hinges, and they found themselves at once surrounded by the poor maniacs.

Who can describe the wretched creatures they beheld! Some were laughing in a wild convulsive manner. Some yelled like fiends, and rolled their eyes from one side to the other, as if in anger. Some sat moping in a corner by themselves, as if they could not take pleasure in any thing. Some stood staring with fixed unmeaning eyes at their own shadows.

Poor creatures, said Waver, it is enough to make one think that God is not just and merciful, when one sees so much misery.

Yes, said the keeper, if one believed that there was no life beyond the present, it might tempt one to such a thought. But if there be a future state, all this may be set right. These poor creatures may have their blessings in a future state, and you and I may have to give an account for the use we have made of our blessings in this life; that may prove all things to be dealt more evenly than it may appear to us now.

Surely that is very just, said Waver; it seems quite agreeable to justice to make up to these poor creatures in a future state what they have

suffered in this. But pray, Mr. Keeper, were most of these people born mad?

No, said the keeper, many of them have driven themselves mad by their vices, by drinking, gaubling, quarrelling, and such like things, as generally punish a man in this life. And, take my word for it, there are more men who bring on madness by vice, than ever find their way into a madhouse. Is not a man mad who takes more pleasure in sitting in an alehouse, drinking, and swearing, than in bringing up his family to be a blessing to him, and taking care of his health and property? Is not a man mad who allows every trifle to put him in a fury? But let us remember, as long as a man has got his conscience and his reason, he is answerable for the mad actions he does. If a man chooses to be mad when he might keep his right mind, he is answerable for any sins he commits.

When the keeper had said this, he unlocked another door, and led them through a long passage, on each side of which were cells, in which were confined those poor creatures who would have injured themselves and others if they had been at liberty. In one of these cells sat Gudgeon. There was a look of despair in his face that cut Waver to the heart. He sat on his little bed without stirring hand or foot. His eyes seemed fixed, and his hands were clenched strongly together.

Poor man, thought Waver, how different he might have been if he had never known that wretch Nework! I remember him a contented

fellow, who loved his wife and children, and knew what it was to be happy; but he is an altered man.

As the keeper unbarred the door, and Waver spoke the words "Ah Gudgeon!" his poor friend leaped up in a state of passion impossible to describe. All the thoughts of his past life seemed to come into his mind at once, and seizing Waver by the arm, he cried out, Have they caught him? have they caught the bloody villain? If there is law for man, he shall find what it is to deceive a poor wretch in this manner, to rob him of every thing that is dear to him. A bloody treacherous villain!

We have not found him yet, said Waver. Gudgeon let go his arm, and threw himself on the bed, covering his face with his hands for a moment. Then he said in a low voice, Yes, there is a God, there is a Judge; and he cannot escape his sentence, though he should prove too cunning for man. It cannot be possible that such a bloody villain should cause all this misery, and not suffer for it sometime or other.

The constable interrupted Gudgeon, by telling him, that he must prepare to go with them as soon as the warrant had been backed by the magistrates of the town.

The keeper, who now saw that Gudgeon was not really deranged, expected that he would have shammed madness on hearing what they intended to do with him. But instead of doing so, Gudgeon answered in a more steady voice than he had used before, that he was ready to

go with them, and that he was thankful to the keeper of the Asylum for the care and kind treatment he had received from him during the short time when his senses had left him.

The keeper, who did not know as much of his story as the others, asked what was the cause of his senses having ever left him. On hearing this question, the poor man again began to shew such signs of rage and despair, that they thought it best to leave him to himself, and go about the warrant without farther enquiry.

The fact was, that Nework had been left to secure their passages in a ship to America. The ship was to sail on the Thursday morning, and on the Wednesday night Mary Gudgeon contrived by the assistance of Nework to give her husband a sleeping draught, which kept him in a deep doze till long after the ship had sailed on Thursday. On understanding from Nework's letter the treachery which had been practised on him, his mind, which had been sorely disturbed before, on account of the murder of Squire Oldcastle, and was still affected in some degree by the opium he had taken the night before, had quite forsaken him for a time. He went down to the dock in a frantic state, determined to drown himself, and would have done so, but for the interference of some charitable persons, who carried him to the Lunatic Asylum.

Here he recovered his senses in the course of the day; but as he still broke out into a fury of anger when questioned about the cause of his

madness, and at other times kept sullenly silent, it is not wonderful that the keeper should have supposed him insane, till he heard him converse with Waver in a more reasonable manner.

CHAP. IV.

How many sell their happiness here and hereafter for a joke.

IN the course of the same day the constable had his warrant backed by the magistrates of the town, a guard of two dragoons was ordered to attend the prisoner, and Gudgeon, having been given up by the governors of the Asylum, was conveyed with the constable and Waver in a post chaise on his road toward the chief town of the county in which the murder was committed.

The prisoner appeared to be overcome by his own bitter thoughts, and kept a melancholy and sullen silence during the journey. He could not help perceiving, that the violent words, feelings, and actions, which he had learnt from his Radical friends, had ended in a crime which he shuddered to think of, though it had not been done by his own hand. When he called to mind the treachery of his friend Nework in seducing his wife, and in leading him into suspicion about this murder, (probably for the very purpose of doing so,) he could not help acknowledging, that it is the interest of every man to support laws, by which villains are punished and crimes prevented. And lastly, when he thought that Nework would most likely escape altogether, whilst he himself would suffer for an action he did not commit, he could not help

thinking to himself, Oh there must be a future state, in which the wicked who escape in this life will be punished!

But then this future state, in which all will be set right, what may be my lot in it? Though I am not so bad as this villain Nework, shall I escape all punishment? Oh that I could know the will of my Almighty Judge, and what sentence he will pass upon me! But what if I have refused to listen to his will? What if the Christian religion, which I have despised and laughed at, be indeed his will? If it should be so, I am in a worse state than ever; for I have dared to treat with scorn the laws of that great Judge, who will try me perhaps by the very laws I have despised and broken.

Such were the thoughts of Gudgeon. In the mean time Waver's mind was not idle. Thankfulness for having escaped the actions and fate of his former companions, was mixed with hopes of living a better and a happier life in this world, and a desire to know more of that future world, which, however we may forget it in the hour of thoughtlessness or sin, will be thought of in the hour of danger and of death.

After Gudgeon had been lodged in the county jail, and left in solitude and silence to his own misgivings and remorse, Waver went immediately to Parson Alworthy, and begged of him to see Gudgeon, and converse with him, as he thought that something might yet be done to quiet the mind of his poor friend.

In a few days Mr. Alworthy took an oppor-

tunity of seeing Gudgeon. The poor man received him at first with that sort of dislike and suspicion which he had learnt from his Radical friends to feel towards all priests. But on Mr. Alworthy telling him, that he did not mean to talk about religion unless he desired it, but would confine himself to such subjects as might be important to prove his innocence, if he really was innocent, Gudgeon no longer refused to talk about Tom Newk and the murder.

After some observations on the danger of keeping company with violent and wicked men, Mr. Alworthy said, Are you sure, James Gudgeon, that the company of such men has done you no other mischief than that of getting you into this great danger? Are you sure that you have learnt nothing from them which would lead you into danger again, if you were to escape this time?

Oh no! said Gudgeon; if I escape this time, I will take good care into what company I get again.

Yes, said Mr. Alworthy, but will you be careful what thoughts you keep company with? If you keep company with evil thoughts, you will be led wrong by them as much as if they were evil men. For bad thoughts will lead to bad actions.

But what bad thoughts have I to lead me wrong, said Gudgeon?

Why, I fear you have the bad thoughts of despising and laughing at God's Word, said Mr. Alworthy. Has not this bad thought al-

ready led you to make your wife an adulteress, by teaching her that she had no duty to perform to her husband? And may not this bad thought lead you to make your children grow up wicked men, when they are taught by you that God will not punish wickedness? Above all, may not these bad thoughts end in your own eternal destruction in a world to come, as they have ended in your misery in this?

Ah, Sir! said Gudgeon, I do think that the scoffing and ridicule with which I spoke to my wife about religion, may have made her less careful of her duty to me. I do certainly remember the time when she would have feared to do as she has done now.

James Gudgeon, said Mr. Alworthy, I have promised not to speak of religion to you, and I will keep my promise. It seems you are more afraid of my proving to you that religion is true, than you were of scoffers proving to you that it is false. Like many other men, you wish it to be false, and so you try to believe that it is false. But take care, the danger of its being true is not lessened by your keeping your mind from thinking on it. If you were walking on the edge of a terrible precipice, it might increase your danger if you were to shut your eyes, but it would not remove the precipice.

Mr. Alworthy was rising to go, but Gudgeon now begged him to converse further on this subject.

I sadly fear, said Mr. Alworthy, you are not

in a fit state of mind to hear reason ; your mind is shut against it.

Indeed that is not true, said Gudgeon : no one is more fond of reason than I am.

Then if you are so fond of reason, said Mr. Alworthy, why do you not attack the Scriptures by reason ? Why do you try to lessen men's respect for religion by ridicule and jesting, instead of proving fairly that religion is wrong by argument ?

But is not ridicule and jesting good reason ? said Gudgeon. If I prove a thing to be laughable and ridiculous, have I not shewn it to be contrary to reason ? And if I can shew that religion is laughable and ridiculous, have not I shewn every fair man that he is a fool if he believes it ?

All this sounds mighty well, said Mr. Alworthy : now let us see if it will hold good. Here I have in my pocket an attack upon religion, made by a wicked and a very foolish man, who calls himself the Rev. R. Wedderburn, a Unitarian minister. Have you read the work ?

Gudgeon laughed, and acknowledged that he had read it, and found it very witty and very convincing.

You know then, said Mr. Alworthy, that he directs his wit, as you call it, against such parts of the Scriptures as he thinks he can prove to be lies.

Now I will take his three great arguments against religion, and will put them into plain

language ; and after that I will force you to confess, that they have no reason in them. If you choose to believe them, indeed, for what you call their wit, and so to sell your soul for a joke, you must do so. But never pretend then that it is reason which convinced you of the falsehood of religion.

Now look here. His first attack upon religion is in these words :

“ Jesus Christ says, no man has ever seen God ; then what a damned old liar Moses must have been, for he tells us, that he could run about and see God in every bush.”

Gudgeon could not contain himself, but burst out a laughing outright, crying out, Ah, Sir, he touches them there ; let them answer that if they can.

Why, said Mr. Alworthy coolly, it is very witty in this Mr. Wedderburn, to call a prophet sent by God a damned old liar : but as for the reason of what he says, and which ought to be very strong to make the using such words not dangerous to his eternal welfare, I must own there is not the least bit of reason in his words. Let me only put them into plain English, without any of this wit, and we shall see. He means to say, that Jesus Christ says, no man has ever seen God, and Moses must tell an untruth when he says that he could run about and see God in every bush.

Now I say, first, that Moses never said any such thing. He tells us, that God appeared to him once in a flaming bush ; but as for his

running about and seeing God in every bush, he never says any thing of the sort ; Mr. Wedderburn invents this falsehood first, and then fathers it on the Scriptures.

That I own, said Gudgeon. But how is it that the Scriptures tell us that Moses saw God in the bush, and on Mount Sinai, and yet our Saviour says no one ever saw him.

Let me ask you what our Saviour means, when he says that no one ever saw God ? Has he not told us that God is a Spirit ? and does he not mean to say, that no one has ever seen God really as he is in his spiritual nature ? Flesh and blood can see bodily things, but can it see spiritual ones ? Do we not learn that this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality, and we must be changed, before we can inherit the kingdom of God ? It is probable that we shall then be able to see, and hear, and conceive things, which we cannot hear, or see, or conceive now.

Yes, said Gudgeon, but did not God shew himself to Moses ?

I grant you, he shewed him his power. He shewed him something which convinced Moses that it was God that spoke to him. He shewed him a bush burning which was not consumed. But do you think that the flame was God himself ? He spoke to Moses " face to face," that is, more clearly and plainly than to any other prophet. But the words " face to face" are only used in order to compare spiritual things with

temporal ones ; for you do not believe that God is really a man, and has a face like ourselves. In the same manner, when God is said in the Scriptures to uphold or support any one with his hand, you do not think that the Scriptures mean that God has a hand and fingers. No, it means only that he supports us with his power.

And when you consider this, you may perceive that Moses may say true, when he says that he saw God ; that is, he saw some miraculous thing by which God made himself known to him. Our Saviour speaks true, when he says that no one but himself ever saw God. That is, that no man ever saw the Spirit of God. He who was the Son of God, and came from God, being more than a mere man, had seen God in his spiritual nature. But Moses and the Prophets, being only men, had not seen him in his spiritual nature.

If what I have said is just, Moses and our Saviour have not contradicted one another, and it is not at all necessary to suppose either of them to have spoken false in what they said. So much for Mr. Wedderburn's first piece of wit and reason.

Now for his second ; " Then there was Balaam's ass ; O yes, that spoke, and yet they tell us it was God put the words into his mouth : then I suppose God got into the jackass."

To be sure this is very witty. But the nonsense of it is too plain not to be seen by any one. Could not the Creator give to whichever

of his creatures he pleased the power of speech, as well as to man? But this was an opportunity of being profane, which Mr. Wedderburn could not resist.

Mr. Wedderburn says again, "Then there is a pretty story they tell us about the witch of Endor. Saul, who had been destroying all the witches as devils, or what not, at last sends for the witch of Endor to raise up old Samuel, to tell him what he was to do. Now Jesus Christ tells us, no one can raise the dead but God. Then the witch must have the power of God."

Now all this is to be sure very witty. It is very witty to call a chapter in the Bible a "pretty story." And to say, that Saul had been destroying witches "as devils, and what not;" and to call the Prophet of God "old Samuel." This is all very witty, but it is all nonsense. If Mr. Wedderburn had read the Scriptures, he would know that others besides our Saviour and the witch of Endor have raised the dead, as Elisha and Paul. But in all these cases it was God that really did the miracle, and not man. It was he who gave them power to work these signs. And to come to the case of the witch of Endor, is it not fair to suppose that the Almighty raised up Samuel to the astonishment of this wicked woman, who intended only to have practised the tricks of her trade upon Saul? The manner in which the woman cried with a loud voice, and spake unto Saul, saying, "Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul," immediately on the appearance of

Samuel; and her answer to his question, "What sawest thou?" from which answer it would appear that she did not know whose apparition stood before her, are proofs that the witch of Endor did not raise Samuel by any power of her own, but, on the contrary, was amazed at his appearance. So that in this case, as well as in every other, it is God who raises the dead, and not man.

Indeed, said Gudgeon, there is more reason in what you say, than I could have thought to hear.

Yes, said Mr. Alworthy, you have been dazzled by what you call wit, (but which appears to me to be the most stupid impudence,) and have overlooked its being nonsense. But even supposing this wit was really good of its kind, and worth laughing at, I should say that it is very much out of place when applied to religion. It makes men despise a thing, which must either prove true to their endless confusion, or, if false, ought to be shewn to be so by sound argument, not laughed at as trifling. Whether religion be true or false, it is no trifling matter, and ought never to be treated as such. A man who could joke about the life or death of a fellow-creature, must either be a foolish jester or an unfeeling brute. What must he be, who can jest about the eternal life or death of us all?

No, James Gudgeon, if you have any real, solid objections to the Christian religion, make them seriously, and I will answer them seriously.

But as for jokes and jests, they are mere vanity of words, without any thing real in them. They are mere bubbles, which any idle fellow can blow by the hundred. I fancy it would not be difficult for Mr. Wedderburn, or Nework himself, or any other witty man, *to make a joke of your wife having run away from you.* Yet this thing is no joke to you, but a cause of great misery. Yet your misery, which it would be unfeeling and cruel to laugh at, is but the sorrow of a moment, when compared with the worm that dieth not and the fire which is not quenched.

In all cases in which it is attempted to turn the Scriptures into ridicule, I advise you to begin by getting rid of the joke, and then examine whether there is any strength in the objection when the wit of it is taken away.

In the end, Jem Gudgeon was obliged to own, that in these and in many other cases, in which the Scriptures had been made a matter of laughter, when the joke was taken away, there remained nothing but nonsense to support the objection. And in this manner, said Mr. Alworthy, you may turn every thing of importance into ridicule, and prevent yourself from ever thinking about serious things in that serious manner with which things of real importance ought always to be treated. If you persist in making a jest of religion, it is in vain for me to converse with you on the subject. For by doing so, you quite hinder yourself from seeing the truth, and will go on jesting about important

things, till you are fallen into the terrible state of a reprobate mind, which cannot be serious even where its eternal interests are at stake. Saying these words, Mr. Alworthy took his leave.

CHAP. V.

Sooner or later the wicked man will have his reward.

IN a few days Mr. Alworthy returned, and found Gudgeon in a more sober state of mind, determined, as he said, to come to the truth seriously, and to stand to the consequences, whether he should be convinced that religion was true or false.

Mr. Alworthy then proceeded to answer the objections to Christianity, and afterwards to bring forward those strong proofs of its truth, which we have spoken of in a former part. To which he added some others not less convincing.

James Gudgeon expressed his wonder and astonishment that religion had ever been represented as without any reasonable proof. Hitherto he had considered it as a thing which priests and old women could alone believe; but he found himself quite unable to resist the proofs by which it is supported.

But, Sir, said he, is it not wonderful that a thing so valuable as religion is not given to all men? Why should it be confined only to a part of the world?

That is a question that I cannot answer, said Mr. Alworthy. I only know, that there are many other good and valuable things which it hath pleased God to give to some men and not

to others. God gives to some men the great blessings of health and strength, whilst others are born weak and diseased. To some he gives great cleverness and quickness of mind, whilst others are foolish and dull from their very birth. Some nations have been permitted to acquire much more knowledge than others. For instance, we know how to build and to use wind-mills, water-mills, steam engines, thrashing machines, winnowing machines, and so on, whilst the savage Indians have no such knowledge. Why we Englishmen should be allowed to have more knowledge than the Indian savages, I cannot explain. But the thing is certainly true, though we cannot tell the reason of it. In a future state we shall perhaps learn the reason of many things which we cannot explain now. Just as children learn to understand many things when they grow up to manhood, which they could not understand whilst they were children.

Suppose your little boy, who knows that bread is made from wheat, was to see you sowing wheat in the ground for the first time. Would he not be likely to say, "O father, how foolish you are to throw away the nice wheat into the dirt!" But when he grows up, he will know that this is the way to have more wheat next year. And is it not very likely that some things, which may appear wrong to us now, will be found very right when we come to know more about God's nature, and our own nature in a future state? The little child who finds

fault with what his father does, because he does not or cannot understand it, is not a bit more foolish than the man who finds fault with what his heavenly Father does. Indeed he is much less foolish, because a child is more near to understanding all that a man can do, than a man is to understanding all that the Creator of all things, who liveth for ever and ever, can do.

Indeed, if it were possible for man to make known to the brute animals, that it is in his power to pass laws for the government of society, to let people, who are thousands of miles off or who are yet unborn, know what he wishes to tell them, and that he can foretell the coming of comets, and the very moment when the sun or moon will rise, the brute animal, to which he made this revelation of his power, would have a better reason for doubting the truth of what he should say, than we have for doubting whatever it may please God to reveal to us of his nature. For there must be far less difference between the nature of man and the brute, than there is between the natures of the Creator and man. Now if this be so, it becomes man to listen to whatever the Almighty has pleased to reveal to him with the humility of a little child. He must not say, I will not believe this, or I cannot believe that, when he finds something not quite on the level with his comprehension. He has no more reason to expect that all God's power, wisdom, and actions, will be easy to be understood by him; than the child or the brute has to expect that the power, and wisdom, and

actions of man, will be easy to be understood by them. Let him rather remember our Saviour's answer to Nicodemus; "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not; how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

But if religion is so necessary to a man, said Gudgeon, why is it not in a manner put into his mind at his birth, without any trouble to him, just as animals know all that is necessary for them without learning it.

I may as well ask you, said Mr. Alworthy, why a child who will be a farmer is not born with all knowledge about the management of land; why another child is not born with a knowledge of ship-building and navigation; why another is not born with a knowledge of weaving; and so on. There is just as much reason that men should be born with a knowledge of all that may be useful to them in their worldly business, as of what will be useful to them in the concerns of their souls. While we see men born without one kind of knowledge, we have no reason to be surprised if they are born without another kind. It is not for us to question plain truths, because we cannot quite account for them.

Then I suppose, said Gudgeon, it is our duty to endeavour to learn from God's word how to manage the affairs of our souls, just as it is to learn from our elders how to manage the business of our trade or calling.

Surely, said Mr. Alworthy, and in each case diligence in learning and steadiness in practis-

ing are equally required of us. If we fail for want of doing our parts, the fault is our own, and we must stand to the consequences.

Saying these words, Mr. Alworthy gave the poor man a Bible, exhorting him to read it and consider it well, with the intention of believing what it asserts, doing what it commands, and leaving undone what it forbids. Moreover, he exhorted him to compare the conditions of acceptance which God there sets forth with his own feelings and actions, and to consider well whether he could in his present state hope for God's mercies, or to escape his anger.

In that most important business of reading the Scriptures and self-examination, Gudgeon was much assisted both by Mr. Alworthy and by his friend Waver, who was admitted to see him by Mr. Alworthy's desire. He was taught to see and to feel the sinfulness of his past life. His soul was full of heaviness and fear, when he thought of the wicked man's end. But when he read of the great mercy offered through our Saviour who died for sinners, and will surely receive and save those who turn to him in newness of heart and life, and shew their faith by their works, striving to make their calling and election sure by doing the will of him who died for them, his heart was full of hope and gratitude.

It was curious to observe how the tempers of the men shewed themselves even in their religion. Gudgeon, who was warm tempered and confident, believed himself to be under the im-

mediate influence of God's Spirit, and to be sealed to salvation amongst God's elect. Waver, who was of a colder temper and more fearful spirit, felt inclined to doubt of his salvation. To both of them Mr. Alworthy gave this answer, when they expressed their hopes and fears. By their fruits ye shall know others, and by your fruits shall ye know yourselves. If you find yourselves striving humbly to do God's will from a desire to please him, you have the best evidence of a right faith. Without this proof hopes and fears are equally vain. Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter, nor shall every one who beateth on his breast, and calls himself a miserable sinner, be shut out. If you bear the fruit of the Spirit, striving diligently to do his will in all things, be not cast down by a cowardly heart. On the other hand, if you do not strive diligently to do his will, but live after your own lusts, let not a bold heart persuade you that you are safe. Can you think that the law of God is weaker or less certain than the law of man? An Englishman would fear to break the law of the land, because he knows that the power of the law would lay hold of him, and that the wisdom of his judges would not be deceived. Is the power of God less able to lay hold of the sinner? Is the wisdom of God more likely to be deceived? We may deceive others, nay, we may deceive ourselves, but he who is about our bed, who knoweth all our thoughts, and to whom all hearts are open, is neither to be escaped from nor to be cheated.

It wanted about a fortnight of the time for Gudgeon's trial to come on, when as Mr. Alworthy knocked one morning at the jail door, he perceived a chaise and four soldiers coming towards him. On their stopping at the gate of the prison a police officer got out, and after him a prisoner strongly handcuffed and secured, whom Mr. Alworthy immediately knew to be Nework.

The latter turning to Mr. Alworthy, said, in an impudent tone of voice, Well, Parson, they have brought me here contrary to law and justice, and, I suppose, will force me to turn king's evidence against poor Gudgeon.

Where did you take him, said Mr. Alworthy to the officer?

Oh, Sir, said he, I was up to his tricks; I found that he never went by that American vessel, but got over to the Isle of Man.

To be sure, said Nework. Gudgeon took his passage to America, for fear of being hanged for the murder he committed. And I dare say he is safe enough now. But what should make me quit England I wonder, when all the ill I had done was having been civil to his wife? I found it indeed necessary just to get out of his way, and take his wife off the morning he was to sail, for fear of angering him. But I dare say he had a pleasant passage to America, and will never return to trouble me or his wife. Indeed he had better not, if he values his life, for that business of Squire Oldcastle will not be forgotten in a hurry.

Mr. Alworthy immediately saw that Nework had formed a plan of laying all the guilt on Gudgeon. He advised the keeper not to let Nework know of Gudgeon's being in prison, till the day of trial. In the mean time he offered his spiritual help to the prisoner, who only laughed at him, and told him that he feared neither God nor Devil for his part, and would not be humbugged by a priest. All that Mr. Alworthy could do was to hope that this blindness of heart had arisen from bad education, or some other cause for which this wretched man was not accountable, not from impenitent hardness of heart.

When the day of trial came on, Gudgeon and Nework met for the first time. The first look of Nework was that of a man who is convicted on a sudden of some great crime which he cannot disown; but he put on an hypocritical look of pity, and said, "Ah, poor Gudgeon, I hoped you would have escaped, but the truth will come out." As for Gudgeon, he looked at first ready to tear off his irons to get at his betrayer; but Christian self-command came to his assistance, and he only said in a low voice, "Christ prayed for his murderers, and I am a Christian."

In the course of the trial it was proved, that the shoes which belonged to the man who must have fired the gun were Nework's. That he had often sworn that sooner or later he would have his revenge on the Squire.

Besides which, it was proved for Gudgeon,

that he had gone with Nework unwillingly, and that Nework carried the gun on quitting the house. The Squire's servant swore, that though he was so far behind, having stopped to pick a stone out of his horse's foot, and though Nework was so hid behind a bush that he could not see him whilst he was talking with his master, yet he could see Gudgeon plainly, and could make oath, that he had no gun in his hands till after the shot was fired from the bush where Nework stood. It was proved also, that Gudgeon had often said, that Nework wanted him to do some mischief to Squire Oldcastle, but that he would not consent to it.

Nework endeavoured to throw all the blame on Gudgeon; appealed to the witness of Goodman, that the gun was in Gudgeon's hands when he saw him; asserted that his having been employed by Gudgeon to take only one place in the ship for America, proved who was afraid of staying in England. But this Gudgeon denied, and said that it was a trick of Nework's to get rid of him; he had always thought that Nework took three places in the vessel.

When they came to examine witnesses as to character, those of Nework were so few and so contradictory, and his letter to Gudgeon spoke so clearly against him, that every one was satisfied of his treachery and guilt.

The Jury, after consulting for half an hour, brought in a verdict of guilty against Nework, and acquitted Gudgeon. The charge of the

judge to the prisoners deserves to be long remembered.

You, Thomas Nework, stand here a miserable instance, that great talents will seldom conceal crimes, or protect a man against justice; for sooner or later guilt will be discovered even in this world. You have employed as much art and ability in this wicked action, as might have got you honour and riches, had they been employed in honest endeavours. But it appears from your whole conduct that you hoped to benefit yourself by cunning, treachery, and wickedness, and have neglected the straight plain path of honesty, uprightness, and religion. You see to what such conduct leads in this world; learn now, if you are ignorant of it, that hereafter as well as here, the paths of wickedness lead to misery.

You, James Gudgeon, have put yourself under heavy suspicion and into great danger, by keeping company with wicked and violent men. You now see what is the end of violent feelings and wicked conduct in another, and you must feel that your character has been injured, and your life endangered, by these evil courses. Take warning, whatever irreligious and violent men may say, the only way to be happy is to live according to the laws of God, and to bear with patience those evils, which it is not in our power to mend.

It only remains that I pass the sentence of the law upon you, Thomas Nework, which is, that you shall be carried to the place from

whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, where you shall be hanged till you are dead, dead, dead; and the Lord have mercy on your soul.

We will only add concerning Nework, that he preserved his impenitent hardness of heart to the last. At the very moment that the executioner was tying the fatal noose, which was to end his existence in this world, he said with a laugh to one of his friends, "Now in ten minutes I shall know whether there is a future state or not."

Yes, said the Clergyman, you will know indeed, but your state will then be fixed: if, as I believe most firmly, there is a state in which God's rational creatures shall give account how they have used their reason, I tremble to think of your fate: but even if there be no future state, and if you who have reason will die for ever like the brute beasts, still your vices have made you unhappy in this world, and have brought you to a miserable and untimely end.

This thought seemed when it was too late to strike the unhappy man. "I almost wish," he said, "that I had time to think more on this subject. It is true that I have not been happy in this world; and that seems some proof: but it is too late; I will not die like a coward to be laughed at. And with this foolish speech, in which he shewed more care for the opinion of men, than for the welfare of his own soul; more cowardly dread of being laughed at by man, than reasonable fear of God; more foolish boast-

ing, than true courage ; he gave the signal, and was launched into eternity. "O that he could come back, and tell us what is his fate," said one of his old companions. No, said Goodman, ye have Moses and the Prophets ; if ye hear not them, neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

CHAP. VI.

Happy are those who, having found by experience that vice produces misery, learn to act rightly.

THOSE persons who talk of man as if he were only a brute animal, forget that he has reason which knows right from wrong, and which enables him to learn much of the will of his Creator, and obey it if he chooses. Those things the brutes have not.

Those persons who say that man would be happy if he were to be left to his passions and feelings alone, just as brute animals are, speak both foolishly and wickedly. The youngest animal has an instinct which tells it how to take care of itself. A bird will choose such food as is good for it; it will leave a country at the right time of year, when cold weather is coming on; it will choose a proper place for its nest; it will build it in the most wonderful manner. But what can man do of all this? He must be taught every thing that is necessary for his good, before he can practise it. Let us not say then, that he will be happy if he lives according to his passions and feelings.

But if God has not given to men such strong instinct as he has given to the brutes, he has given him something far better. He has given him a rule of life in the holy Scriptures, which

will make him happy here and hereafter, if he will follow it.

But some men will not take this rule. Then God shews them their folly, and makes their sins to become their punishments. The drunken and profligate man finds his health of body and mind going from him; the liar finds that no one will believe his word or trust him; the dishonest man finds that he is suspected and shunned by all; the violent man finds that his passions make others hate him, and himself unhappy. And in this manner, every man's sins will find him out.

Happy are those who see the errors of their ways before it is too late to mend. But if men will persist in their wrong conduct, whether they be private persons like Nework, or whether they be bodies of men like the jacobins of France, their end must be miserable.

William Waver, happily for himself, was warned in time. He left his discontented and wicked companions, to make themselves miserable by idle and violent plans of reform, which could never have come to any good if they had succeeded. He left them to grumble at what they did not understand; to be discontented with evils which no art of man can remove; and to plan schemes of reform which never can be put in practice; being now convinced, that he who pulls down a good house in order to build a fine castle in the air, is a very silly fellow; whilst he who quarrels with his lot because some are richer or greater than himself,

may as well quarrel because others are taller or handsomer than he is. Such things will be; and though we may make ourselves and others very miserable in trying to prevent them, we shall find all our labour lost.

But Will Waver saw what reform was in his power; he strove to reform his wrong passions and wrong conduct. He endeavoured to guide himself by the will of God in all things. He tried to bring his own mind into that state of Christian temper, which never fails to make a man happy and contented; and he was so regular, sober, and industrious in his conduct, that before four more years had passed, he had, with Sarah's help, laid by a comfortable sum. He was then married to that good young woman, and enjoyed all the comfort and happiness which two persons who love one another, and strive to govern their temper by the Christian rule, whilst they assist one another in discharging the duties of their station, must feel.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to add, that his love for reading the Bible, in which he became a very good scholar, led him to read other books, particularly those which give an account of the lives of great and good men, and those which tell us of voyages and travels in foreign parts. Indeed he has often said, that if men knew what pleasure they might have in reading such histories, they would never sit quarrelling and stupifying themselves at the alehouse. Mr. Alworthy takes much pleasure in conversing with Waver about what he reads, and will often

shew him the towns and rivers which he reads of in his large map. Sarah Waver is quite as much pleased with such subjects as her husband. Indeed he often reads to her in an evening when he has done work, and intends, if it please God, to make all his children scholars. For he says, that when learning is such an innocent pleasure, and leads a man to such knowledge of his duty and happiness, it is a blessing which all should desire to have and to give to others.

As for Jem Gudgeon, he found on returning to the village that the murder was so much talked of, and many persons suspected him so much, in spite of all that Mr. Alworthy, Goodman, and Will Waver could say, that his life was made very unhappy. He owned that he had no one to blame for it but himself; but there was little comfort in that thought. So as there happened at that time to be a farmer who was going over to Canada to settle there, he engaged to go with him. Some years passed before any thing was heard of him again. But it was then understood, that he had conducted himself so industriously and well, that when the time of his agreement to work for his passage and living was ended, the farmer offered him high wages as his bailiff; and that by this means he laid by such a sum in the course of a few years, as enabled him to get a small estate in that country, and stock it. For the government there is in the habit of making grants of waste land, without charging any thing for it,

to any poor man of good character who will engage to cultivate it. He wrote over to Mr. Alworthy to send him some books, chiefly about the management of land; from which it is supposed that he never forsook his studies which he began under Mr Alworthy's direction. Indeed it is said, that he intends to write an account of his way of life and his success in Canada.

I forgot to mention one circumstance, which was of great importance to his future happiness. Very soon after he was let out of prison, he received the following letter from his wife, which moved him so much, that he sent for her just before he went abroad, and strove to forget every thing about the past, except his own folly.

“ My dearest Husband,

“ I write this in great shame and sorrow, to beg and pray for your forgiveness. Oh James, I always loved you and our dear children, till that vile man came with his jokes and his speeches to laugh us out of all that was right. And sure, James, you must accuse yourself in some measure, for having taught me to despise and ridicule the only sure rule of life. I soon found, that a man who will make a mock at religion, is not likely to do any thing that is good. He beat and abused me for every trifle; and when I told him that he ought to bear with me as a Christian, he only called me a fool to expect such nonsense from one who owned no other guide but his nature.

“ Oh my dear husband, if you could forgive me for my wickedness, I would make so good a wife to you, and so good a mother to our poor dear children, as should make you forget the past. Indeed, I do feel that the only way to be happy in this world is to do one's duty in such a manner as may give good hopes of happiness in the world to come. Believe me, dear James, your affectionate and sorrowful wife,

“ MARY GUDGEON.”

THE END.



TREASON AND SEDITION.

BY the Statute 25 Edw. III. s. v. c. 2. All treasons, which had been uncertain, were settled. Treason is, when a man doth compass or imagine the death of the King, &c.—or if a man do levy war against the King ;—or be adherent to the King's enemies ;—and if a man slay the Chancellor, Treasurer, or the King's Justices of assize, and all other Justices assigned to hear and determine, being in their places doing their offices.

Misprision of Treason, is when one knowing of any treason, though no party or consentor to it, yet conceals it. The judgment of Misprision of Treason is, to be imprisoned during life, to forfeit all his goods for ever, and the profits of his land during life.

Riot Act, 1 Geo. III. s. ii. c. 5.

If any persons to the number of twelve or more, being unlawfully, riotously, and tumultuously assembled to the disturbance of the peace, and being required by proclamation of any one Justice to disperse, shall to the number of twelve or more unlawfully continue together for one hour after such command or request made, such continuing together shall be felony without benefit of clergy. Every Justice, and all other persons commanded to assist, shall seize such persons :—And if any of the persons so assembled shall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt, such Justice and persons aiding him shall be indemnified.

By 36 Geo. III. c. 7. (made perpetual by 57 Geo. III. c. 6.) the following offences are made high treason ;—Levying war against the King, in order to constrain him to change his measures or councils, or to intimidate or overawe both Houses, or either House, of Parliament ;—or compassing, devising, or intending death, or any harm

tending to death, of the person of the King, his heirs and successors.

57 Geo. III. c. 7. continues 37 Geo. III. c. 70. which says, Any person who shall maliciously and advisedly endeavour to seduce any person serving in his Majesty's forces from his duty and allegiance to his Majesty, shall suffer death without benefit of clergy.

By 39 Geo. III. c. 79. (the Act against unlawful combinations and confederacies,) it is enacted, sect. 13. Every person allowing unlawful meeting in his house shall forfeit five pounds. Sect. 27. Every person who shall print any paper or book to be published or dispersed, whether sold or given away, shall print his name and place of abode upon the front of every such paper, if printed on one side only, and upon the first and last leaves of every paper or book which shall consist of more than one leaf; in default of so doing, he shall forfeit twenty pounds for every copy dispersed.

Sect. 29. Every printer shall keep one copy, ready for the inspection of any magistrate, for six calendar months.

Sect. 30. Persons selling or giving away printed papers without the printer's name, to be apprehended.

60 Geo. III. c. 1. Meetings for the purposes of being trained to use of arms are prohibited;—persons present liable to transportation for seven years, or imprisonment two years.

Cap. 7. Authorizes Justices to seize arms.

60 Geo. III. c. 6. 1. No meeting exceeding fifty persons (except any meeting of a county, &c. called by Sheriffs, or five or more Justices,) shall be holden for the purpose or on pretext of deliberating on any public grievance, or on any matter relating to trade, &c. or to Church and State, or of considering and proposing any petition or remonstrance, &c. unless in the parish where the persons calling it usually reside;—nor unless six days notice shall be given to some Justice residing near;—nor unless such notice shall be signed by seven resident householders.

2. Justice may alter time and place of meeting.

4. No person shall attend unless he is a freeholder or

resident householder, &c. in the county, parish, &c. for which such meeting is held, under pain of fine and imprisonment.

5. Justices may require the assistance of any number of constables, or of any other persons in their aid.

7. If the notice for any meeting shall express or purport that any thing by law established may be altered otherwise than by authority of Parliament, or shall tend to incite the people to hatred or contempt of his Majesty, or the government and constitution, the meeting held in pursuance of it shall be deemed an unlawful assembly.

8. Any Justice may by proclamation command every person unlawfully attending to depart; and such person not departing within a quarter of an hour shall be guilty of felony, and liable to seven years transportation; and the Justice may (sect. 11.) make proclamation commanding all persons to depart; and if any to the number of twelve continue together half an hour after proclamation, they shall be guilty of felony, and liable to seven years transportation.

13. Justices may order the apprehension of any person making any proposition or holding any discourse for the purpose of stirring up the people (as above mentioned), and if obstructed may make proclamation for dispersing the meeting.

15. Justices may order all persons to assist in apprehending, and if any of the persons assembled shall happen to be killed or hurt in the dispersing, the Justices, &c. shall be indemnified.

16. Are not to extend to any meeting holden in a room.

40. To continue for five years, (from Dec. 1819.)

BLASPHEMY AND PROFANENESS.

ALL blasphemies against God, as denying his being or providence; and all contumacious reproaches of Jesus Christ; and all profane scoffing at the holy Scriptures, or exposing any part of them to contempt and ridicule; are punishable by fine and imprisonment, and also such corporal punishment as to the court shall seem meet. 1 Haw. c. 5, 6.

Also seditious words in derogation of the established religion are indictable, as tending to a breach of the peace. 1 Haw. c. 5. s. 6.

If any person having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of, the Christian religion in this realm, shall by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny the Christian religion to be true, or the holy Scriptures to be of divine authority; and shall be convicted thereof, in any of the courts at Westminster, or at the assizes, on the oaths of two witnesses; he shall for the first offence be incapable to have any office ecclesiastical, civil, or military, (unless he shall renounce such opinion in the court where he was convicted, within four months after such conviction;) and for the second offence he shall be disabled to be plaintiff, guardian, executor, or administrator, to take any gift or legacy, or to bear any office, and shall be imprisoned for three years. 9 and 10 Will. c. 32.

In the prosecution of the King against Earl (M. 1 Geo. II.) for publishing two obscene books, the Court, after long debate and consideration, gave it as their unanimous opinion, that the case came within their jurisdiction; they said, that religion is a part of the common law, and therefore whatever is an offence against that, is evidently an offence against the common law. And the defendant was set in the pillory. 2 Str. 788. 2 Burrandent 29.