

121-2



0373

ELEMENTS OF REFORM,  
OR  
AN ACCOUNT OF  
*THE MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS*  
OF THE  
ADVOCATES  
FOR  
PARLIAMENTARY REFORMATION.

BY WILLIAM COBBETT,  
PROPRIETOR OF THE POLITICAL REGISTER.

“Englishmen! read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.”

LONDON:

Printed and published by J. GOLD, 103, Shoe-lane, Fleet-street,  
And to be had of J. Asperne, 32, Cornhill; J. Hatchard, Piccadilly;  
and Reynolds and Sons, 137, Oxford Street; and of all Booksellers  
and Newsmen in Town and Country.

1809.

*Price Six-pence.*

## ELEMENTS OF REFORM.

Neque lex est justior ulla  
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.—OVID.

**H**AVING, in America, witnessed the fatal effects of revolution; having seen piety give place to a contempt of religion; plain-dealing exchanged for shuffling and fraud; universal confidence for universal suspicion and distrust; having seen a country, once the seat of peace and good neighbourhood, torn to pieces by faction; plunged, by intriguing *demagogues*, into never-ceasing hatred and strife; having seen a people once too fond of what they called *liberty* to bear the gentle sway of a British king, humbly bend their necks to the yoke, nay, to the very foot of a set of grovelling despots; having, in short, seen the crime of rebellion against monarchy punished by the tormenting, the degrading curse of republicanism; it is with the utmost astonishment and indignation, that I find many of those, who have the press at their command, endeavouring to bring down on my native country the very same species of calamity and disgrace.

Notwithstanding the example of America, and the more dreadful example of France, I find the emissaries of the Republican faction (*for such it really is*) still preaching fanaticism and infidelity, still *bawling for that change which they have the audacity to denominate REFORM*, still exerting all their nefarious ingenuity in sapping the foundation of the Church and the Throne. Those who want experience of the

consequences, may, for aught I know, be excused for con-  
 niving at these attempts; but *for me*, who have seen acts  
 passed by a republican legislature, more fraudulent than  
 forgery or coining; *for me*, who have seen republican officers  
 of state offering their country for sale for a few thousand  
 dollars; *for me*, who have seen republican judges become  
 felons, and felons become republican judges; for me to fold  
 my hands and tamely listen to the insolent eulogist of repub-  
 lican governments and rulers, would be a shameful abandon-  
 ment of principle, a dastardly desertion of duty.

It is with no small mortification that I find too many of  
 the periodical publications (as well pamphlets as papers) in  
 the hands of fanatics and infidels, all of whom, however nu-  
 merous their mongrel sects, however opposite their tenets,  
 however hateful their persons to each other, do most cordially  
 unite in their enmity to the national establishment, and most  
 zealously co-operate for its destruction. Convinced as I am,  
 from the experience of America, as well as from history in  
 general, that an established church is absolutely necessary to  
 the existence of religion and morality; convinced also that  
 the church of England, while she is an ornament, an honour,  
 and a blessing to the nation, is the principal pillar of the  
 throne; I trust I never shall be *base enough* to decline a  
 combat with her enemies, whether they approach me in the  
 lank locks of the sectary, or the scald crop of the jacobin.

The subjects of a British king, like the sons of every pro-  
 vident and tender father, never know his value till they feel  
 the want of his protection. *In the days of youth and of  
 ignorance, I was led to believe, that comfort, freedom, and  
 virtue, were exclusively the lot of republicans.* A very short  
 trial convinced me of my error, admonished me to repent my  
 folly, and urged me to compensate for the injustice of the  
 opinion I had conceived.

During an eight years absence from my country, I was not  
 an unconcerned spectator of her perils, nor did I listen, in

silence, to the slanders of her enemies. Though divided  
 from England by the ocean, though her gay fields were  
 hidden, probably for ever, from my view, still her happiness  
 and her glory were the objects of my constant solicitude;  
 I rejoiced at her victories, and mourned at her defeats; her  
 friends were my friends, and her foes were my foes. Once  
 more returned, once more under the safeguard of that  
 sovereign, who watched over me in my infancy, and the want  
 of whose protecting arm I have so long had occasion to  
 lament, I feel an irresistible desire to communicate to my  
 countrymen *the fruit of my experience; to shew them the  
 injurious and degrading consequences of discontent, disloy-  
 alty, and innovation, to convince them, that they are the  
 freest, as well as happiest, of the human race; and above  
 all, to warn them against the arts of THOSE AMBI-  
 TIOUS AND PERFIDIOUS DEMAGOGUES, who  
 would willingly reduce them to a level with the cheated  
 slaves, in the bearing of whose yoke I have had the mortifi-  
 cation to share.\**

We are told, that there is, or ought to be, about every  
 human body, a certain part called the *crumena*, upon which  
 depends the whole œconomy of the intestines. When the  
*crumena* is full, the intestines are in a correspondent state;  
 and then the body is inclined to repose, and the mind to  
 peace and good neighbourhood; but when the *crumena*†  
 becomes empty, the sympathetic intestines are immediately  
 contracted, and the whole internal state of the patient is  
 thrown into insurrection and uproar, which, communicating  
 itself to the brain, produces what a learned state physician  
 calls the *mania reformationis*; and if this malady is not  
 stopped at once, by the help of an *hempen necklace*, or some  
 other remedy, equally efficacious, it never fails to break out.

\* Vide Porcupine Newspaper, No. I.

† The purse.

into *Atheism, Robbery, Unitarianism, Swindling, Jacobinism, Massacres, Civic Feasts and Insurrections.*\*

The history of the *United Irishmen* will not detain us long. Soon after the ever-to-be-regretted epoch, when God, in his wrath, suffered the tinkers, butchers, harlequins, quacks, cut-throats, and other modern philosophers, to usurp the government of France, their brethren in Ireland, tempted by the successful example, began, with wonderful industry, to prepare for taking the government of that country into their own hands. With this laudable end in view, they formed what they called their *society*, in the city of Dublin. To say in what manner they proceeded to business would be superfluous, since we know they were *Democrats*. Their meetings, as among us, produced *resolves* in abundance, and good fortune seemed for a time to smile upon them. *The press was suffocated with their addresses*,† and letters of fraternity, which were swallowed by the *mob*, for whom they were intended, with an appetite which generally characterizes that class of citizens. But all of a sudden, when they were in the height of their work, mangling the carcase of the government, the magistracy soused down upon them, like an eagle among a flock of carrion crows. Here was fine helter-skelter; fining, imprisoning, whipping, and emigrating; some men ran this way, others that; some came to America to brew whiskey, some went to France to gather laurels, while others of a more philosophic turn, set off to Botany Bay, to cull simples.‡

The ostensible object of the *United Irishmen*, like that of all other usurpers from the beginning of the world to the present day, was a *reformation* in the government of their country. To say much about a plan of *reform* proposed by a "band" of such obscure and illiterate persons as their proceedings prove them to be, would be paying

\* Vide Porcupine's works, vol. ii. page 8 and 9.

† Vide Political Register *passim*.

‡ Vide Porcupine's works, vol. ii. page 97, 98.

ignorance too much attention, and would be, besides, in a great measure, superfluous, as we have already been favoured with the newest new constitution of a *sister* republic, of which that proposed by the *United Irishmen* was but a counterpart.\* "Rebellions," says Swift, "ever travel from north to south; that is to say, from poverty to plenty." The Dean knew mankind pretty well, but not better than his countrymen, the *United Irishmen*, as we shall see by their addresses to the poor. "To you," say they, "the poorer classes of the community, we address ourselves. We are told you are ignorant; we wish you to enjoy *liberty*, without which no people was ever *enlightened*: we are told you are uneducated and immoral; we wish you to be educated, and your morality improved by the most rapid of all instructors—a good government. Do you find yourselves sunk into poverty and wretchedness? Examine peaceably and attentively the plan of REFORM we now submit to you. Consider, does it propose to do you justice? does it propose to give you sufficient protection? for we have no fear but that the *rich* will have justice done to them, and will be sufficiently protected." In another place they tell their poor friends, that it is the "*unequal partition of rights*" that is the cause of their poverty, and that makes them *mob*." It is thus that the ambitious troublers of mankind ever find their way to the hearts of the lower classes of the community. They flatter their natural inclination, which is ever to attribute their wants and misfortunes, which are usually no more than the lot of humanity, or the natural consequences of their own idleness or profligacy, to the errors or wickedness of those who rule over them.\*

Those who are simple enough to listen to a DEMAGOGUE, seldom care about his moral character. With the rights of the citizens, their virtue, and their sovereignty, eternally vibrating on his lips, he may, for aught they care, have

\* Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. ii. page 107.

† Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. ii. page 105.

a heart as black as Tartarus. If he writes, let him fill his pages with frothy declamation, and vaunting bombast, with the canting jargon of modern republicans, and it matters little what arrangement he makes use of. Ambiguity and confusion are even an advantage to him; they are a labyrinth in which he loses the wretches whom he has enticed from duty. In short, his business is to awaken in his reader, jealousy, envy, revenge, and every passion that can disgrace the heart of man, to lull his gratitude, reason, and conscience asleep, and then let him loose upon society.\*

On all hands it is allowed, that the parasite of a prince is a most despicable character; a POPULAR PARASITE must then be doubly despicable. It is possible for the supple courtier to find something like an apology for his self-humiliation; one may be dazzled by the splendour of a crown, or blinded by the munificence of a friend and protector; but what must be the man (*if, indeed, he be worthy of the name*) who can crawl to the dregs of mankind? who can make a voluntary surrender of the superiority with which nature has endowed him? who can sacrifice truth, honour, justice, and even common sense, to the stupid stare and momentary huzza of the populace, whose welfare affects him not, *and whom in his heart he despises*?†

Sir Francis Burdett, in a moment of exultation and tumult of joy, undoubtedly considers himself as a most sublime patriot, and as the idol of the mob. *Enviably distinction!* But the most serious charge I have against him is, the attempt he has made to insinuate, that government has had recourse to secret execution. This is so black and diabolical an insinuation, that no power of language can sufficiently mark its infamy. Does he mean to say that prisoners have been secretly executed without a trial? Can he have the effrontery to assert it? Let him bring forward his proofs; proofs clearly

\* Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. ii. page 282.

† Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. ii. page 283.

substantiated. I dare him to do it. But no, he cannot; he dare not; and the attempt to fix such a crime on the government, is to the full as atrocious as the actual commission of it, and merits the strongest and most pointed reprobation. *Can measures, sanctioned by Parliament, and approved by a vast majority of the country; measures evidently adopted for the security of our persons, our properties, and our laws, be called tyranny and oppression?* It has been the happy lot of this country to possess a minister (the late Mr. Pitt), whose great and comprehensive mind was competent to the difficulties of our situation; by whose effective and decisive measures, the disaffected have been crushed, and compelled to hide their diminished heads; and it will reflect the most resplendent lustre on the British character to the latest posterity, that the people had the wisdom to approve, and the fortitude to support them. Sir Francis need not be told, that by these insinuations he is highly reflecting on the Parliament, which he probably intends. The measures which have prevented the seditious from disturbing the peace and good order of the country, and for whose sufferings, though justly inflicted, he feels such a tender regard, were approved in Parliament; *and dares he censure his decree?* It really excites something like a smile, to observe how very limited is the loving-kindness of this tender-hearted philanthropist. It has never come to my knowledge, that he has extended it to any *other* criminals. Did he ever bring before the House the cause of the widow, or the orphan, unconnected with politics? or of some unfortunate wretch, languishing in prison, rather through his own misfortunes, or the villainy of others, than from any crimes? Did he ever from the purse, which now so readily overflows; did he ever glad the heart of the unfortunate debtor, and restore him to his afflicted and starving family, and to society? Let him satisfactorily answer these questions, before he makes a parade of his philanthropic humanity, in behalf of acquitted felons, and the *pests of society*.

He says he loves his country, and its tranquillity. What a prostitution of the noblest of all principles! Our patriotic philanthropist proves this, by advocating the cause of its bitterest enemies. Is it love for our country to display, on every occasion, the most rooted animosity to its constitution and government? Is it love for our country to take a decided part with the seditious and disaffected? Is it love for our country to treat with contempt the laws, and its administrators? Away with such hypocritical cant. If this be love of our country, I confess I have none of it. Sir Francis may again assert it; but *where is the credulous fool who will believe it?*\* It was our intention to have entered into a refutation of certain political doctrines, which Sir Francis Burdett has published; but, upon closer examination, we find them proceed upon notions so *directly subversive of the laws and government of the country*, that any controversy with him must necessarily have for its object, to *prove the inexpediency of destroying the monarchy of England*. To reason with such a man would be absurd: he must be treated with silent contempt, or be *combated with weapons very different from a pen*: however, we declare our abhorrence of the principles and conduct of the man, who, in alluding to the British Government, speaks of "*hired magistrates, parliaments, and kings*;" we DETEST and LOATHE Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, we would *trample upon him*, for his false, base, and insolent insinuations and assertions respecting his and our Sovereign.†

I shall stop here to make an observation which ought to be very well attended to by the whole of the British nation: and that is, that *all* the revolutionists, while they are endeavouring to excite the people of Great Britain and Ireland to *revolt* against the government, *profess* great fidelity to their country, and *loyalty* to their king. They pretend to have nothing in

\* Vide Political Register, vol. ii. pages 134, 135.

† Vide Political Register, vol. iii. page 151.

To SAMUEL WHITBREAD, Esq. M.P.

SIR,

I dedicate the following ELEMENTS to you, because I am convinced that no man is better acquainted than yourself with the real motives and intentions of the advocates for Parliamentary Reformation. Your union with those illustrious Patriots, Sir Francis Burdett, Lord Folkestone, and Mr. Wardle, has been duly appreciated by the enlightened part of your Fellow-Citizens; and it is my sincere wish that nothing may prevent your hanging together for the benefit of the Nation.

I am, Sir,

With due respect,

THE AUTHOR.



view, but "the good, the honor, the permanent glory of the empire." They propose "to amend and not to destroy," to make the people truly happy, and "His Gracious Majesty truly Great." Their *stalking horse* is REFORM, but their *real object* is the OVERTHROW OF THE MONARCHY: a scramble for power and riches; and this intention, should they succeed, they will boast of, with as unblushing a front as Lauderdale's friend Brisot and his gang, after they had made the exciting of the insurrection of the 10th of August, one of the crimes for which they put their sovereign to death, boasted of having excited the insurrection themselves! This is one of the blackest deeds in the annals of Republican France; but let the people of Great Britain be assured, that, instead of abhorrence, it has served to awaken emulation in the minds of the degraded and desperate faction, who have still the *hypocrisy to bellow for REFORM*.\*

In reply to Counsellor Ego's speech (for *reform* in 1797), Mr. Pitt did not take the ground that I should have taken. He insisted (and with great truth), that the sort of reform, which the *present reformers* intended to introduce, was widely different from that which he had once endeavoured to bring about, and therefore he was not chargeable with inconsistency in espousing the one, and opposing the other. He said, that with respect to *any plan of reform at all*, whatever he might in former situations of the country have felt on this subject, he meant not to deny, that since the new era in the history of the world, occasioned by the French revolution, he had felt the ground on which the argument formerly stood, was essentially and fundamentally altered. Thinking as he now did, of a parliamentary reform, it was not at all inconsistent, that under the present situation of the country, he should be inclined to forego the benefits of reform, rather than compromise, or give a footing to principles of so

\* Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. ix. pp. 258, 259.

much more dangerous a tendency than those imperfections in the constitution; the removal of which he might wish." This was not the ground for a man like Mr. Pitt to take; he should have candidly and boldly acknowledged his error. He was a youth when he formerly espoused the cause of Reform; AGE AND EXPERIENCE had taught him that he was wrong.\* I should think myself the most stupid ass that ever browsed a thistle, were I to doubt one moment as to the unity of the object kept in view by all the tribes of REFORMERS.†

The people have been told that they are not represented in the House of Commons; that that assembly is no longer what it used to be, and that until it be reformed, it is in vain for them to hope for any good from that quarter. The words *representation* and *elective franchise* have done much towards confusing the brain, and corrupting the heart of his Majesty's subjects: and, though we have not the vanity to suppose that we possess the power of dissipating the fatal delusion, it is our duty to contribute our mite in the attempt.

The maxim, upon which the enemies of the government proceed is this: that a people are free and happy in the exact proportion in which their voice prevails in the election of those who make the laws; and, as the voice of the mass of the people here has, in truth, no very great share in the election of the House of Commons, they, of course, can enjoy but a small portion of freedom, and of that happiness, which it is in the power of law and government to bestow.

To argue against this doctrine would be useless: men have been disputing on it for two hundred years, and are as far from an agreement as ever. We shall, therefore, appeal from reasoning to experience; from theory to practice; from opinions to facts. Nor shall these facts be drawn from antiquated history, the authenticity of which might be doubted,

\* Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. vii. p. 32. † Ib. p. 33.

but from a state of things this moment in exercise. Again, they shall not be sought for amongst the Venetians, the Genoese, the Swiss, the French, or the Dutch, but amongst people descended from the same stock with ourselves; speaking the same language, having the same sober temper, the same habits, customs, and manners, and differing from us only in those points where the revolution in their government have had an immediate effect.

It will easily be perceived, that we here allude to the people and government of America; and we shall, after a few prefatory remarks, extract a passage from a pamphlet, written by an American, an eminent lawyer of New Jersey, in the year 1799. The pamphlet was addressed to the people of that state; the author's name, William Griffith, whose object was to point out the evils of the government, and to prevail on the people to consent to a change. The "*elective franchise*," was as universal as even Sir Francis Burdett could have wished it, and we now are about to see a fair picture of legislative assembly produced by that "*inestimable privilege*."

Our famous countryman, SWIFT, has compared the people who choose popular assemblies, to those silly worms, which exhaust their substance, and destroy their lives, in making habits for beings of a superior order. With all due deference to such an authority, we beg leave to say, that the latter part of the comparison will not bear the test of experience. That the people, in the exercise of their imaginary rights and privileges, do exhaust their substance, and sometimes destroy their lives is most certain; but, that they do this for the sake of beings of superior order, will be believed by no one, who has paid any attention to the objects of their choice, and who must of course have observed, that that choice does not unfrequently fall upon bankrupts, swindlers, quacks, parasites, panders, atheists, apostates, in a word, upon the most infamous and the most despicable of the human race; wretches whom no



prudent tradesman would trust alone in his shop, and with whom any honest man would blush to be seen in conversation.

How happens it, that the people of America, for instance, are induced in many instances, to commit their property and their lives to the guardianship of the refuse of the community? The Americans are, generally speaking, descended from the same ancestors with ourselves; they are by no means inferior to us in point of discernment; and their love of liberty, property, and life, is equal to ours. The cause of their preposterous choice is this: the mass of the people of all nations are so fond of nothing as of *power*. Men of sense know, that the people can, in reality, exercise no power which will not tend to their own injury; and, therefore, if they are honest men, as well as men of sense, they scorn to foster their vanity at the expence of their peace and happiness. Hence it is, that in states, where the popular voice is unchecked by a royal or any other hereditary influence, that voice is, nine times out of ten, given in favour of those fawning parasites, who in order to gratify their own interest and ambition, profess to acknowledge no sovereignty but that of the people; and who, when they once get into power, rule the poor sovereign that has chosen them, with a rod of scorpions, affecting, while the miserable wretch is writhing under their stripes, to call themselves his "*representatives*."

Of all the tyrannies that the devil or man ever invented, the tyranny of an elective assembly, uncontrouled by regal power, is the most insupportable. When the tyrant is an individual, the slaves have the satisfaction of knowing their oppressor; they have the consolation of hearing him execrated, and amidst their miseries, they are now and then cheered with the hope, that some valiant hand will bear a dagger to his heart. But, an uncontrouled assembly is an undefinable, an invisible, and an invulnerable monster; it insinuates like the plague, or strikes like the apoplexy; it is

as capricious, as cruel, and as ravenous as death; like death, too, it loses half its terrors by the frequent repetition of its ravages; and, such is its delusive influence, that every man, though he daily sees his neighbour falling a sacrifice to the scourge, vainly imagines it to be at a distance from himself. Now, for *proof* of what we have advanced, we shall quote Mr. Griffith's description of the Legislative Assembly of New Jersey.

Page 109.—"It is impracticable here to enter into a detail of facts to prove, that the virtue of the legislature has been, and will be constantly assailed and overcome. It shews itself in the very formation of the legislature. No sooner does an election for a legislative assembly and council approach, than the question is not who are the wisest and most disinterested, and of most integrity; but who will best answer the views of *party*, of private ambition, or personal resentment. In every county there is constantly a succession of people aspiring to appointments, civil or military: some desire to be judges, some justices, some majors, and some colonels; some have interests depending in the courts of law; and some, perhaps, have resentments against existing officers, and would fain oust them from their seats: all these, and a thousand more passions are set to work; and nominations to the legislature are directed, and supported, upon principles altogether beside those which should form the basis for a right election of legislative characters: the result must, of course, be unfavourable to the public good. But this is not all; not only are elections rendered vicious, and the morals of the *people* corrupted, in these struggles for personal advantages, but unhappily the *candidates* partake of the contamination: they must promise allegiance to their party: *you shall be a judge, and you a justice, you a major, and you a colonel, you a clerk, and you a commissioner; I will solicit your cause in the court of errors, and will vote for*

*your friend to fill a seat in the judiciary.* If these kinds of illicit engagements are not publicly or directly entered into, they are sufficiently understood and guaranteed by those friends of the candidate who take a leading part in his election. Instead of being elected with a national view, and for the purpose of forming general laws, for the more equal and salutary government of the people, the persons go there to represent the interests, and gratify the desires of a few partizans in their different districts, *upon the performance of which will depend their re-appointment at the ensuing election!*

"When the legislature is formed, then begins a scene of intrigue, of canvassing, and *finesse*, which baffles all description, and is too notorious to require proof, and too *disgusting for exhibition*. The members of a county, in which an office is to be disposed of, are beset by friends and partizans of the candidates; their hopes and fears are excited, by all the arts which can be suggested; from these the attack extends itself till it reaches every member of the legislature; and so strong and so general does the contest become, by the different representations, having each particular objects to attain, that *one grand scene of canvass and barter ensues*: a vote for one, is made the condition of voting for another, without regard to qualifications; *even laws which are to affect the public interest, are made the price of these interested concessions*; and not unfrequently is almost the whole sitting of the legislature spent in adjusting the pretensions, and marshalling the strength of the respective candidates for office. To such a pitch has this grown, that even the members of the legislature complain of it as an intolerable evil. There contests again lay the foundation for new parties and new sentiments at the next election. To counteract the opposition which may be stirred up, all the appointments will be made, with a view to strengthen the interest of the sitting members.

New commissions, civil and military, judges and justices, general officers, general-staff and field officers, will be made, with a reference to the state of parties in the county, instead of being dictated by a quite contrary spirit. It is within the knowledge of those conversant in the *courts of law*, that in the counties, many of them are become *mere political clubs*. They take sides; and a man, before he brings on his cause, *counts the heads upon the bench*.

"The result of all this is seen and felt in every quarter. From hence proceed the jars and divisions *which destroy the pleasure of social life in every neighbourhood and village*; and from hence arises the instability of laws, the multiplication of magistrates, the weakness and division of the courts of justice, the heats and ill-directed zeal at elections, and that general langour and dereliction of principle in every department, which menaces the total depravation of the body politic."

Such, Englishmen! such is the description of a legislative assembly, where "*equal representation*" prevails, where *almost every man* has a vote at elections, and where those elections do *annually* recur. The ambitious knaves, who flatter you with high notions of your rights and privileges, who are everlastingly driving in your ears the blessings of what they call the "*elective franchise*," wish to add to the number of electors, because they well know that *they* would thereby gain an accession of strength. The only object that such men have in view, is the gratification of their own ambition at the public expense; and, to accomplish this object, they stand in need of *your* assistance. There is a continual struggle between them, and the legitimate sovereignty of the country, which restrains them FROM PILLAGING, OPPRESSING, AND INSULTING THE PEOPLE. Hence it is, that they are constantly endeavouring to persuade the people, that that sovereignty

requires to be checked and controuled; *in which nefarious endeavours, they are unfortunately but too often successful.* How they would act, were they once to engross the whole power of the state, you may easily perceive, from what has been disclosed to you respecting the legislature of an American republic. If you imagine, that *you* should be able to avoid the evils, which, from this source, the Americans have experienced, you deceive yourself most grossly. They are as fond of freedom as you are, and they want no information, nor any good and great quality that you possess; but, having been too jealous of the royal authority, having lent their ears, and next their hands, to those demagogues who persuaded them that they were capable of governing themselves, they destroyed the only safe-guard of that liberty, for which they thought they were fighting, and the want of which they now so sensibly feel and so deeply deplore.

"Stick to the Crown, though you find it hanging on a bush," was a precept which a good old Englishman gave to his sons, at a time when the monarchy was threatened with that subversion, which it afterwards experienced, and which was attended with the perpetration of a deed that has fixed an indelible stain on the annals of England. Blessed be God! we are threatened with no such danger at present; but a repetition of the precept can never be out of season, as long as there are Whigs in existence, and as long as there are men foolish enough to listen to their insidious harangues. The Crown is the guardian of the people, but more especially is its guardianship necessary to those who are destitute of rank and wealth. The King gives the weakest and poorest of us some degree of consequence: as his subjects, we are upon a level with the noble and the rich; in yielding him obedience, veneration, and love, neither obscurity nor penury can repress our desires, or lessen the pleasure that we feel in return; he is the fountain of national honour, which, like the sun, is no

respector of persons, but smiles with equal warmth on the palace and the cottage; in his justice, his magnanimity, his piety, in the wisdom of his councils, in the splendor of his throne, in the glory of his arms, in all his virtues, and in all his honours, we share, not according to rank or to riches, but in proportion to the attachment that we bear to the land which gave us birth, and to **THE SOVEREIGN, WHOM GOD HAS COMMANDED US TO HONOUR AND OBEY.\***

The present have been called "the days of disloyalty," and in truth of the justice of the appellation, the clamours for what has been termed **CONSTITUTIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM** have been cited. From whatever source *political delusion* may come, by whatever means it may be propagated, and in whatever degree it may prevail, can its prevalence ever be conducive either to the *interest* or honour of the nation?—Can it enlarge our understandings, or strengthen the integrity of our hearts? **CAN IT LESSEN OUR WANTS or INCREASE OUR COMFORTS?** At home can it *ever* make us *happy*? Abroad can it ever make us feared or respected? **EXPERIENCE**, sad **EXPERIENCE**, says **NO**.

On the contrary, it is the cause of all our calamities and disgraces, domestic and foreign. It is a slow but deadly poison to Britain. Amidst those blessings, which are the envy of her neighbours, it makes her peevish, mal-contented and mad: it mines her constitution: it convulses her frame: **IT ENERVATES THOSE COUNCILS AND PALSIES THOSE ARMS, WITH WHICH SHE WOULD OTHERWISE ANNIHILATE HER FOES.\***

Those who have perused the recent Numbers of the

\* Vide Political Register, Vol. i. page 791-2-3-4-5-6.

† Vide Porcupine's Works, vol. x. page 390, 391.

*Political Register*, will scarcely believe it possible that the foregoing sentiments could have been promulgated by the same author; they may, however, rest assured, that every line is the genuine production of the identical William Cobbett, who now addresses us as the advocate of REFORM, who is now the sworn friend of the man whom he wished to "trample under his feet;" who is now one of those very demagogues, of whom he has said that "their stalking-horse is *Reform*, but their real object is the overthrow of the *Monarchy*;" and that "while they are endeavouring to excite the people of Great Britain to revolt against the Government, profess great fidelity to their country, and loyalty to their King;\*" and who is now, according to his own words, endeavouring to persuade us, that the sovereignty requires to be checked, that he may "PIL-LAGE, OPPRESS, AND INSULT THE PEOPLE."† In his *Political Register* of this day, (May 13th, 1809) page 722, he tells us, that the constitution of our forefathers considers the House of Commons as a check upon the crown." Now let us see what he has before said on the subject, when the Question of *Reform* was agitated in the House of Commons, in 1797, Mr. Erskine, then a demagogue, stated that the office of the House of Commons was to curb and controul the power of the Crown, acting on the part of the people. Upon which sentiment Mr. Cobbett made the following remarks:—"Precisely the contrary, good lawyer. I defy you to produce any sentence, phrase, or words in use among "our forefathers," from which it can possibly be presumed that the office of the House of Commons was to curb and controul the executive power; and with much more confidence I defy you to prove, that this House were

Vide Cobbett's Works, vol. ix. p. 258 and 259.  
*Political Register*, vol. i. p. 725.

ever looked upon as mere agents, acting on the part of the people. They are one branch of a grand council, the whole of the Members of which act for the King and the Nobility, as well as for the rest of the nation. Nothing is more invidious, nothing more repugnant to the principles of monarchy, nothing more dangerous and leading to consequences more destructive, than this whiggish doctrine of separate powers, acting in opposition to each other."—(Cobbett's Works, vol. vii. p. 29.)

Thus has he given us two diametrically opposite accounts of 'the Constitution of our forefathers.' And shall we be cheated by such knaves as this? Shall we listen to the delusive voice of traitors, who are endeavouring to excite us to revolt, that they may "pillage, oppress, and insult us?—Let us first consider what benefits WE should obtain by furthering their visionary schemes; let us calmly compare our own situation with that of other European nations—and let us seriously reflect that the same tyrant who has subjugated France, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy,—degraded Prussia, and desolated Spain, will not fail to take advantage of any civil commotion among ourselves, and, while we are contending for imaginary rights, despoil us of those real blessings, which Englishmen, and Englishmen alone, enjoy.

It must not be forgotten, that WILLIAM COBBETT has told us that eight years experience had taught him "the injurious and degrading consequences of discontent, disloyalty, and INNOVATION," (for which he was once before an advocate), and that Englishmen "were the freest as well as happiest of the human race"—his present apostacy, therefore, admits of no palliation, and his wilful attempts to destroy our happiness must result from the most malignant and diabolical motives that ever debased the human heart.

\* "Ex uno disce omnes."—VIRGIL.

0385

We may now say of him, as he, in his Political Register of Dec. 11th, 1802, said of his present idol, *Sir Francis Burdett*; "The wonder is not how a man can hold up his head, but *how he can bear to exist*, under the proof of *such glaring such shameful TERGIVERSATION!!!*" Henceforward, Britons, I trust, you will daily *appreciate* the worth and *patriotism* of

WILLIAM COBBETT.