freedom, is *superior* to those other rights he noticed; inasmuch as it is *inherent*, whereas these are *derived;* it is original and antecedent to all government, whereas those of the Lords and of the King are the mere concomitants of *trust*, conferred by, and to be exercised for the benefit of the people.

The noble lord is reported to have proceeded thus, "he did not "mean to say that there was any absolute *limitation* to the *power* "of Parliament on this subject, where *circumstances* rendered "such a stretch of power *indispensable.*" What, can Parliament take away a right it never gave? a right antecedent, by thousands of years, to its very being?

Such notions can only have had their birth in a superficial study of the science of government, and a very careless consideration of the English Constitution.

To decide on the question of parliamentary competence, to take away, in any conceivable case, the natural, inherent, original rights of a people, it is proper to inquire into what are the respective imports of the words *constitution*, and *parliament*.

If these be indeed real entities, and not shadows or dreams, or unfathomable mysteries, they must admit of definition and explanation.—Now a CONSTITUTION is that system of polity, by which a free people agree to *govern themselves;* that is, through the medium of representation, to impose on themselves all the laws they shall observe, and all the taxes they shall pay; and of which system all the principles of truth and justice, so necessary to preserve the community's liberty, and to promote its well-being, are the very life and soul.

Their CONSTITUTION is, therefore, necessarily, the criterion, in that community, of political rectitude; a sacred law to their legislature; a "limitation" of its authority it cannot without criminality pass; and on all occasions an indispensable rule for its conduct, and that of all other functionaries of the state. Such being the CONSTITUTION, we next inquire,—what is PARLIAMENT?—In the foregoing definition of the CONSTITUTION, as in a mirror, we see the outline of its image. Farther to explain it, we say it is a *trustee* in the ordinary work of legislation for the management of public affairs; as well as in the superintendence of all magistracy and all judicial

proceedings; for keeping the several functionaries
duty.

It is not necessary to descend to minute~~s~~, touching a
bution of its offices, between the Lords and the Commo
is proper to remark that, although PARLIAMENT i
tent to enact such statute-law in the management of publ
according to the CONSTITUTION, as may be expe
would be manifestly absurd to admit that it hath aut
take away, or for one moment to *suspend* one iota of the
tion; or, under any pretence whatever, to violate
principle thereof: for it is a maxim of law, that, "*If*
ciple be violated, all are shaken."

The *statutes* in a free nation, like the *bye-laws* in a
tion, can *declare* principles, and can *supply* what is w
regulation, but cannot *take away* what was *fundament*
individuals, anterior to their becoming ~~explanators~~.

I trust, Sir, it is now apparent, that PARLIAMENT
is a mere *creature* of the people, their *trustee*, their *age*
ly to officiate in their service, for their benefit, and hath
function whatever, and which, in an especial manner,
to officiate, ~~and~~, as limited by the CONSTITUTION,
more right, ~~or~~ no more authority, to violate that Con
and deprive the people of their liberties, than your att
your steward hath to embezzle the title-deeds of your
to withhold from you to their own use the estate itself,—
the Archbishop of Canterbury dared to say of the peopl
dently to proclaim you *mad*, and thereupon to put you
to thrust you into a solitary dungeon, to treat you as
just as long and as often as they should think fit.

I know, indeed, that it is to be found in books written by
that PARLIAMENT is "*absolute*,"—that it is "*despotic*
it "can *change* and *create afresh* the CONSTITUTION
kingdom;"* that is, (for no less can be the meaning
words,) that, at its will and pleasure, for the Consti
England, it can give us the constitution of *Spain*, with
Inquisition!—or of *Algiers*, with its sabre justice!

* Blacks. Com. I. 160.

Morocco, where men's heads are struck off for royal amusement.

Nay, and for the consolation of our Bible-societies, tell this in *Gath*, publish it in the streets of *Askalon*,—these lawyers also affirm, directly in so many words affirm, that "Parliament can "alter the established religion of the land;" words which must mean, that it can abolish homage to a deity infinite in perfection and set up a *Moloch* to be worshipped with *human sacrifices;* and, to say the truth, we have seen the way paved for such an *alteration* in the religion of the land, by certain devotees of *Moloch*, while professing more than ordinary sanctity as Christians.

The same lawyer who penned the contemptibly ignorant positions I have quoted, as if to reach the climax of absurdity, likewise declared, that "Parliament could change and create afresh ITSELF," that is, it could at one and the same time be *cause* and *effect ;* the *potter* and the *pot*.

But lawyers do not write, and plead, and expound, nonsense for nothing. Nonsense is a fog which they have a peculiar art of raising in exhalations from the quagmires of their own sophistry, *for confounding the minds of men to some evil end*; and never hath more wickedness, or more tyranny, worked its way, than in this law-fog of pretended *parliamentary omnipotence*.

Traces of the infernal mischief are distinctly seen in all the present Attorney General's political *indictments;* in which are introduced, with a disgusting, a nauseating reiteration, this miserable nonsense—"the constitution, as by *law* established;" a phrase utterly unknown to the lawyers themselves; even so late, as when, in our own time, *Hardy*, *Tooke*, *Thelwall*, and many others, were indicted for High Treason, in 1794.

The very first appearance of this contemptible jargon, this gross absurdity, was in the gagging acts of parliament of the following year, into which acts it was foisted, as I have been credibly informed, as an *amendment*, by that paragon of scripture parodists, that most learned of the learned, the present Lord High Chancellor.

The drift hath ever since been most visible to all but the wilfully blind. IF Parliament at its pleasure could *change* the con-

stitution ;—and IF a rotten borough oligarchy could once
all the functions and authority of parliament, what more
be wanting to the complete establishment of a rotten-bo
constitution, composed of all that is corrupt and tyran
with statutes to declare all parliamentary reformists trait
their rotten-borough-majesties ?

For more than twenty years *parliamentary reformists ha*
uniformly objects of slander and persecution ; nor shall I ev
get certain significant words uttered in my hearing on the
Mr. *Horne Tooke*, by the present Chancellor, then A
General, and member for a close borough : the words w
follows :—" *If the* KING *should consent to act with an*
" *sentation, otherwise than as it is now constituted*, HE O
" TO DIE, *and* I TRUST IN GOD HE WOULD D

A Sir *Andrew Agnew* is said to have made, to a regi
soldiers he commanded, this concise harangue, " You s
" enemies, kill them or they will kill you." To the par
tary reformists I, in like manner say, ' you see the boroug
' gers, put down their usurpation, or you and your p
' must be their slaves.'

By last year's grape-shot shower of petitions, corrupti
thrown into convulsions, panic, and phrenzy. Her v
exposed her wickedness to hatred, as her extravagancies
her folly into contempt.

For petitions by hundreds, overwhelm her with peti
thousands, and then shall soon be seen a statute for ra
form worth a thousand *Magna Chartas*, and a thousand
Rights ; in as much as you shall then have *possession* o
sacred rights and liberties which those boasted charters o
little more than *declare !*

JOHN CARTWRI

* Commonwealth in Danger, published in 179[illegible], p. 81.

THE END.

W. Marchant, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street.