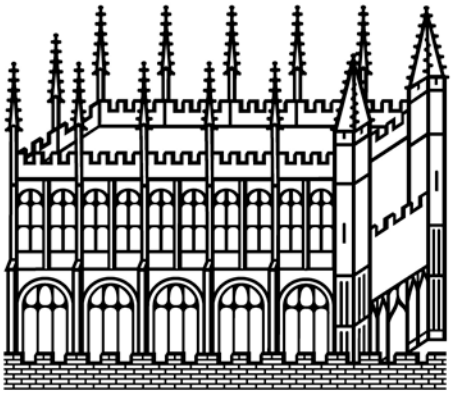

THE COUNTRY

WITHOUT

A GOVERNMENT,

&c. &c.

Tilling, Printer, Chelsea.

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A GOVERNMENT;

OR

PLAIN QUESTIONS

UPON THE UNHAPPY STATE

OF THE

PRESENT ADMINISTRATION.

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&c.

THE time seems, in the opinion of all men, now to be come, when it behoves the people of this country, and none more than those who in station or in possessions stand at their head, to ask themselves a few plain but most important questions, touching the constitution of that Administration, which has for two years past undertaken the management of public affairs. It is the object of the following pages to assist in answering those questions, which must have already occurred to every body's mind, especially during the last two months.

When we speak of the Members of the present Administration, we, in fact, use, from habit, a very unnecessary circumlocution.—The shorter, as well as plainer, and by far the more accurate expression is, *the Duke of Wellington*.—He has thought proper to become the sole Minister of this great Country, whose interests are complicated beyond those of any other State,

whose affairs are in a condition of unprecedented embarrassment, whose policy, domestic as well as foreign, involves every abstruse and difficult question in the science of national economy and of legislation; and the time which His Grace has chosen for making this extraordinary display of his attributes and his accomplishments, is to the full as extraordinary as the scene on which he has been pleased to exhibit himself—a crisis not only of unwonted pressure upon all classes of the people, but one in which the greatest changes are making in our system, both of commercial polity, and of jurisprudence. The moment is one requiring all the resources of civil wisdom and experience in the acts of Government; but it is, at the same time, one in which a familiarity with the Art of War is absolutely of no use. And to this prodigious task, the work of regenerating our Finances and our Laws, His Grace brings the capacity of choosing his Ground for a battle, of conducting a siege, and of arranging a commissariat.

The Duke of Wellington (he is called, by his flatterers of both sexes, *the Duke,* as we say, *the King,*) is a confident, perhaps a presumptuous man. His great success in War, and the remarkable services which he has rendered his country, make it very natural that he should

rely upon himself, and estimate highly his own endowments. But he is a sensible man, notwithstanding. He cannot but feel the strange nature of his present position. What would he say to a Gentleman of the long Robe, if, upon the faith of his victories at *Nisi Prius*, or Sessions, he were to present himself at headquarters, and assume the conduct of a siege, or the disposition of troops for a general engagement? But this would, in reality, not be more ridiculous, than a General Officer presiding over the complicated details of our financial and legal reforms. To gratify the learned pretender, might wear, at first sight, a more destructive appearance, because the discomfiture which his self-conceit and blunders must entail upon him, would cost the lives of many men within a few hours. But assuredly the whole effects of the Soldier's failure in Downing Street, at the Bank, and in Westminster Hall, are likely to be far more disastrous; and in his path through those unknown regions, he is certain to leave behind him much more lasting and wide-spreading marks of his incapacity and presumption.

This is the light in which the subject must strike every man of reflexion. It is the light, too, in which, three years ago, the matter must have struck His Grace, when he declared, that he

must be worse than a Lunatic to dream of being Minister. But the great blame which would unquestionably attach to him, if no peculiar circumstances existed to account for his conduct, must be shared with others, and in part ascribed to those very circumstances.

The late King (it is in vain to deny the matter from any courtesy) made his private and personal feelings a prominent principle of Government. He would not hear of this man; he must not have that man named: and the Courtiers, always the cause, because the instruments of mis-rule, were ready enough to cry out, "Name him not,—the King will have it so." When, therefore, the Ministers of Christmas, 1827-8, exposed their weakness and disunion, and when the parasites of Windsor dared not suffer the Royal Ear to be invaded with the names of those men, who alone could form a strong and able Government, it was hardly a matter of doubt, that the Duke of Wellington must be Prime Minister. It is injustice, it is ignorance, to blame him for accepting power under these circumstances; but it is both just and unavoidable, to charge him with *monopolizing it*, and resolving, as he has pertinaciously done ever since, to rule alone, to surround his throne with cyphers, and to bear nothing like an equal near it.

This monopolizing, or, it may perhaps fairly be called, domineering spirit, has been especially displayed since the resignation of Mr. Huskisson, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Grant, if, indeed, it did not occasion that event; and, no doubt, it has been encouraged by the kind of men whom the Duke has since had for his colleagues, with the exception of Mr. Peel, who appears not quite enough to have felt his own importance; and Lord Rosslyn, who, belonging to a different class, became of no weight when he quitted it. It has been also greatly encouraged by the arts of those worst of enemies, the parasites of both sexes, by whom great men are so apt to be surrounded, and who have actually been extravagant enough, in their fawning, to represent their idol as of himself all-sufficient, nay have discovered in him the powers of a politician, and even of a debater. His Grace ought to be aware, that some of these sage Counsellors have, to say the very utmost, about as much right to hold an opinion upon such subjects, as the most ignorant of their waiting maids.

One of the first questions which men naturally ask, is, How can all this have been suffered to go on so long? Nor is the answer far to seek. There was a rare combination of accidents in favour of any one man who had a

sway over the late King, and a firm purpose of his own, how deficient soever he might be in every other quality required in a Minister. The conduct of Mr. Huskisson, and others of Mr. Canning's friends, in deserting his allies, and joining those who had hunted him to death, made distrust of them for some time almost a matter of necessity. The unhappy differences of 1827 continued to sever Lord Grey, and one or two other leading Whigs, from the rest of that powerful party. Some of its most preponderating Members were known to be averse to office, from personal and accidental considerations. To others the King had insuperable objections. For a season, therefore, the Duke's Cabinet, or Board of General Officers, was pretty secure; and, indeed, all wish to remove them was disavowed; while some hopes of their attempting conciliatory measures in Ireland, were plainly expressed. Thus were they carried over the long vacation, and 1829 opened with Catholic Emancipation, which gave them another year's forbearance, at the least. But that great event requires a single observation in passing.

The Duke's flatterers are fond of appealing to it, in order to contrast his power and his decision with the infirmity of purpose, which always marked the policy of the Whigs, the Grenvilles, and Mr. Canning, towards Ireland.

"He has done what none of you ever could." Nothing more true than the fact; nothing more absurd,—more thoughtless, than the inference in his praise, if intended as a disparagement of his adversaries. Why could not they do it? Why durst they not even attempt it? Because of *the Duke*, and such as *the Duke*, who had they taken a step towards it, would have raised the cry of No Popery, and set themselves at the head of a High Church party, to destroy whatever ministry should venture upon such courses. The King and the Court were with them, and a change of Government would have been the consequence in four and twenty hours. The Duke carried the question exactly, because he, its enemy, luckily came over to join its friends. To praise him for doing so is fair and just; but to praise him at the expense of those friends of the measure, whom he had so long prevented from carrying it, and to whom he went over at the eleventh hour, would be exactly like praising Jussuf Pasha for the surrender of Adrianople, and exclaiming—"See how much better a friend to Russia this barbarian is, than her own Diebitch? When did he ever do such a thing?"

Another observation may be permitted upon the same point. The conduct of Mr. Peel was above all praise; he lost his weight in the

country, and with the Church party; he did so with his eyes open, and to serve the State, not himself. No one who loves his country ought ever to forget this rare claim to gratitude. Nor ought Mr. Peel to forget that he is following a false light, if he ever tries to regain the favour of those whose indignation he faced. His opinions and theirs, are on all, or nearly all other subjects, wide as the poles asunder. But the Whig leaders shewed to the full as great a spirit of disinterestedness on that memorable occasion. The Duke's Government could not have stood an hour, had the Whigs opposed the Disfranchisement Bill, and thrown it out. This they might have done with perfect consistency; they might even have raised their character with the people of Ireland; they could have incurred no blame for factious conduct; but they honestly preferred the less popular course, and secured the success of the great measure to which they had so often made similar sacrifices, and for which they have reaped so little gratitude.

The next question that suggests itself is not so easily answered as the last. How has such a Government contrived to go on to this time? The end of last Session was marked, on the part of the Ministers, by an abandonment of every one measure to which any opposition was threatened; and the Whigs preserved them

the first night of the present one, when they were on the point of losing the question of the Address.

How then have the Ministers gone on since the beginning of this Session? It must be admitted, that they have gone on as no Ministry, of whom we have any knowledge in history, ever yet did. Their career has been a succession of mortifications and humiliations—of constant discomfiture in the debate; and, for the most part also, in the division. They have had to meet the whole artillery of the Opposition, Whigs, Ultras, Canningites; the heavy troops, and the light troops; and to oppose to all of these, they have but one single debater to whom the House will listen, and to him not always. But they have not yet encountered the worst that may befall them; for the most powerful part of their adversaries has thus far, in a great degree, spared them. The guns have not been loaded with heavy shot, or have been fired over their heads on purpose. But if the principal debaters on the side of the Whigs; if Mr. Stanley—if Sir James Graham—if Lord Althorp—and, above all, if Mr. Brougham, *in himself a mighty host*, were to unmask the battery which may now *at length* be supposed to be ready charged, and to await the slow, the very reluctant match—if *they* were to hold up the Government and their measures to the

wonder of the country, how could so baseless a fabric continue to exist even for a short period; when it has hardly been able to exist up to this time, saved, as it has hitherto been, by the long suffering and forbearance of its antagonists; manifestly, and in all but a very few debates, walking with studied care; and, as it were, lifting high the foot to avoid treading on and crushing it? Those adversaries, too, have hitherto been disunited. What would they be in concert? The Duke has some experience of their power in occasional co-operation: he may conjecture what it could compass, if consolidated by a regular coalition.

Can this last much longer? Can any set of men so far forget what is due to themselves, as to go on in this way, merely because a self-willed master says, "Go and expose yourselves for me—I am in the House of Lords, and do not mind what castigations you may receive in the Commons, or what figure you make?"

A remark here presses itself on the attention of all who observe how the present Ministry is supported and opposed. A Government without talents, or even ordinary powers of debating, may go on for a considerable time trusting to the support of the Crown, and of the Country, if it possesses the favour of a popular Prince, and has either the public voice, or a number of supporters, whose rank and

wealth gives them weight in the community. Mr. Addington withstood a formidable union of opponents; it may be asked, Why should not Mr. Peel? One answer is, that Mr. Peel has far less firmness than Mr. Addington. He speaks better, and is not ridiculous; but he has not Mr. Addington's nerves. The Duke, however, has his own, which are better, it may be said. In War he is a bold man, doubtless; in Civil Conflict he has not yet equalled Mr. Addington. But Mr. Addington had, besides, what the Duke has nothing of, and Mr. Peel less than nothing—he had popular favour;—he fed the prejudices of the multitude, as he pampered those of the Court;—he was the Champion of the Church, as of the King. No such chivalry is the Duke's! Again, he had an assured protector in George III. No Son of that Monarch *can* give the same confidence to the Minister of his choice.—But chiefly he had much of the Aristocracy of the Country with him; the present men have little or none of it, and all, or nearly all, the great families banded against them. If it were no question of talent, no question of popularity—if all the genius, all the eloquence lay on the side of the Ministers, the fearful force of wealth and station, embattled against them, would make the struggle most perilous. If, instead of Mr. Goulburn,

Lord Ellenborough, (himself a host of unpopularity,) and Lord Aberdeen, (who has inherited all Mr. Pitt's insolence, with less than Mr. Addington's capacity,) the Cabinet numbered among its members the Pitts, the Foxes, and the Windhams of other days, and were only opposed by such a race as now compose it, there would be the utmost difficulty in keeping together a body divested of Aristocratic support, and resisted by all the great houses of England. What English Nobleman of weight in the Country belongs to the Government by the tie of office? How few such support it? The Duke has got Lord Lonsdale, who opposes no Government; the united families of Beaufort and Rutland, who support all Governments; and of late Lord Cleveland, whose accession has been as unaccountable, as it has been generous; but whose feelings and principles must be in favour of a *strengthened* Ministry. Look to the ranks of Opposition—look to the division on the Galway Franchise Bill in the Lords, when all the exertions of the Duke, and of Lord Rosslyn, could only secure a majority of 15! Against him were seen the Dukes of Norfolk, Somerset, Richmond, Grafton, Bedford, Portland, Newcastle, and Buckingham, (the Duke of Devonshire being ill, and, therefore, absent.) But it is useless to go through the list of the great

families, who, on that occasion, opposed him; the names here mentioned, may serve as a sample of what composed the minority.

But there must be no misunderstanding, wilful, or other, on this matter: the want of aristocratic support, and the powerful coalition of families in opposition, is *not* the ground upon which the King is called upon to distrust a Ministry which the Country has rejected, as utterly incapable of managing its affairs. The constitution of the Ministry, and of the Opposition, is the real ground of decision. What powers of face can enable any one to look grave at so prodigious a contrast! The Duke of Wellington is a veteran soldier, and, if you will, a hero. He is to rule the Senate by his powers of debate, and superintend all our financial and juridical reforms.—Mr. Peel is a highly respectable man, both in Parliament and out of it; and no Ministry could be indifferent to the value of such service as he well can render. At the same time, it is somewhat unfortunate, that the ground of his popularity should have been so entirely changed; for he *was* of weight, as the leader of the Anti-Catholic party, and is now chiefly praised, as having carried the Emancipation by the sacrifice of his personal influence. Of the Chancellor of the Exchequer it would be cruel to speak; but is

the Lord High Chancellor at all fitter for his station? an advocate of no celebrity; indeed, unknown at the Bar, as he was in Politics, until he became a Tory, and took office, from having been an Ultra-Whig. The most signal passage in his life, was his entire failure on the memorable occasion of the Queen's Trial. Of the other Ministers, what shall be said? Sir George Murray, a most admirable Quarter Master General, and a very amiable man; till he quoted Horace, and undertook the Colonial Department, supposed to be, also, a sensible one. Lord Aberdeen, a tolerable scholar, and respectable gentleman, about as fit for the Foreign Department as Lord Dudley, whom he succeeded. Lords Ellenborough and Bathurst, whom, to say the least of, is to treat the most kindly;—and there may be one or two more, whose names do not immediately occur to the recollection. Such are the Ministers whom, according to report, His Majesty is disposed to consider adequate for the present crisis, and whom some of the chosen friends of Earl Grey, the Duke of Bedford, and the Earls of Jersey, Rosslyn, and Lauderdale, have been most slanderously charged with preferring, to that honourable, experienced, and highly-gifted person—because the Duke of Wellington has chosen to have it so! The charge *must* be

groundless; but were it true, let those who are its objects, be well assured, that their support might forfeit the confidence of their country for themselves, without enabling their new favourites to gain any portion of it.

How long the Country can bear such a state of things, is another question. The Duke of Wellington must render himself far more precious than he has thus far done, even by all his Great Services, before the people of England will continue to submit to him as their Ruler, if the only terms on which he will consent to trample upon them, are, the having such colleagues as Lord Aberdeen, to manage our relations with the Polignac's and Metternich's; Lord Lyndhurst, to shew how much worse the Court of Chancery can be conducted than by Lord Eldon—by indolent incapacity, than by dilatory genius—and, Lord Ellenborough, incredible! to dispose of India. It is very likely that the Duke of Wellington would be a useful and a popular member of any Government; but he must consent to have significant figures with him, and not, by the vain effort of giving value to a row of cyphers, expose himself to the derision of the nation.

His incapacity to regulate, unaided, our domestic affairs, cannot be doubted; but has he been more fortunate abroad? Let Greece, Por-

tugal, France, testify against him. In his negociations with all these countries, the erroneous and narrow-minded nature of his policy has been as remarkable as its total want of success.

In the East, while intending to prevent the establishment of Greece as an independent State, he has *really* occasioned the fall of Turkey. For had he not encouraged the Porte to resistance against the Russians, the latter could never have had a pretext for marching to Adrianople. In Portugal, while the *moral* support and favour he has afforded to the blood-stained Miguel, and the outrages he has suffered to be committed in the waters of Terceira, have degraded our name in Europe, he has yet hardly been able to preserve his favourite *Legitimate* upon the throne; and a Regency in favour of Donna Maria, has actually, in spite of his efforts, been established in the Azores. With regard to France, he has disgusted that nation by his support of ultra principles and opinions; he has weakened, nay almost annihilated our influence over the gigantic power of Russia; and all that he has gained for us in return, is, the friendship of worn-out Austria —the general opinion that England is against all liberal institutions—and the consequent abhorrence and contempt of the most enlightened portion of Europe. Such are the fruits,

as far as foreign affairs go, of a two year's administration of His Grace, which, when it commenced, found this country looked up to, and courted by all other nations—the centre of enlightened diplomacy and the umpire of the civilized world.

But, after all, it is at home we must look, when we wish to form or to give an opinion of the Government—not because foreign policy is less important—for what can be more weighty than the consideration of how the peace shall be preserved on which our very existence depends? but because questions of domestic policy are more easily understood by all men.

Then let us reflect for a moment on the prospect before us at home, and ask ourselves if the times now approaching seem more easy, or sufficiently easy to be likely to suit the capacity for government of the kind of ricketty thing that calls itself the Duke of Wellington's Ministry—if the discussions so near approaching are those to which a General Officer and his Aid-de-camps are the best suited--if the difficulties surrounding us on all sides are such as his skill and habits may be the most likely to steer us through.

The accession of King William, and the discussion of a Regency question, are, by the consent of all men, one and the same thing.

If, then, His Majesty were disposed to retain the Duke as his Minister, *that* is the first debate in which he would be involved. He would, no doubt, upon this occasion, send his Subalterns for the volumes of the Debates in 1789, and 1810, and read them—and he probably would feel, having perused these, ready to discuss the question. But would that provision of knowledge and sagacity satisfy the exigencies of the case? There are great changes in the world since 1789—even since 1810. There are mighty considerations which now imperiously press themselves upon our notice. The state of the Royal Family—the condition of the Empire—the power of the people—the aspect of foreign nations—and the state of public feeling in France, are all elements in this gigantic question: and the Country will demand in its Minister a degree of wisdom and capacity—a forbearance, as well as a firmness—of which His Grace might, peradventure, be found wholly destitute, even though he had gained greater victories than Salamanca or Waterloo.

But to suppose that the Duke of Wellington can dream of trying such questions with a set of Colleagues like those, who nightly excite the pity of the Commons, and the contempt of the Country, is too extravagant. If, however, he can get them to stand in the breach any longer,

let them rest assured that a *real* and determined opposition awaits them. That discreet friend Lord Ellenborough has told Lord Grey he prefers an open enemy to an insidious friend.* Well, then, his Lordship will be suited to his heart's content. No more courtesy—no more displays of superiority without mischief—no more exhibitions of skill in shewing men their weakness, without doing them any harm—no more shaking them good-humouredly over the precipice, and then setting them down on its edge—no more taking them up by the nape of the neck, or holding them on the palm of the hand, and patting them on the head, as the Brobdignag King did Grildrig. The time for action is come—the buttons are dashed away from the foils—the guns are shotted to their lips—they are pointed at the weak parts—that is, they are pointed at all parts—the matches are on fire—and the word only is wanted to make them roar. *The Captain* is a bold man; but to lead the forlorn hope upon such an occasion as this, requires a madman, not a bold one.

But is there no other King to be consulted beside "*King Arthur*?" Have we no longer an hereditary Sovereign to guide us? What object

* Every man who knows Lord Rosslyn must expect him instantly to leave a Cabinet that can so treat Lord Grey.

can it be to William the Fourth to have a troubled and a stormy reign?

It is said the Duke of Wellington will have it all his own way, or he will have nothing to do with it. This is supposing him to be one of the foolishest, and certainly one of the very worst of men. Therefore, we have no right to believe it possible in one so distinguished for good sense, who has given ample proofs of patriotism, and whose government has shewn a spirit of rare disinterestedness. Suppose it true, however; and what follows, but that the New Sovereign should say, courteously and graciously, but firmly—If you mean to continue my Minister, you must look for support to a united people, and to all the great Statesmen of the day, who, with hardly one exception, are to be found without the walls of the present Cabinet.

The last question that occurs is this—Whence arose (for it exists no longer) the notion of the Duke of Wellington alone being able to govern the country as Prime Minister? It arose from the disunion of some parties, now no more—the want of decision of some individuals, now little regarded—the dislike of office in others, now likely to be overcome—but above all from what was held necessary in the late King's time, namely, a firm man to controul him. A King who had no childish fancies to gratify—who did

not one day want to get rid of his wife at the risk of a civil war—another day to build palaces at the cost of a million—who had no minions to rule over him—and no personal spites to gratify, would never have required an unyielding Minister to keep him in order; and the necessity of the Duke of Wellington, as Premier, would not have been felt. With the Duke's failures abroad, and the deplorable state of his parliamentary campaign at home, much of this supposed necessity, even during the King's life, had disappeared, and men had begun to find out that other qualities were wanted in a Minister than those, which any ignorant and obstinate, yet bold individual, possesses equally with His Grace. But the demise of the Crown at once puts an end to all that remained of the delusion, restores to the country the chance, at least, of a respectable Government; while at the same time it presents to the Duke of Wellington the fair choice, of either ceasing to govern at all, or being content to govern with colleagues, fit for the service of the State. This is a choice, which he may rest assured, all mankind, except some half-dozen flatterers, have long foreseen awaited him. It is equally clear, that to his own naturally excellent understanding the truth will not come by surprise.

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