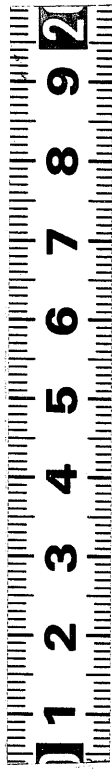


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*Thoughts on the English Government.*

ADDRESSED TO THE

QUIET GOOD SENSE

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

LETTER THE FIRST.

ON THE

*National Character of Englishmen—The Nature of the English Government—The Corruptions caused in both by the Introduction of French Principles—The Effects produced by the Reformation and the Revolution upon Political Principles—The Conduct of the Whig Party—The Character of the modern Democrats.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages make part of what was intended as a Preface to a Work now in hand: But the Author having been gradually led into many reflections which are of a temporary nature, and some of them such as may be thought not quite suited to the temper and gravity of the Work to which they were to be prefixed, he gives them to the Public as a Pamphlet; and if his manner of treating the subject of our Government and Laws should be approved, the present sheets may be followed by more.

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TO THE  
**QUIET GOOD SENSE**  
OF THE  
*PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.*

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**I** ADDRESS myself to you in that temper of mind, which is produced when we contemplate what may be considered as the cause of all the happiness we enjoy in this country.

GOOD SENSE is said to be worth all learning and all science; and it is believed that, among other distinctions which we possess, in this Island, above the Nations around us, we possess a greater portion of this excellent quality, through all ranks of society, from the highest to the lowest. I declare myself one, who assents to this belief. Should any of the modern philosophers, or politicians, think this declaration too assuming and illiberal, and that

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too little is allowed for the endowments and qualifications of the rest of mankind, my answer is this; That I have not yet seen equal marks of Good Sense in those matters where of all others they should be manifested, I mean in their Laws and Government. In the next place, I am not a *Citizen of the World*, so as to divide my affection with strangers—I am an Englishman—and I thank God for having placed me among a People who, I think, possess more goodness of heart and more GOOD SENSE than any other in the world, and who are the happiest, because they make the best use of both.

WHEN our happiness so much depends upon the exercise of GOOD SENSE, how kind has Providence been in bestowing this valuable quality so generally through all ranks of People! It is to be found among the middling and ordinary classes as much as among the higher; depending less upon the helps of education than the original frame and temperature of the mind. It is usually distinct from the faculties that make most show and attract notice; it manifests itself in conduct rather than discourse; it is not what a man says, so much as what he does. In such a sphere as this, how many can act without seeming to be employed; and what effects may be produced without any one appearing to be in motion!

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IT is in such quiet unperceived movements that the GOOD SENSE of the Country performs most of its operations, and exercises its influence on the conduct of public men and the national affairs. How often have we seen designs opened with high expectation, set off with great appearance of argument and much ornament of speech! How have we seen parties combine; all their power of numbers, and all their arts of confederation brought into action! meeting after meeting! all the stirrers and all the talkers at work! no doubt of accomplishing their object! no suspicion that anything could oppose them! and how have all these mighty doings been baffled, and scattered into air, without our seeing the hand that has destroyed them.

IT is the GOOD SENSE of the Country that has done this; it is YOU who have confounded the builders in their mad work, and have dispersed them; one of them you have admonished, another you have reprehended, another you have frowned down; all of them you have discountenanced and discredited; and behold! the leader and the led find no longer strength in their numbers; their arguments appear to have no reason, and their oratory no charms to mislead.

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Thus we generally find, that whatever actors may be on the stage, and whatever piece may be proposed, nothing can be brought to a successful conclusion unless it is approved by the GOOD SENSE of the Country; which, though it discovers itself in a QUIET way, is very rarely without effect.

BEING sensible of the final decision YOU, fortunately for us, possess in all public matters, and wishing publicly to own and shew my reverence for the gentle and useful sway which you enjoy, and I hope will always maintain in this nation, I have addressed to you these Thoughts upon the nature of our *Government*, which is now fashionably called, *The Constitution*. If my Thoughts should be agreeable to YOUR GOOD SENSE, I shall not doubt of their being founded on principles that are sound, and truly English.

THE peculiarities of the English character are discernible in nothing more than in the Laws and Government which they have gradually formed to themselves. These, in their frame and quality, are entirely our own; and it is for want of our habit of thinking, that foreigners, who have studied them and are disposed enough to admire them, do not yet comprehend their true value. We admire the same things, but not in the same manner, nor upon the same motive, nor with the same view.

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Thus, an Englishman loves *liberty*, but he loves it not for the sake of the mere name; he must have something substantial that results from it; something that he can see and feel: this he has in the freedom of his person, and the security of his property. An Englishman, therefore, thinks more of his *civil* than his *political* Liberty; more of the end than the means: the consequences of the former are always before him, and he feels it to be truly the Liberty he needs; the other is only an occasional resource, a necessary evil, and he sees that the exercise of it too frequently tends to private Licentiousness and public disorder.

AN Englishman is more *jealous* of Power, than ambitious to partake of it. Thus he seeks not to domineer over his neighbours, but he will take good care, that they shall not domineer over him. This jealousy disposes him more towards a *Monarchical* than a *Republican* Government; for he will bear with the superiority of those who are his superiors, but he will not brook, that his equals should be placed over him; and he feels that the protection which his *civil* Liberty has under the one sort of Government, is a greater blessing than all the sway and honours that he may chance to attain from the full exercise of *political* Liberty in the other.

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THESE qualities of the mind are joined with another, which has been noticed, and has sometimes raised a sneer among foreigners. An Englishman has a natural *modesty*, which is not un-mixed with a quiet, reserved, unassuming *pride*. These dispose him to conform to subordination, and to respect rank and station: his modesty inclines him to yield that, which established custom demands, and his pride will not allow him to assume what belongs to another. The native disposition of Englishmen, therefore, brings about imperceptibly that, which in other countries is prescribed by positive institutions; I mean the distinction of Ranks. But we possess this convenient modification of Society in a manner that is seen in no other country; for the distinction of ranks with us makes no difference of persons; we have no *privileged* Orders; and yet there are none of us who do not yield proper deference to distinguished rank. In no country, perhaps, is Nobility more esteemed and honoured; and yet certainly, when we consider what Nobility bestows on its possessors, in no country can it strike less awe, or need be less feared. We concede readily to them that respect which we have the power to withhold; we unite in upholding the honour and influence of the higher ranks out of courtesy, and from a love of decorum;

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rum; perhaps also from a consciousness that many of us aspire, and a knowledge that all of us may by possibility attain, to a participation of it, from steady exertions, and virtuous conduct.

THIS generosity in the middle and lower orders of life is not received by the Great without acknowledgment and return. To say nothing of the relative situation of the Nobleman and the Gentleman (where the sameness of education and habits of life will not suffer any essential distinction of manners and sentiment), we seem, from the very highest to the very lowest in the nation, to confess that there is a native unalterable temper and constitution of mind which belongs to us all in common; we express it by two short words \* that are at length become endeared to us; expressing, as we all think, that original indelible character of an Englishman; which the first Nobleman is proud to profess he enjoys, but enjoys only in common with the meanest of his tradesmen, his tenants, or his servants. This is a sentiment that makes us love and respect one another. The want of this in France, where the Nobility and Gentry hated or despised those beneath them, as a distinct race of men, was the

\* John Bull.

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cause that they first placed barriers of separation, which made an inequality that was invidious ; and afterwards, in their rage to cure the mischief of such a separation, levelled all to an equality that is more detestable than their former distinctions. This feeling of a congenial equality among us, is a philosophy that is the growth of this Island. Its rise is natural, not forced ; it is a philosophy that comes from the heart, and not from the head. It has been generated by a common consent, not imposed by hot-headed speculators ; and I trust it will have the power to preserve us by indissoluble bands of union, when the artificial schemes of philosophizing Politicians are buried in oblivion.

BUT, above all things, an Englishman loves *Quiet*.—*Give us peace in our time*—is the language of his prayers, and the silent wish of his heart. How many virtues does this single disposition oblige him to practise ! It is from hence that he is patient and forbearing towards his Governors ; not captious and wilful, but seeking the fairest construction of what they do ; ascribing to them the same honesty of intention which he feels in his own mind. And, should his jealousy once be excited, he will bear and forbear for a time, still hoping that things may mend. He knows the value

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value of what he possesses better, than lightly or hastily to wish for a change, and he dreads every change may be for the worse. What storms and convulsions have been escaped by the prevalence of this love for *Peace* and *Quiet* ! But the more immediate consequence of it is this, that its kindred quality GOOD SENSE has thus an interval left, to interpose its protecting influence, and consider of such remedies as may seem suited to the nature of the existing evil.

THE English Government is an organ of public union and activity, which is adapted to the humour and mode of thinking of those who were witnesses to the formation of it, and who live under it. It appears to me, we may discern in the whole disposition of it, the result of that constitution of mind which I have just ascribed to our countrymen. Unambitious, and preferring the quiet and peace, which enables them to pursue their own affairs, to the power and splendor of managing those of the public, the English yield a willing obedience to a Government not of their own choosing : it is an Hereditary King, who bears all the burthen of Government, who is endued with all the power necessary to carry it on, and who enjoys all the honour and pre-eminence necessary to give splendor to so high a station. It is the *King's Peace*, under

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which we enjoy the freedom of our persons and the security of our property : he *makes*, and he *executes* the Laws, which contain the rules by which that peace is kept ; and for this purpose, all officers, civil and military, derive their authority from him. Still further to strengthen this all-powerful sway, two qualities are added that seem to bring this Royal Sovereignty, as far as mortal institutions can be, still nearer to the Government of Heaven. First, This Power is to have perpetual continuance—*the King never dies*.—Secondly, Such unbounded power shall be presumed to be exercised with as eminent goodness ; and it is accordingly held that—*the King can do no wrong* ;—meaning, that his person is so sacred that wrong shall never be imputed to him.

THESE are the original and main principles upon which the plain Englishman, full of honesty and confidence, thinks he may rest for the protection of his person and property. But human institutions will swerve from their original design, and Englishmen will not always confide ; jealousies and fears arise, and those must be appeased. The reasonable jealousy of an Englishman seems to be fully satisfied, when a qualification is annexed to the power in the King, first, of *making*, and secondly, of *executing* the Laws ; by which his subjects

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subjects are admitted to participate in a share of those high trusts.

ACCORDINGLY, the King can *enact* no Laws without *the advice and consent*, not only of *the Lords Spiritual and Temporal*, who are in some sort counsellors of his own choosing, but also of *the Commons in Parliament assembled*. And the jealousy with regard to property has been such, that in devising this measure the subject has suffered a guard to be put upon himself ; for the *Commons*, who are to advise and consent, are not the people at large, nor are they chosen by the people at large, but they are the *Knights, Citizens, and Burgeses*, who are respectively chosen in *Counties, Cities, and Boroughs*, by persons of substance and sufficiency, who may safely be trusted with the exercise of a charge where property is in question.

IN this manner is the power of the King qualified in the *making* of Laws. His power in *executing* the Laws is qualified by joining Grand and Petty Juries, in the administration of Justice, with his Judges. To these two controuls on the power of the King, must be added a principle, which gives the Nation another security for the due exercise of the Kingly Power ; for though the King can do no wrong, yet if wrong is done by the application of the King's

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Power, as he never acts without advice, the person who advises such application is responsible to the Law.

WITH the exception, therefore, of the advice and consent of the Two Houses of Parliament, and the interposition of Juries; the Government, and the administration of it in all its parts, may be said to rest wholly and solely on the King, and those appointed by him. Those two adjuncts of *Parliament* and *Juries* are subsidiary and occasional; but the King's Power is a substantive one, always visible and active. By his Officers, and in his name, every thing is transacted that relates to the peace of the Realm and the protection of the Subject. The Subject feels this, and acknowledges with thankfulness a superintending sovereignty, which alone is congenial with the sentiments and temper of Englishmen. In fine, the Government of England is a *Monarchy*; the Monarch is the ancient stock from which have sprung those goodly branches of the Legislature, the Lords and Commons, that at the same time give ornament to the Tree, and afford shelter to those who seek protection under it. But these are still only branches, and derive their origin and their nutriment from their common parent; they may be lopped off, and the Tree  
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is a Tree still; shorn indeed of its honours, but not, like them, cast into the fire. The Kingly Government may go on, in all its functions, without Lords or Commons: it has heretofore done so for years together, and in our times it does so during every recess of Parliament; but without the King *his* Parliament is no more. The King, therefore, alone it is who necessarily subsists, without change or diminution; and from *him* alone we unceasingly derive the protection of Law and Government.

SUCH are the Principles and Constitution of the English Government delivered down to us from our ancestors; such they can be demonstrated to be from the incontestible evidence of history and records; and such it is wished they should continue by nine tenths of the Nation.

BUT, notwithstanding this great majority in favour of the Government, there have never been wanting persons to find fault with it, decry its excellence, and do their endeavours to subvert it, and set up another in its place. Though such persons err against the plainest evidence, yet, all circumstances considered, it is not to be wondered that differences of this sort should happen under a Government, whose best title is professed to be,  
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its conformity to the principles of reason ; it is not to be wondered that this, among other subjects, should occasionally become matter of speculation, and be brought to the test which it so readily challenged. And, where liberty of speech and of writing has been so invariably allowed, this spirit of discussion could not fail of spreading. Thus, from the best of motives, might the merits of our Laws and Government be brought in question. Little mischief could be dreaded from honest disputation like this, and ultimately some benefit might be derived from the new lights, which frequent argumentation would be sure of producing. The opponents, in such controversies, might be friendly to the Government equally with the defendants ; differing in the means, and not in the end ; in circumstances, and not in the substance.

But the greater part of those who have raised questions upon the merits of our Government, are certainly determined enemies to its fundamental principles ; and among these are some, who have most assumed the guise and affectation of great friends and favourers of *The Constitution*. That there should be persons of this description is not much more to be wondered than that there should be mistaken friends of the description before mentioned.

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THE truth is, that all Englishmen are not of the stamp I have above supposed to belong to our Countrymen. But those who bear a different mark seem to me to be influenced by a defect of mind, which I must consider as an aberration from the national character and general disposition of Englishmen. In these men, it is sometimes the understanding, and sometimes the will that has received a wrong bias ; either their affections are hurried away by an impression from strong propensities, that they think too well justified to need examination ; or their understandings are so sophisticated by preconceived opinions, that they are unable to make a clear judgment of any thing that is to affect those opinions : so that by the strength of the will, or the weakness of the wit, they go on from error to error, and are almost always in a heat from the pursuit, and from the disappointment attending it.

SUCH are those men, who, contrary to the genius of Englishmen, hate *peace* and *quiet*, and instead of reposing themselves confidently on the Government of the King, earnestly seek to have a share in it themselves. Such men have usually no calling of their own, or none that they attend, and they wish to make one for themselves in the affairs of the public. Such are those unbridled  
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spirits that hate all power but their own, and would cry down all rank and station that they may rise upon its downfall, leaving no inequality in the land but the wealth they appropriate from the spoil of the good and great; who would rather take the chance to become one of five hundred Republicans that govern by their ordinances, that is, by their own will, than continue the subjects of a King who governs by Law. It is not to be expected, that men blinded by passion, and stimulated to designs so contrary to the general bent of the English character, should be influenced by any suggestions of that GOOD SENSE, which prevails so much with the rest of their countrymen. Delivered over to a state of reprobation, they act as totally bereaved of that species of saving and preventive grace, which interposes its admonitions so seasonably, and so often rescues us from the commission of some folly or wickedness.

WHEN we find, amongst a sober and discreet people, a certain set with crazed brains and perverted understandings, opposing their own conceits to the general inclination of the people, we are led to enquire what could have been the cause of such a schism, whence the spirit originated, and what motives or encouragement could have conspired to keep it up. And here I feel some consolation

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consolation to be able to say, that although the disposition to cavil at our Laws and Government, and to extol another system, is a mischief that has been cherished and strengthened by the malicious industry of many amongst ourselves; yet it is a weed of foreign original, transplanted by men who had suffered their minds to be captivated and corrupted by outlandish fashions; and only adopted and cultivated here by persons of a light or fanatical humour, addicted to paradox, infatuated with refinement, and fond of innovation.

It is from a nation whose national character is the very opposite to ours, that the seeds of this evil were borrowed, and then scattered in this island; a nation, which has made itself odious to Europe by its violence and fraud; always planning fresh hostility against its neighbours, either by arms and open war, or by fomenting internal commotions: and by such base means this Nation has grown to a size and importance that the Great Dispenser of all things has not seen fit in his wisdom to allow to those, who confine themselves within the sacred bounds of justice, and propose nothing but the safety of themselves and the peace of mankind:—a Nation, which the same just God has nevertheless at length punished for its iniquities, by delivering them over to their own vain and wicked imaginations, so that they

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might revenge upon themselves the injuries of Europe, more, by a thousand fold, than all Europe itself could have done; and that they might become a scorn and by word for every thing hateful and abominable among men:—a Nation so unfit for the enjoyment of liberty, that while they were kept in subjection to their Kings they had Religion and Laws, manners and refinement, and were admired and imitated by their neighbours; but, since they have broken from that restraint, and have recovered what they call Liberty, they have pulled down and abolished all those valuable supports of life, even to the very wreck of civilization itself. In *their* place, their Rulers have erected one mockery of a Constitution after another; haranguing daily upon Liberty, but exercising the most unexampled Oppression; for Oppression is still the lot of a Frenchman. In a Republic of three years standing, the greatest exploit they have to boast is the destroying of a tyranny that filled up fifteen months of the time. And who was this tyrant? Not a man on an established throne, surrounded with guards, and abetted by powerful alliances and numerous friends and dependants; it was one of themselves, who shewed himself daily among them, of the same order, upon the same form.

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WHAT a counterfeit of Liberty has been played off upon the poor people of that country! and what a degenerate down-trodden race must they be, who have not discovered the imposition; or, discovering it, have not resisted it, and done themselves justice! This could not be, if there was any honesty, any fortitude, or any manly sentiment in the country; but these are not qualities to be found in France, and Liberty seems destined never to make her abode there. Men must be trained to Liberty; and a whole Nation cannot so easily practise it as a Committee of conceited Academicians can lay down definitions, and propound maxims for its establishment. The mind and manners of a Frenchman need much purifying, before he can comprehend the Liberty he talks of with so much fluency and heat. Liberty is the reward of those only who are just and good; and it is to be attained only by those who have GOOD SENSE enough to understand it, and to use it with moderation.

BUT, although the French nation have miscarried in the only attempt they ever made to establish Liberty in their own country, they have, nevertheless, produced men, who in their writings have endeavoured to advance a *cause* which bore the appearance of it; and some, who have been

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able actually to carry it into practice in other countries. In former times, those who fled from slavery at home became Apostles of Liberty abroad ; and, since the Nation has persuaded itself that the land is full of Liberty, the establishing a college for *propagating* their blessed doctrines in foreign countries, is nothing more than might be expected from the vainglory of a Frenchman. Be the times what they may, the Governments of Europe are still to be disturbed with the conceits of Frenchmen ! Whether it is for Religious or Civil Liberty, they will never keep their inventions to themselves ; they are determined, by preaching and proselyting, to bring all the world to conform to the new lights which they alone have discovered ; and to insult the blindness and folly of those who resist their fraternization ! From *Calvin* down to *Condorcet*, from *Beza* to *Brissot* (innovators in different matters, but alike in the self-sufficiency, heat, and imperiousness belonging to all Frenchmen), no true Gospel but theirs ; no *Rights of Man* but theirs ; no Government in *Church* or *State* but according to their *platform* and their principles.

WE all know the destructive doctrines upon which the French Liberty of the present day is founded ; and we see, with uneasiness, the pains  
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and the success in propagating them in this Country. The infection has spread already too far ; and, such is the fatal seduction of those principles, that they are too likely to work their way much further : their looseness is likely to win to their side the dissolute and immoral ; their speciousness to ensnare the unwary and unprepared ; men of bad principles find a comfort and support in them ; men of no principles know not how to combat them. Thus it has happened, that many of our countrymen, who had not strongly impressed on their minds the National Character before described, have given themselves up to these foreign delusions, and have begun to apply them to the reforming and new-modelling of the antient Government established in this Land by the wisdom and experience of our forefathers.

SUCH is the *present* novelty from France ! We may learn from History what was the nature of the principles which *Calvin* and *Beza*, and their followers at Geneva, instilled into the *Puritans*, who infested our Government in the reign of Queen Elizabeth ; and who, under the name of *Presbyterians*, *Commonwealth's-men*, *Independents*, and other factions and sects without number, at length overturned, first the Government of Scotland, and afterwards the Government of England.  
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Upon examination we shall find a similar spirit prevailing in the French principles of those days, and of the present times.

It would be curious to pursue the comparison that sometimes makes a contrast, and sometimes a parallel, between the character and designs of the French Reformers of old time in the Church, and those of the present day in the State; the Religious and the Civil *Jacobins*; the *Puritans*, and the *Democrats*. It is wonderful how similar they all are in their doctrines, and how they agree in the system and the instruments they use for disseminating their principles, for gaining proselytes, and for *carrying on* the unhallowed work of setting the populace against the established Government. How analogous was the machinery of their party; the cant and imposture of their pretences!—The unalienable rights of the People to form the Government of the Church, taught by *Calvin* and the *Puritans*; and the unalienable right of the People to form the Government of the State, taught by the *French Democrats*:—The pretended commands of God for the one; and that omnipotent power upon earth, the Sovereign Will of the People commanding the other.—What is “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon?” but the modern title to the holy right of insurrection?

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rection? View the Covenants and Engagements of the one, the Civic Oaths of the other; both alike sworn, and broken and re-sworn;—the hypocrisy of Solemn Fasts, and the mummerly of Civic Feasts;—the Classes and Conventicles of the one, and the Affiliated Clubs of the other;—the Pulpit, and the Tribune—preaching down, or lecturing down the Government;—affected appellations of Brethren and Citizens;—and, lastly, the spring of action that is the cause of motion in the two, the Fanaticism of those who had too much sense of Religion, and the Illumination and New Lights of the latter, who have no Religion at all.

In making this comparison, I have taken the liberty to mix together the character and proceedings of the French abroad, as well as of their disciples in this country; it is all a part and result of the same system. The first French Reformers, and their followers in this Country, proclaimed a Church Government, which was the invention of *Calvin's* brain, as commanded by God, and as imposing upon every one the obligation to overturn the established Church Government, and erect this in its place; such was the impudence and profanation of the *Puritans*. The modern French Reformers declare all Govern-  
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ment to be usurpation which is not formed by the will of the People; and that the People have an imprescriptible right to subvert such Government, and make another according to their own will and pleasure; such are the imperious pretensions of the *Jacobins*. The principles of the *Puritans* and the *Jacobins* equally tend to sedition and rebellion, and equally strike us with terror: the one rested its support on the greatest Power in Heaven, and the other depends upon the greatest Power on Earth: the witnesses vouched for these high demands, seem to be equally suspicious in both; they are to be found nowhere but in the inscrutable ways of their own minds; in their own strong persuasions, dazzled by vain imaginations, and strengthened by the confirmation of self-will.

In order to see the manner in which French principles have insinuated themselves into this Island, and vitiated the plain honesty of the English character, it will be necessary to look back to some occurrences in our History. We shall then see what pretences have been used, from time to time, to bring our antient Laws and Government into discredit, and to corrupt their genuine principles with notions introduced from abroad, and no less foreign in their nature than their original.

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It seems to me, that most of the errors and misconceptions relative to the nature of our Government, have taken their rise from those two great events, *The Reformation*, and what is called *The Revolution*. There has either been some dissatisfaction with the manner and extent of those two measures, or some misapprehension of their design, or a want of insight into the grounds and principles of the subject matter; namely, the Government in Church and State.

THOSE memorable transactions were conducted in a way that was truly English; the actors in them proceeded with their remedy as far as the disease reached, and no further; and they never suffered themselves to lose sight of this main rule, that what they did was to preserve the antient Government, and not to destroy or alter it.

By the Reformation, it was intended to remove those errors and superstitions that had gradually been introduced into the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church by the Popish Clergy; so that Christianity might be professed in that purity and simplicity which prevailed in the primitive ages. At the same time, occasion was taken to put an end to the long-contested claim of the Pope to exercise ecclesiastical dominion over the King's

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subjects in this kingdom. The whole of that usurped jurisdiction was expressly and completely taken away by Act of Parliament ; and that jurisdiction, first under the name of *Headship*, and then of *Supremacy in all Ecclesiastical Matters*, was placed by the same authority in the King. The Church was thus fast bound to the Monarchy ; and this union of all authority, ecclesiastical as well as civil, in the Crown, it was hoped, besides placing Religion out of danger, would make a common cause between Church and State, would produce mutual advantages to both, and give to the antient pillar of the Government, the Crown, new strength and splendor for the protection of the subject.

Thus much and no more seems to have been the sum of what was done and designed to be done by the Reformation. The first observation that is suggested by this event is, upon the wonderful moderation that seems to have prevailed through the whole. It is a master-piece of temper and good sense, and will ever remain an example, among several others, of the great wisdom shewn by our Churchmen, and the services they have done, at different times, towards preserving our antient Government.

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THE conduct and success of our Reformation becomes more striking when we look abroad and take a view of the proceedings of our neighbours in the same sort of work. A spirit of dissatisfaction had spread in France on the subject of Popish superstitions. According to the disposition for caballing and proselyting so remarkable in that people, opinions engendered in France were soon preached and propagated at Geneva, and through the Seventeen Provinces of the Netherlands ; countries still destined to be infested either by French arms, or by French principles, which generate internal distractions that are worse than war. In all these countries, except in France itself, the people took the affair of Reformation into their own hands, and, proceeding in the only way of reforming understood by them, they began to pull down and overturn everything that had been established in the Church ; believing that nothing could be primitive Christianity that was not wholly opposite to the system which they had been used to, and was now condemned. These commotions were suppressed in some of the Provinces ; but in the others, and at Geneva, they became the actual ground-work of the Reformation that was afterwards settled.

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THE Bishop and Clergy of Geneva, like many others of their order, had fled, to escape the fury of the populace. At this crisis, the French refugee *Calvin* happening to come to that town was chosen by the people to be their pastor. Having once got a footing, he succeeded, not without some vicissitudes, and through many a shift and artifice, to establish and maintain to his death over the people who raised him, an ascendancy which they neither liked nor dared to shake off. From this time, Geneva became the school for teaching the new opinions in doctrine and Church government; and during the unfortunate interval of persecution in the reign of Queen Mary, many of our exiled Reformers took up their residence in that place, and there imbibed those notions which afterwards wrought so much confusion and misery in this Island.

As *Calvin* came into power on no authority but that of the people, he could form his Church government upon no other than popular principles. He joined, therefore, two Elders with the Minister, and gave to these parochial officers supreme authority in all Church matters, without appeal, except in special cases: and thus he subjected the whole community of a parish to the direction of three persons, two of them laymen of an ordinary stamp,

stamp, who were likely to submit their judgment in most things to the guidance of their spiritual associate. This species of Government was professed to be such as God had commanded for the government of his Church, and such as all were bound in conscience to set up, against all opposition, whether from Magistrates, Bishops, or Kings.

WHEN this popular basis for Church government had once taken full possession of the mind, it was not likely soon to cease fermenting. The work of Reformation is very apt to overheat those who are engaged in it; the bold spirit of such *projectors* grows bolder as they go on; every success gives new courage; and if they have the strong hand of the people to second them, what should stop their ambitious designs. We accordingly find, that the *French* Reformers of the Church soon undertook to search into the title of the Civil Magistrate, and examine by what authority and upon what trust he exercised his power. They soon told him, that the origin of all power was from the People; and they began to threaten Sovereign Princes with the same tremendous storm which had been blown up against the Bishops. Indeed, they did not open this attack without well knowing what they had to depend upon. The populace (who upon such occasions are called the People) were a monster which these

these Ministers had in their own tuition and keeping; they knew they could work upon their fanatical fancies as served their purpose; could heat them and cool them, unbridle and bridle them, as they pleased. In this manner did a new set of opinions start up to shake the peace of society; and Civil Authority was once more exposed to be undermined by the plots and confederations of Churchmen, carrying on their work under the pretence of religion.

THE Princes of Europe had weathered the storms that used to be directed against them from the Papal Throne; and the thunder of excommunication or deprivation no longer daunted the Prince, because the People no longer thought it a pretence for rebellion: but the new opinions gave more alarm than any danger that had been escaped. The People were now tempted to rebellion, not because their Prince was excommunicated, and the Pope authorised them so to do, but because they believed themselves the origin of all Civil Authority. So long as Man loves himself, and is fond of his own will and imaginations, so long will he listen with gratification to such doctrines. These *puritanical* notions give a zest to sedition and a title to rebellion which could never be discovered in any Papal Bull; and accordingly, wherever they

they were brought into action, they were accompanied with a rage and ferociousness that is peculiar to Fanaticism, whether in a *Puritan* or a *Jacobin*.

THESE notions upon Civil Government are to be found in the writings of *Calvin* and *Beza*, and in those of *Buchanan*, *John Knox*, *Cartwright*, and others of the Geneva Discipline, who chose to make this Island the Theatre for acting some of their Tragedies.

THE praise of moderation and wisdom before bestowed on the English Reformers I cannot help repeating here, when I turn my eyes to the sad confusion caused in the sister kingdom by a contrary conduct. Unhappily, the people there took into their own hands the affair of Reformation, and it was performed to a degree of subversion and anarchy, that could only be suggested by fanaticism, and executed by popular fury. More unhappily for that country, and ultimately for this, the seditious spirit then infused by *Puritanism* was not allayed for many years after; during which the *Presbyterians* in Scotland had an opportunity, by co-operating with their brethren in this kingdom, to become the principal cause of the rebellion in the time of Charles the First, which led

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led to abolishing, first the Church Ceremonies and Government by Bishops (the immediate object of all their detestation), and afterwards the House of Lords and the King, who, I firmly believe, will in no times be able long to survive the first breach made in the fabric of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government.

IN the midst of the confusion and anarchy that reigned in the neighbouring countries where Reformation was going on, the Church of England had reason to congratulate herself that this great work had been accomplished with all the forms of law in a parliamentary way, and that she was united with the interests of the Crown in such manner as to claim the full support of the Civil Power, if assailed by enemies; and further she might comfort herself, that her reforms were so temperate, and so compatible with all the essentials of the late state of the Church, that her enemies would be few, and those few would have little strength of reason for maintaining their opposition. For several years of the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign the Church enjoyed peace, notwithstanding the Papist *was still in the land*.

BUT now was the time for a new adversary to appear, more implacable and politic than even the

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the Papist, and one too sprung from the bosom of Reformation itself. Many of the English who had suffered their minds to be infected with Calvinistical opinions during their residence in Geneva and in the Low Countries, began, about the year 1572, to complain of our Reformation as incomplete; and from that time men of this persuasion never ceased, by their writings and conduct, to manifest the most violent dislike of our Church, and to profess openly their wish and design to overturn it and set up the discipline of Geneva in its place. Doctrines like these were very alarming, because they were levelled not only against the Bishops, who were a considerable part of the Legislature, but against the supremacy so lately united to the Crown. Such is the effect of all extremes, that the Calvinistical Church, no less than the Popish, assumed to itself to be independent of the Civil Magistrate, and thus threatened to revive all the inconvenience of a power in the Church distinct from that of the State; an *imperium in imperio* so ill brooked in the Pope; and the settling of which in the Crown was thought to be one of the happiest strokes in the Reformation. In this point of the Supremacy they were therefore joined by the Papists, and both parties thought their objections particularly strengthened at that time, from the circumstance

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of the Throne being filled by a Woman. But though the Crown was, in this particular, assailed by both parties, and although the *Puritans*, in other respects, never ceased heaping upon their brother Non-Conformists, the Papists, every odium that could be invented, and endeavoured, by keeping up this cry, to draw off the attention of the Government from their own designs, they were, nevertheless, regarded all through the remainder of this reign, by those who, it appears since, saw farthest into human affairs, as the faction most of all to be dreaded, on account of their principles, and the activity, perseverance, and system with which they promoted them.

THE high pretensions of this *new discipline* did not pass without most complete answers in point of argument. The writings of *Whitgift*, of *Bancroft*, and more particularly of *Hooker*, had so fully examined and confuted every argument alledged for the proposed Reformation, and so exposed the pernicious tendency of the new doctrines, and the dangerous designs which the authors of them meditated, and which they had actually begun to put in practice, that they were completely silenced by the end of this reign; so that at the commencement of the next reign, in the conference at Hampton Court, held in the  
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presence of King James, they could make no show of defence whatsoever.

BUT though the *Puritans* were so foiled in argument, they did not, on that account, relinquish their purpose. The failure, indeed, in the conference, seemed to have this effect, that they no longer pretended to force their discipline into notice upon any open and bold claim of merit in its favour, but thenceforward rather confined themselves to raising and keeping up a cry about the increase of Papists and the danger of Popery. In the meanwhile, they lost no time silently to improve every opportunity for spreading their opinions, and adding to the number of their disciples and partizans.

DURING the reign of James and Charles the First, other matter of public dissatisfaction arose, which the *Puritans* could manage with better face than their own ecclesiastical pretensions; and if they could work any political differences up to a pitch of general discontent, and so to resistance against the Government, their end would be equally served, and their darling object might stand a chance of being attained without directly contending for it. It is well known, that both in Parliament and out of Parliament the most forward to quarrel with the measures of Government,

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and to foment contention between the Crown and the People, were those infected with *Puritanical* opinions. This contest went on from bad to worse, till the plot was thoroughly matured, and the whole broke out into full-blown rebellion in the year 1641. This was not brought to bear till the Scots army of *Presbyterian Covenantors* was prevailed upon to invade the kingdom, and our House of Commons recognized and received with open arms their *Puritanical Brethren*; then the *Covenant* was taken univervally by the Parliament and all its adherents; the long-looked-for time was arrived, when *Calvin's* plan of Church government—*Presbytery by Divine Right*—was to be erected on the ruins of Episcopacy; and it was accordingly so ordained by the Parliament.

WE all know what followed; and the calamities endured by the unhappy people for near twenty years, till the Country, worn out with projects of one Government after another, in none of which was found security of property, freedom of person, or the peace and quiet it so much sighed after, at length recovering its good sense and former energy, returned to the place whence it had so fatally departed, and caused, without bloodshed or a blow, the antient Government of Monarchy to be restored in 1660.

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SUCH were the vicissitudes and catastrophe attending the first set of *French opinions* introduced into this kingdom, for the purpose of disparaging, undermining, and subverting the Constitution of our Government established by Law. They set out with a frivolous exception to Caps and Surplices worn by Ministers in performance of Divine Service; they proceeded to cavil at the government of the Church by Bishops, and at placing that Supremacy in the Crown, which ought, as they contended, to reside in the Parson of the parish and his two Lay Elders. Not being able to advance this by argument, or win the people to a liking of the design, they reserved themselves to take advantage of every occasion to public discontent, and became the most forward Patriots of the time; till they were enabled, under pretence of the general good, for preserving the People's rights and maintaining the good old laws of the country, as they said, to destroy all ranks and stations in Church and State; to levy war against the King, for the protection, as they pretended, of the King's person; and, finally, to destroy him: all which they transacted under various denominations of *Presbyterians, Independents, Commonwealth's Men, Fifth Monarchy Men, Anabaptists, Quakers*; and other sects and divisions too irksome to be named; all of them, more or less, disciples of the same school;

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school ; where the Sovereignty of the People and the Killing of Kings was first brought into system, and sanctioned by the dictates of the Gospel.

THE abdication of King James the Second, and the transactions that ensued upon the vacancy thereby made in the Throne, compose a very important and curious passage in the History of our Government and Laws. It has been vulgarly called, *The Revolution* ; upon what authority I know not ; it was not so named by Parliament, nor is it a term known to our Laws. This term had certainly no better origin than the conversation and pamphlets of the time, where words are used, in a popular and historical sense, without any regard or thought of technical propriety. But, unfortunately, this invention, or misapplication of words, leads to a confusion of ideas ; knowledge is thereby put into a retrograde course ; instead of going from things to words, we are obliged to pass from words to things : let the term *Revolution* be once consecrated as the true denomination of that event, and the mind ascribes to that transaction everything which it can conceive to belong to the term. Too many among us use the word in some such indeterminate general sense, and such persons are accordingly misled by notions that have no sort of connexion with  
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the thing of which they are speaking : and yet it is remarkable, that those who embrace this phantom do it with a zeal and prepossession which we do not see in those who regard the substance and reality. These men think they can never shew sufficient warmth and emotion when they name *The Revolution* ; they form Clubs to swear by, and worship it ; they make great feasts to celebrate it ; they have no love for *The Constitution* but for that which was *formed at the Revolution* ; and they are good subjects and loyal, only upon *Revolution principles*.

WHAT can be the cause of this mighty zeal ? Whence does it originate, and to what does it tend ?—This beloved Revolution happened more than a century ago ; so that all the heat which naturally attends such a crisis, and which may be kept up while it was recent, must have long since cooled and died away. No one can say, that any of the causes which produced that event, have recurred in our time, so as to remind us of the remedies our ancestors applied on that occasion. All this earnest demonstration of affection and devotion, without any apparent cause or occasion, is either ridiculous affectation, or signifies something that is not obvious to persons of common understandings. For we may ask them, Who has  
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cenfured or cavilled at thofe proceedings, that fhould move thefe perfons fo violently to defend or extol them? And we may further ask, Who befides themfelves fay or think anything about them? They are recorded in our Statute Book, like other matters of equal importance, and are the objects of ferious ftudy and contemplation; precedents that are regarded with reverence and with gratitude towards thofe who made them, but which we hope never to have occafion to follow. Thefe are the fentiments which are fuggested by GOOD SENSE on the view of thefe valuable memorials; and as they are never thought of without fome mixture of concern and pain, we are always glad to lay them afide, and we rarely wifh to recall them.

BUT what manner of men muft they be who make this a fubject for Tavern Meetings, for congratulation, and for frivolous feftivity! a fubject to declaim, to combine, to run ftark mad upon! However, they know their meaning, and there are very few of us who do not know their meaning alfo. All this wondrous paffion is excited by the *idea* of a Revolution; what they *idolize* is a *Revolution in the abftract*; and thefe *Revolution* principles are the only ideas they profefs of our Conftitution.

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BUT we muft not expect men to be fo void of caution as to avow fuch a motive; *they* pretend nothing more than the fame event which we all mean; and, upon fuch a confideration, *they* think themfelves juftified fufficiently in all they fay and do. To repeat nothing here of the folly in fuch effervescence of zeal, I wonder, confidering the rank and ftation of fome of thefe perfons, that a fense of good-breeding and decorum has never fuggested to them that fo much commemoration of that Revolution, repeatedly urged out of all feafon and meafure, cannot found agreeably in the ears of the Sovereign. To him, fuch commemoration muft convey fome infinuation of reproach. I know, fome who have had qualms of this fort, have excufed themfelves by alledging that *The Hanover Succeffion* arofe in confequence of the *Revolution*.

BUT with the good leave of thefe Gentlemen, the way for *them* to manifefit fuch fentiments would be exprefsly to commemorate *The Hanover Succeffion*; for which I never heard that, in all their zeal, they had formed one Club, or made one dinner. And it does not look well, that when they are gratifying their own prejudices and pre-poffeffions in pofitive and plain terms, they fhould compliment their Sovereign only by circumlocution, and leave him to make it out himfelf, as he can, by collection and inference.

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SUPPOSE, for a moment, that some Patriot should, among the estates that he has not yet been obliged to sell, possess one that came to his ancestor from the favour of the Crown (which is no obstacle to the descendants being Patriots), and that this estate had come to the Crown, as perhaps it may again, by forfeiture for high treason; if some wag of a tenant should collect a noisy meeting in the village to celebrate there the virtue of *forfeiture and confiscation for treason*, and alledge a reason like the above, I doubt whether the circumlocution would give much relish to the joke in the mind of the said Patriot. But it is not for men of a popular disposition to do by others as they would be done by; they are men who do no right and take no wrong; men who reap where they sow not. Like the Patriots of former times, the godly *Puritans*, they have a privilege peculiar to themselves, that dispenses with the obligations which bind ordinary persons, who are not of *the Brethren*.

BUT though the term *Revolution* throws confusion on the nature of the event it is meant to denote, it must yet be confessed, that it is not wholly without analogy to the circumstances attending it. As this term is of a comprehensive and loose import, and of a capacity for the worst men

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men to find their own meaning in it, so that event, which was brought about by the energy, good sense, and firmness, of some of the best and greatest men in the Nation, was of a nature (unlike most good things) to be helped on by the concurrence and approbation of some of the worst men that could be found. But there was this difference between the two descriptions of agents; what was merit in the one class of men was none in the other. Those who loved the antient Government, and knew the value of Monarchy, had great prepossessions to sacrifice before they could take such a step, though for the preservation of both, and though they knew that on the preservation of both depended their Laws and Liberties. But the rest, who had no partiality for Monarchy, or who were ignorant or careless of its value; the *Republican*, the *Presbyterian*, and the *Secularies*, to whom may be added a long train of the abandoned and dissolute; nothing was more easy to them than to join in anything that looked like successful rebellion. Those who hated the very frame of the Government could not but be pleased with the shock it now received: some hoped that the change might lead to other innovations; those who had been used to pull down and destroy, gladly saw a prospect of reviving their old trade; persons without a determinate

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object were yet too much amused with novelty not to be on the side of the authors of it.

WHATEVER were their motives for joining in the new settlement, the *Republicans*, *Presbyterians*, and *Seſtaries*, did not fail soon afterwards to urge their merit, and it must be confessed not without some show of reason. It was a fortunate crisis to them; they now saw a Government which they had a hand in rearing; they thought they should no longer be regarded with jealousy and suspicion; and they hoped now to make themselves a party *in* the State, instead of being considered as a party *against* it. Bending all their endeavours to this point, the first thing to be done was to get a good name. For this purpose, they took their stand among *The Whigs*: under the pretence of that way of thinking, they began to vent their political opinions; which, however, they now so tempered and turned as to adapt them to the Government established by Law. As they sacrificed the rigour of their own notions, they did not fail to take a similar liberty with the principles of the Government; and so they have gone on, from those times to our own, corrupting the genuine principles of the English Laws and Government, in order to suit them to their own theories and systems, till they have filled the whole with

uncertainty;

uncertainty; and *The Constitution*, of which they are so incessantly debating, is made one of the most doubtful and difficult things to comprehend.

To these men, and to this sinister design, we are indebted for the jargon of which I have just complained. *They* invented the term *Revolution*, to blind and mislead; and they have never ceased repeating it, that they may put the People in mind of making another. This mystery they have couched under the still more loose metaphysical idea of *Revolution principles*; and by the glorious spell of—*The Constitution*—they can conjure up any form, fashion, modification, reform, change, or innovation in Government they please, and it shall still be nothing more, as they pretend, than the genuine true English Constitution.

THE term *Constitution* has nothing in itself objectionable: a plain man might receive it without suspicion of any mischievous implication lurking under it. It might be understood as a short way of speaking for—*The Constitution of the Government*. But those who introduced this mode of expression were men famous for doing nothing without design. That design was noted very early by persons whose ears had been habituated to the proper language of our English Government.

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It appeared to them, according to the language of one of them, " that this new term Constitution " was commonly brought forward with a Republican face, as if it meant somewhat excluding " or opposite to the Monarchy, and carried an " insinuation as of a co-ordination or coercion " of the Monarchy."

THE tenor of almost every thing that has been written or said by this class of men, from that time to the present, on the nature of this supposed *Constitution*, justifies the suspicions then early entertained. We need only recur to a few particulars to establish and illustrate this character of them.

It is from persons of this way of thinking that we have heard the following curious observation, that " so and so, it must be confessed, is not warranted by Law, but it is certainly a part of the " Constitution." To what illusions a man's mind must be a prey before he can be brought to acquiesce in such folly ! and how lost must he be before he can have the boldness to vent it ! I always thought, that it was the disposition of Englishmen to require plain and defined sentences for the Charter of their Rights and Liberties ; that they claimed to have known, written,

\* ROGER NORTH on the English Constitution. and

and express Laws to govern them ; and that they regarded high pretensions founded on visionary and refined theories, as the air in which they were built : and I thought, that *the divine indefeasible Right of Kings*, with other fancies of former times, were exploded principally, because they were positions that had no warrant from the known express Laws of the Land, but rested on general reasoning, from topics not known to the usage and laws of the country : and I always believed, that the set of men who most clamoured against those pretensions, upon the very grounds here alledged, were those who afterwards set up this new system.

BUT it seems to me, that this new system, giving origin to positions like that above mentioned, and so carrying the mind beyond the bounds of law equally with the other, is quite as absurd as the former, and differs from it only in being much more mischievous. For whereas the former attempted to raise the imagination to something above us, which might sooth and elevate the senses ; the latter opens to us no space wherein the imagination can exercise itself, but the very gulph of Democracy, there to toil and turmoil, without hope of rest or consolation.

BUT as the Constitution was alledged, upon this system, to be something that differed from the

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the Law and Government, it became necessary to have Professors and Doctors to give responses upon the nature of it, and direct our course in these untrodden paths. There accordingly started up a race of men called *Constitutional Lawyers*. I have heard it said, that "such a person is not much versed in the Law of Westminster-Hall, but he is nevertheless a very good Constitutional Lawyer." As far as my observation goes, these Constitutional Lawyers seem to be divided into two classes. One of them consists of Gentlemen who are bred indeed to the Law, but whose circumstances are so competent that they are not obliged to make a livelihood of it; and as these Gentlemen need not torment their brains with the details necessary for the practice of Courts, they are at leisure to extend the scope of their reading, and at liberty to take only the cream of their extended harvest. As there is no compulsion, no pressing stimulus to these pursuits, they are followed as it may happen; and the principal objects proposed to themselves by such students, are usually matters relative to the King and Parliament. Such persons often attain the courtesy of being called *Constitutional Lawyers*; that is, if they were sentenced as severely as I once heard *Gentlemanly Scholars*,—they are no Lawyers at all.

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THE other class are of a very different sort: they are really Lawyers; possessed of learning, experience, and parts, and, what is more, resolved to make the most of them. Such persons, having secured their footing at the Bar, and being tolerably certain of preserving a lucrative practice, have nothing more to seek than preferment and rank. These attach themselves to some Party in Parliament, usually in Opposition; they lend their name and credit to give stability to the pretensions of their Party; and they are too often ready to maintain, with colour of Law, every thing that needs such support;—and verily these men usually have their reward.

BUT the *Revolution* politicians are much better able to explain their own doctrines than any of their Constitutional Lawyers. A Gentleman of singular wit and conviviality, who from accident and circumstances was, in spite of his nature, made a Patriot, could not refrain from letting out the secret. This Gentleman, I am sure, ought to be looked upon as an authority; for he enjoyed a longer career of popularity, of more violent heat and universality; and his name was more frequently joined with Liberty (even to the becoming a by-word), than the best of them, be his pretensions what they may. This

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Gentleman is said to have favoured us with a definition of that which had before puzzled so many; he gave a definition of the Constitution. He says—*The Constitution is everything that is not Law.* And though he seems to have gone a little too far, in confessing for others, as well as for himself, he has also given us his idea of the class of Lawyers of which we have just been speaking: he frankly declared why he thought his learned friend and colleague, who was a great Constitutional Lawyer, so able and so valuable: “I think him,” says he, “the best Lawyer in Westminster-Hall; for he will make that to be Law which I want to be so.” And so much for *Constitutional Lawyers.*

BUT all who talk upon these subjects do not see so far, nor express their discoveries so clearly as this singular Gentleman has done. I verily believe, that among nine tenths of those who are so noisy for *The Revolution*, there are hardly two who agree upon the same conception of it. Most of them unite in repeating, “*The Constitution as established at The Revolution.*” But whether by this they mean the precedent then established of removing one King and setting up another, which seems the most worthy cause for extravagant joy; or something about the dispensing

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power, which however seems a little unimportant for so famous a thing as a Revolution; or something about Popery and Arbitrary Power, which sounds better, and is better for being general and indefinite; or whether it is not something divided into chapters and sections, detailing a new system of superfine texture, differing from that which prevailed in the popish and arbitrary reigns of Charles II. and James II.: whether anything like these, or what else has possessed the brains of these men, when they declare themselves friends of “*The Revolution, and the Constitution then established,*” it is not easy to collect.

BUT they will be very much surprized when they are informed, that the matter about which they make so much ado, is something very different from what they expected and believed; and further when they see it, they will, I promise myself, think as lightly of it, as men of more sense than they have long thought. Be it known, then, to all those who have taken their “Constitutional information” from Pamphlets and Political Societies, that they have not yet looked into the right place for the history, nature, design, and principles of this supposed Revolution. But if they will read over Statute the 1st of William and Mary, Session the second, Chapter

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the second, which is shorter than any of the papers published by the Societies for making Revolutions, they will find the whole secret explained to them; to which, if they wish a little more light, they may add Statute the 1st of William and Mary, Session the first, Chapter the sixth, which is still shorter than the other.

It appears from the former of these statutes, that the Parliament, having placed King William and Queen Mary upon the throne, which King James chose to leave vacant by his abdication, stipulated nothing for the people but upon those points where King James had broken the Law, or what was understood by the generality of men to be the Law of the Land. Indeed the nature of the case demonstrates this; for, if what he did had not been against Law, he would have broken no trust, and the Parliament would have had no ground of complaint. There is only one exception to this; and that is, James being a Papist: *That* certainly was not against any Law; but it was against the disposition of the Nation; and it was now the pleasure of Parliament that the King on the throne should be a Protestant; which was accordingly in this statute provided for in future.

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THE other points, which were twelve in number, were, as I have said, known to be the Law of the Land before, and were now declared and secured by express definition in Parliament, only that what had been recent cause of alarm, what was so deeply impressed on the minds of all, and what might be thought, from late experience, to be of a nature that required it should be solemnly inculcated, might be held up for admonition to future ages.

WHAT disappointment and discomfiture it must be to these idolizers of the Constitution supposed to be established at *The Revolution*, to discover at length that they have bestowed their applause and affection upon the shreds and patches of old date; and that if they had lived in those wicked reigns of Charles II. and James II. they would have enjoyed in theory, though not in practice (and *theory*, of the two, is more considered by modern Reformers), as good a Constitution as they have had since, with the single exception of a Protestant King.

BUT these visionary zealots were reserved for a disgrace more mortifying than this, and from a quarter where it was, to say the truth, not deserved, and not at all to be expected. We live  
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in an age of *Constitutions*; all the world are writing and talking upon Constitutions, and unfortunately too many have had opportunities to set themselves at work to carry their idle speculations into practice. What should have happened in the natural course of these new events, when other countries were becoming free like ourselves, but that the English Constitution, which had been held out as the famous original, should now be placed at the summit of its celebrity; and that the ingenious artificers, who had been working upon it so long to bring it to perfect polish, and had so tortured their brain for topics to set off its excellence and beauty, should be ranked among the benefactors of Mankind? But behold the perishable fame of political theories! At this moment of culmination and triumph; the Constitution-makers of France and America, having arrived at such skill in this trade as to outdo their masters, turn short upon them, and tell them,—“The English have no Constitution at all!” and they follow up this assault by attacking *The Revolution* itself; questioning and reviling it in such terms as if they would insinuate, that we had no more of a Revolution than of a Constitution.

THIS was a blow that should only have been felt by those who had fabricated these idols, and dressed

dressed them out for their own worshipping; but it must be confessed that it ruffled many men of a different way of thinking, who have used, as we all have, the term *Constitution* without annexing to it any of the fanatical notions of its first inventors. It moved their spleen to hear *that* traduced and reviled, which they had so justly esteemed as the model for others to imitate; and this by Americans and Frenchmen! the first having formed Constitutions that looked like the mangled and degenerate members of ours; the latter proposing nothing to themselves but a wretched imitation of those mishapen and degenerate productions.

A LITTLE reflection, however, prepares us to give an answer to these miserable but presumptuous pretenders.

THE above writers on *this* fancied Constitution had been employed to exalt its theoretical perfection, and had worked up certain general positions which they laid down as fundamental principles of the Constitution. When many imaginations were engaged in the same pursuit, a diversity of speculations was to be expected: positions were opposed to positions, and terrible was the contest to settle what were and what were not

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not the true Principles of the English Constitution. When the Americans came to the business of erecting a settled Government, it was natural for them to call to mind this controversy in England; and to take warning from this supposed defect in our Establishment. They resolved therefore, above all things, to guard against the like uncertainty in their own. They accordingly began the formation of their Governments by laying down certain fundamental principles, comprising a Constitution in the abstract, antecedently to their commencing the building in substance and detail. The French have taken the same course in the regeneration of their Government. These men, therefore, might very well, though not very handsomely, tell their master-workmen in this country that we had no Constitution; that is, that those fundamental principles, which had been so long vaunted, were only the theories of private men; had no authority, no public sanction; and were all of them denied by one or other amongst ourselves; whereas, on the contrary, *they* had a Constitution which they could shew, drawn out into plain and clear positions, acknowledged by every one, forming the basis on which the Government was erected, and furnishing an unvarying regulator, by which the Government

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might be set right as often as it should happen in practice to deviate from them.

BUT those amongst us who had never given their minds to such reveries might, without yielding anything, have taken these Constitution-makers at their word; and at once allowed that we had no Constitution in the sense in which *they* understand it. As many of them as were English and Americans had been told this often before; they knew well and long ago that their conceits about Constitutional knowledge were considered either as illusion or imposture, contrived to serve the temporary purposes of a Party, and reprobated by most men of sense in the Kingdom.

IN short — The *Government* we know — and the *Laws* we know — but the *Constitution* we know not. — It is an unknown region, that has never been visited but by dreamers, and men who see visions; and the reports they make are so contradictory, that no one relies upon them. Yet we can manage to spell out of them, that there is resident there a great deal of faction and sedition; envy and ambition; and something that looks like eternal warfare of Party. But the English Government is real and substantial; we see and feel it; we can take its height and its depth;

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and we know its movements, because they are regulated by established and known Laws. This is the only Constitution ever supposed or named by men of sober minds and sound understanding; that is, *the Constitution of our Government, or the Constitution established by Law.*

HAVING said so much upon this supposed Revolution, and the Constitution said to be formed upon it, I cannot pass over a Party amongst us, which I have already named, and which had a considerable hand in the transactions we have just reviewed. Of the *Whig Party* in general, and of the whole of their conduct, I should feel much difficulty in giving an opinion. To say the truth, they are believed by many to have done so much service, and by many more to have done so much mischief, I know not how to appreciate them. But I have no other concern with their conduct than as they took a part in the design which has been carrying on so many years, for corrupting the minds of men on the subject of our Government and Laws, and in fomenting the disorders that have been wrought by misrepresenting what *they* call *The Revolution*, and the *Constitution* supposed to have been *then established.*

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THIS, like every other Party, may be viewed in two lights. In the first place, they were a set of men who agreed to make a common cause, and stand by one another in public affairs; and the single object they proposed to themselves was, to force the present holders out of power, and to force themselves in. But this would not go down with people of sense who looked on; and as *they* had a great sway, though not always seen, in balancing the weight of Parties, they must be won by some profession of principles that sounded well, and promised something for the benefit of others than the professors of them. Every set of public men must, therefore, in the next place, have a set of public principles. Upon these principles they very liberally and frankly declare, when out of office, they mean to act; and it is taken for granted they will adhere to them when possessed of power. A Party thus furnished with principles, sets out in its pursuit of power, and opens that scene which is daily rehearsing in this country, to the annoyance and misery of all, both actors and spectators. I verily believe there is not a partizan, who in his closet can review the planning and plotting, the clamor and struggles, the shifts and artifices, of the day, without compunction and shame. There is not a man of *Good Sense* in the Kingdom but



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has been so sickened with the disappointments from great undertakers in Party, as to be brought to regard the pretensions of public leaders little otherwise than as the strutting and fretting of so many Players upon the Stage. But this belongs to all of them, and is not peculiar to the *Whigs*.

WHEN the Government was settled on King William, the Whigs had very just title to consideration; for though they were not the principal persons who brought about that event, the scale being turned by another description of persons high in Church and State, yet they were the first who suggested the measure: they had begun it by the Exclusion Bill in Charles the Second's time; they had never ceased driving on the same design till it was accomplished; and therefore, besides the merit of activity, they had that of foresight; having so long ago predicted that James would not be borne on the Throne, and that the only measure was to exclude him from it. The memory of what was past gave weight and importance to the Whig Party, and they immediately gained an ascendancy, which, by one means or another, was more or less maintained afterwards for many years.

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ALL this was not compassed without the aid of certain public principles, which were made the creed and test of the Party. What so natural for Whigs as to conceive a set of principles suggested by the recent event in which they had such a share, and took so much pride; and what more likely to be well received, and become generally popular, than opinions that were to make the Nation satisfied with what had just been done, and shew that the Settlement then made, and the principles on which it proceeded, were founded in the clearest reason and wisdom! Having so strong an interest in keeping the eyes of the Nation fixed on that event, they went great lengths for the advancement of these opinions. Hurried on by the heat of party and of the argument from one topic to another, they at last entangled themselves in theories and speculations which did not properly belong to them, and which they could not view with satisfaction. They were, probably, precipitated into these difficulties by the dangerous politicians before described, who were received into the Party, and who, by these means, under the name of Whigs, were, in all their writings, promoting their darling object of a Republic.

THERE is too much facility in all Parties to admit among them any one who will join in the cry,

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cry, and contribute in any way to support the cause. Whether the Whig Party held themselves out more than any other for receiving partizans, or their principles were more congenial with those who were prone to hazardous experiments on the Government and Laws of this Country; perhaps both these might operate in producing the effect; but certain it is, that the Whig Party has contained in it some of the most dangerous men, and produced some of the most pestilent writings, that have appeared. No man, however averse to our Government, but has had the confidence to call himself a Whig; no writing so mischievous and seditious, but the Writer of it has justified it upon the principles of a *Whig*, and the principles of *The Revolution*.

**BUT**, notwithstanding the exceptionable parts of some of these Writings, it is certain that the constant hammering of the same matter had the effect of producing a great deal that passed current in the world. The principles of the Whig Party being very comprehensive and loose, some approaching to one extreme and some to the other, could not fail of gratifying a variety of palates, and by the force of one or the other, the Party made a number of friends, and grew to be very powerful in every respect.

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THEY were aided, however, by something as powerful as opinions and political theories. The accession of the HANOVER FAMILY to the Throne first gave this Party a decisive superiority over their rivals: and this is a circumstance in the history of the Party that deserves to be remarked; for notwithstanding they met, upon the whole, with little countenance from their Hero King William, and indeed suffered a rebuff, that, with their expectations, must have been a great discomfiture to them, and certainly sunk deep into their minds; and although, during the reign of Queen Anne, they were never entertained by her but against her will, so that they never established themselves completely as a reigning Party till the time of George I. and after they had once got that footing, they were permitted to retain it for a great length of time: I say, considering all this, it is remarkable that, in their Commemorations, they should have nothing more to bestow on the Hanover Succession, than what I had occasion before to notice, and that they should keep all their demonstrations of regard for King William alone.

**BUT** if this conduct has not shewn their gratitude, it has shewn another thing, namely, that the profession of Party principles is thought by them a more firm dependence than the obligations of personal attachment; and that they have been men  
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so wise in their generation, as to prefer what they thought was most to be relied on.

But during the reigns of George I. and George II. the Whigs, for the most part, had an unbounded and uninterrupted sway; and during all that time it was impossible but those termed Whig Principles should have the ascendancy. All other Parties were at that time under suspicions or out of credit; Loyalty and Whiggism were like synonymous terms; and who could dispute the soundness of opinions that were named from the men who were entrusted by their Sovereign, and bore sway in all parts of the Kingdom? Added to this, a certain conceit had obtained, that Political and Civil Liberty depended upon the very principles professed by this Party; that they were necessary conclusions from the enlightened philosophy of the times; that they were upheld and illustrated by the writings of the most eminent among the searchers after Truth; and that they were likewise in unison with all the best times of Roman and Grecian literature, whose remains were the studies of our youth, and the ornament and delight of our riper years.

ALL these strong inducements, whether from the power of the Party, or the dazzle of their principles

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principles united, concurred in giving great authority to anything that bore the name. The Whig Party was the receptacle for all those who belonged to no other Party, or had not given themselves the trouble to prefer one set of political opinions to another, and yet did not like to belong to nobody: in the same manner as those who are of no sect, and have not busied themselves about religious opinions, are supposed to belong to the Church of England. Time was, that a man of a quiet spirit, who did not like to expose himself to cavil or question, would be afraid not to profess himself a Whig: it must be something wrong in the head or the heart that could induce a man to think otherwise than as a Whig!

But the empire of opinion, like others, will have its end, and when things are come to the extreme, a change must be expected. Men who were contented, as times went, to pass for good Whigs, did not like to be responsible for all the sophisticated opinions that were imputed to the Party; and many cast about to find some decent way of alleviating the yoke they were under, without flying out into open revolt against their old friends. Some of these discovered the distinction of *Constitutional Whigs*, by which they

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did not mean the Constitution in the sense of the Whigs, which would have been to express *idem per idem*, and would have been a distinction without a difference, but the Constitution in the sense in which all other men have ever understood it; and it was the same as if they had said—"We are Whigs, it is true; but we do not mean otherwise than well towards the antient Government and Laws of the Land."

This distinction of *Constitutional Whigs* made an opening for a terrible schism in the Party. It afforded an opportunity of separating the good from the bad. But this could not be expected to work exactly in such a manner. No man will write Rogue or Rebel upon his forehead; and why should he pass under suspicion, when it may be removed by a name that nobody can prevent his assuming? Accordingly, as the Republicans before had no scruple to call themselves Whigs, so now not a Whig of them but called himself a Constitutional one; and, considering that *Constitutional* had two senses, it suited the latter as well as the former; and, being of their own invention, it cannot be denied, of the two, they had the best title to it.

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But the principles of the Whigs were never so much put to the test as when they came into the Administration of the Government. It is a well-known complaint of them, that "the Whigs in place always acted like Tories." This is certainly a just remark, and in the nature of things it could not be otherwise; nothing can better shew than this comparison, how unjustly the Party of Tories have been run down and exploded; and, on the other hand, that the pretensions of the Whigs were founded in nothing but their own imaginations, and were totally incompatible with our Government and Laws.

For when the Whigs came into office, they found at Whitehall nothing of the *Constitution*, and the *Revolution principles*, with which they had been used to amuse themselves. They were to conduct a Government that had been formed long before their Party or notions were heard of; and they were to conduct it by the Laws of the Land, and the rules of office, that had long been the guides of practice, and could not safely be changed or abandoned. For it is a sad truth to be told to those Gentlemen who are running the career of Opposition with great eminence of talent and display of ability, that the object they

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propose to themselves, as the reward of all their toil, is one of the dullest affairs in the world. When they are in office they must have done with mere words, and must come to things; they must set down to work by line and rule; must search Laws, hunt precedents, examine minutes of proceedings, consult and discuss, and pursue a detail; often submitting themselves to the advice of subordinate persons, who, though never heard of, do more perhaps to keep the machine a-going than their Principals.

THIS is but an humble employment for a person who has been used to work wonders with a speech, or a pamphlet, grounded on the *principles of the Constitution as established at The Revolution*. But this, among other proofs, shews the truth of what has been contended, namely, That the Government and Laws are different from the visionary Constitution of which we have heard; and further, that this Government is so compacted in all its parts, that every conceit of politicians must vanish before it; and that their authors, in spite of all their theories, must conform to the Establishment descended from their ancestors.

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HAPPILY for us it has been found that, generally speaking, all Parties act on the same principle when in office: this is well known, and the cant of the time has been, to impute it to tergiversation and corrupt impressions. But the current of experience has been too uniform not to discover the true cause of this. The Government and Laws are too strong for any Party, and all Parties must conform to the established order of things. In the administration of Government, Party-principles are nothing, but personal qualification is everything. Where there is more understanding, more attention to business, and more honesty, there, and there only, will the Administration be distinguished from others, and the Country feel the difference.

THIS way of thinking has gained ground much of late years; and there has grown more coldness than there used to be towards men who meant to recommend themselves principally by their Party connexions. This change in the public sentiment has had a considerable influence on the fortunes of the Whigs. They have long sunk in consideration as a Party, and the principles going under their name have become less in vogue. At this time I doubt whether it is  
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more reputable to be thought a Whig, than some years ago it was to be thought a Tory.

BUT the finishing blow to all Party distinctions, and to the credit of all political principles that had no reference but to Party distinctions, seems to me to have been struck in the latter end of the year 1792. At that time an alarm for the safety of the Constitution as established by Law, which seemed to be threatened by the Republican party from within, assisted by the French Republic from abroad, roused the Nation as one man. All Party considerations immediately vanished before that of the common interest of us all. From that time the attention of all sober men has been fixed on the preservation of the Government and Laws; all former distinctions of Party are thrown aside, and the illusion of their principles is forgotten. There are now no divisions in the Nation, but that of the Friends to the Constitution as established by Law, and that of the Republicans, who are laying by for an opportunity to level everything to the Equality of a French Democracy; and there are no political opinions by which men are distinguished, but those that are in favour of the Constitution as established by Law, and those who are against it.

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THUS have I brought to a conclusion this History of the Attempts to corrupt the old English Constitution of Laws and Government. They began and ended by the introduction of *French* principles. We have seen how the *Puritans*, educated in the school of *Calvin* and other *French* Protestants, settled in Geneva and the Low Countries, set out by questioning the Supremacy of the Crown, and the Government by Bishops; and, contending for a Democratic Government in the Church, taught the like principles for the Government of the State; inculcating the Natural Equality of Man, the Origin of all Power from the People, and the Right they have to call their Governors to account. We have seen how these *Puritans*, under other names of *Patriots*, *Presbyterians*, *Republicans*, and *Secularies*, in the time of Charles the First, overturned the Government in Church and State. We have seen how they preserved their principles after they had an opportunity to mingle with the *Whig Party*, and pass under that denomination; and lastly, we have seen how a new set of Republican notions have been lately poured in upon us from *France*, whence have been kindled new flames of Democracy, which it is now the employment of every sensible man to keep under and extinguish.

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BUT though Party is destroyed, Faction will remain; and Whiggism is not of a nature to lie quietly in its grave; its ghost still haunts us, hovering round the scenes of its former exhibition, and attempting, as well as it can in its present unembodied state, to act over again those parts in which it so much delighted when in life and vigour. The only visible appearance of the Party is in the *Whig Club*, which is the mere rump and refuse of the original, and, suitably with its present contracted and diminished state, it confines its operations principally to the keeping up of an Election-interest in Westminster.

I KNOW that most of the individuals of it compose another Club, which holds certain Commemorations expressly with that design. In such employments have terminated all the former importance of the *Whig Party*; and, to make their fall still more conspicuously disgraceful, they have now a tail tacked to them of followers from the rout and rabble of Democracy; men, who have rendered the best things odious by *their* corrupt contact; who have made the friendly appellation of *Citizen* a badge of separation and enmity; and the very name of *Liberty* suspected to the ear of an Englishman. Yet they have admitted these men to cover the empty benches

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at their meetings, and to partake in that communion of friendship, their eating and drinking, which is the strongest test of approbation that can be given. This mixture of *Whigs* and *Democrats* must exhibit a striking picture of the combination of Parties; to see the pride of the Aristocrat and the pride of the Democrat brought into seeming union, yet each determined to destroy the other, if the crisis for it should ever arrive; to see the equality that prevails among so many discordant and imperious spirits; the apparent consent and confederation of all in one common cause! and then, in the same room, to hear a speech from a man, on whose lips the assembled wisdom of the Nation has hung with delight for hours, and afterwards to hear another from a *Citizen*, who comes from the Meeting of Democrats in the open air in St. George's Fields, to teach these Statesmen and Members of Parliament what true Liberty is! \*

THE designs of these Democrats have been fully exposed to the public view, on the trials of some of them last year for High Treason; they were then indeed acquitted by a Jury, but they have since been *found guilty by their Coun-*

\* At the Shakespeare Tavern, Oct. 10, 1795.

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*try*, on the evidence of the proceedings at the trial, which are in the hands of every-body.

THIS new set of Reformers pretend to have no other object than Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments : and they have chosen this pretence, first, because they must profess some principles, that do not quite speak rebellion ; secondly, because this specific project has been vented by some men, not of the lowest consideration in anything but the article of GOOD SENSE ; and by others, not of the highest in anything but in their wealth and *rank* ; thirdly, because they knew (and we know too) that should they succeed in carrying this point, the destruction of Monarchy must inevitably follow ; and a levelling Republic may then be substituted according to the imaginations and will of this rabble.

BUT who are the actors that are most distinguished and forward in carrying on this design ? In truth they are of a description, that in other times would render them too contemptible to be the objects of dread ; but in these days, when everything debased is to be extolled, and every thing noble and excellent is to be vilified and contemned ; and when this has been actually exemplified among our neighbours, who promise  
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aid to propagate this subversion among us ; under such circumstances, the very meanness of the cause constitutes the magnitude of the apprehension. The confidence we see in them, cannot be without great consciousness of strength ; and, when the progress is all under ground, we may hear the explosion before we have any knowledge of the miners. The attempts of these *Reformers* are all among the classes of society, with which we have necessarily too little intercourse. Artificers and handicraftsmen, journeymen and apprentices in great manufacturing towns, are wrought upon by surmises of grievances, and representation of remedies, which set them a-mad-ding after politics and public affairs : this, with an idea of their own importance, inspired by the doctrine of unalienable Rights and the natural Equality of Man, makes them uneasy in their present circumstances, and ready and on fire for any change. This fever is kept up by their Clubs and Affiliated Societies, in the *Jacobin* fashion ; and by inflammatory publications, that are given away or sold at a trifle, and that are dispersed with incredible assiduity and in great numbers. One principal object with them has been to seduce the soldiery from their duty, by painting to them their peculiar situation in every way that could  
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possibly generate dissatisfaction and insubordination.

THESE are the lowest orders in this herd of politicians; and as they are the corrupted and misled, they call, perhaps, more for our pity than severe condemnation. But the corruptors, those who are the professors and missionaries of Sedition, are of a different class. These are men of a better station in life, but of a worse condition in mind; who, feeling nothing but discontent and turbulence in their own bosoms, would willingly light up a general confusion around them; men bankrupt in their purse or their character, who cannot be worse circumstanced than they are, and see no hope but in a Revolution; whose parts have been meliorated by education and sharpened by necessity; able to perform much, and ready to undertake anything; knowing the world and the ways of it; with activity, and the gift of speech; agitators, always in action or preparing for it.

WHAT may not be accomplished by the mischievous industry of such instruments, employed upon such materials? The topics to which they resort for persuasion, might mislead and captivate those

those who had better understandings than *their* auditors; indeed these professors declaim till the very orator is deceived himself. To tell men, that they are by nature equal to their superiors, and that the present inequality between them is brought about by oppression and tyranny;—to lay down, that the people may make and unmake the Government, and to tell the populace that *they* are the People;— in the hearing of the poor and necessitous, to censure and vilify the rich and opulent;—to disparage those put in authority in the presence of the evil-doers, to whom they should be a terror;—to make sport of the person and office of the King himself; and train the minds of men to a contempt of his authority and the Government they live under;—these are topics that are too congenial with the self-love, the malice, and lightness of some minds, not to be heard with approbation and applause; and they cannot long and repeatedly be declaimed on, sometimes in Political Clubs, and sometimes in Public Lectures, to a numerous auditory, without warping the best disposed to an habitual dislike for the Government, and a disposition to attempt, or concur in any change that shall be proposed; more especially if the change is to place them, as they believe, in a situation to become their own Legislators and Governors.

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SUCH is the description of the new *Democrats* who at present infest the Country; a set, who in the meanness of their personal character, in the danger of their principles, and in the open profession of them, exceed everything we have yet had in the nature of Party; a set, that are not a Party, but a Conspiracy; a band of *Catilinarians*, that look only for plunder and bloodshed, general confusion and anarchy.

AND these are the men with whom the *Refuse* of the *Whig Club* have fraternized to make a common cause! the dregs of the upper classes of society mingled with the dregs of the lower! This union cannot be viewed but with disgust and detestation. If one of the parties meant to acquire patrons of their cause, they are not to be blamed; and the getting into so much good company is certainly an ornament that they needed. As to the others, the best motive that can be ascribed to them is, that they meant to make use of these as partizans for strengthening their opposition to the Administrators of the Government. But this is a traffic that must lose them in character what they will never, by these means, recover in numbers. Whatever political men may think of such condescensions, they may assure themselves, that dishonesty and imposture will not procure confidence

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confidence to public men any more than to private; and that mean and unworthy connexions, formed upon no band of union but the base gains to be made by them, are equally disgraceful in public and in private life. And they should be told further, that sincerity and plain-dealing is still so well liked, that I doubt whether, with all their mischief, the political principles of one of these parties make them so odious, as the moral principles of the other: men may hate the one, but the others they will despise.

BUT I will not detain your attention any longer, at present. To exhibit the Constitution of the English Government in its true form; to separate the corrupt glosses and constructions that have, from time to time, been imposed upon it; to expose the pretexts of Parties; to take off the mask from *Patriots* and *Reformers*; and to pursue the machinations of the *Jacobins*; these make an employment to which I shall return in due time; and such *further Thoughts* I shall address to you. These are matters, above all others, that call for the consideration of those amongst us, who are friends to order, love *QUIET*, and are possessed of the *GOOD SENSE* by which Englishmen are used to be guided.

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At the present moment, YOUR attention will be fixed on an object of more immediate concern. The Parliament is now assembled. This is a season when your superintending influence is most needed, and, we usually see, it is then most happily predominant. But it is a season, when the spirits of men, whether good or bad, are most in motion; and all YOUR prudence is wanted to preserve us from folly and wickedness.—You, therefore, you at least, WATCH.

*October 29, 1795.*

END OF THE FIRST LETTER.