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A LETTER  
TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
**SPENCER PERCEVAL,**  
FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY,  
&c. &c. &c.  
UPON  
HIS REPORTED CORRESPONDENCE  
WITH  
**LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE,**  
IN REFERENCE TO  
THE RETURN OF THAT NOBLE LORD TO POWER.

BY  
**A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.**

Omnia patefacienda ut ne quid omnino quod venditor nōrit, emptor  
ignoret.—Cic.

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A

**L E T T E R,**

&c, &c.

SIR,

**A** REPORT having been circulated, through the medium of the public prints, that you had originated a correspondence with Lord Melville, upon the subject of his return to power; or, in the alternative of his Lordship's support of your measures, that you had proposed, in his Majesty's name, an advance in the peerage to that nobleman; and further, this report having been repeated in your presence, in the opening debate of the session\*, and having been permitted to remain undenied and unqualified; I feel myself at full liberty to discuss the merits of the proceeding as an undoubted and admitted matter of fact.

\* By Mr. Tierney.

B

In point of time, this communication is represented to have been made subsequent to your application to Lords Grenville and Grey, for their accession to your administration.

You will no doubt perceive, Sir, that as a political act of your dawning power, this appeal to my Lord Melville involves in it several points of infinite importance to the public, and of vital interest to his Lordship. It was a string which, to touch upon, required a most delicate hand; and which, once rudely swept, must vibrate back in harsh, offensive cadence. You will pardon the doubt which I am compelled to entertain of your having displayed the hand of a master, in this incipient trial of your skill.

As a professed disciple of the Pitt school, the natural order of proceeding would have been an appeal to Lord Melville in the first instance, and not as a mere consequence of the contemptuous rejection of your overtures by Lords Grenville and Grey, both the political opponents of Mr. Pitt; the one by desertion, the other from rooted principle. This personal attention was due to Lord

Melville from the leader of a party avowedly Pittite.

But the objection to your mode of opening the question is a subordinate consideration, when compared with those which arise upon a deeper and more extended investigation of it. Lord Melville had been for several years out of office; and the talents and abilities which had swayed the councils, and given tone and effect to the energies of the country, through a period of unprecedented difficulty, were no longer resorted to, although the situation of public affairs, as it was acknowledged on all sides, required the united talents of the empire.

The circumstances which induced this neglect of means so obviously conducive to the public good are of too recent occurrence to need a minute recapitulation.

Mr. Pitt having, in the year 1804, resumed the reins of government, at a moment when he perceived that the King, unless rescued by his efforts, must submit to the invasion of the Cabinet by men

who threatened the dictation of terms to Majesty itself, as the price of their services, found himself deserted by many of those whose reputation and political existence had been exclusively established by their union and co-operation with him.

One powerful friend still remained to him; and Lord Melville, adhering to the same principles, and impressed with the same view of public affairs, was found at his right hand, ready to support the consistent and enlarged policy of that great statesman. The powerful combination which the passions, and not the principles, of two opposed parties had effected, could not brook the resistance which their united efforts met with from an administration which they considered weak and inefficient, principally because it had been formed to the exclusion of themselves.

Some irregularities having been discovered in a department which had formerly been under the control of Lord Melville; and some neglect, certainly attributable to his Lordship, (for which, however, the peculiarity of his situation at the time would, to every liberal mind, have sufficiently ac-

counted and atoned,) having appeared in the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Enquiry, an active partizan of the new coalition brought forward in the House of Commons a string of Resolutions at once charging and condemning his Lordship unheard. Articles of impeachment were subsequently drawn up, and every light that minute and detailed research, and a bill of indemnity for those whose evidence might tend to bring home the charges to the accused, was thrown upon the investigation, with a zeal that might have led dispassionate men to seek a motive beyond the public good, for the spirit in which this prosecution was conceived and carried on.

Pending these transactions the country lost that illustrious statesman Mr. Pitt. Driven by the pressure of public business, and laden with official labour beyond the subdued state of his constitution to sustain, it was, I trust, for the credit of human nature, a day of mourning, and not of exultation, to some, at least, of those who trampled on his corse, in their avidity to seize upon his vacant honours. A new administration was formed, upon this event, and the political opponents of Lord

Melville having succeeded in the only apparent object of their coalition, went zealously forward with the prosecution of his Lordship.

We live too near the period of which we speak, to make the transaction a matter of historical observation, but not so near as to be excluded from the application of undoubted, although unrecorded facts. It is notorious that the question of Lord Melville's innocence or guilt, upon the charges exhibited against him, was canvassed in a political rather than a judiciary point of view; that the influence of official power was neither withheld from motives of delicacy nor the lukewarmness of possession; and yet, deserted, abandoned, with a popular outcry excited, and sustained by every effort that industrious policy could suggest, against him, that Lord Melville was, upon every article of the impeachment, declared innocent, and acquitted by his peers. It might have been expected that some members among the managers of the impeachment would have been found, candid enough to propose, upon the record of his Lordship's innocence being thus registered, that the resolutions upon which the charges against him had been

founded should be rescinded; such an instance of candour, however, was wanting; and the bare suggestion, loosely thrown out upon one occasion, was strenuously and decidedly opposed by the original supporters of the prosecution; upon what principle of justice, unpractised as I am in the liberal school of party politics, I have never yet been able to discover. But of this, no doubt can remain upon the mind of any unbiassed person, that some ulterior object must be in the contemplation of that man, or society of men, who, having imputed guilt to an individual, and published it with every circumstance of aggravation, refuse to acknowledge his innocence, or rescind the record which asserts his delinquency, when the injustice of that record is established by the verdict of the only tribunal capable of duly and thoroughly investigating the facts upon which it is founded. It is like tearing and disfiguring the canvass which bears the impress of a hated rival, and gloating upon his apparent destruction because he has escaped the assassin's knife to which one had destined him. It is, in short, like any thing but British justice and British feeling.

Thus situated, Sir, Lord Melville retired from the troubled sea of politics, and in the bosom of his family and friends appears to have buried whatever feeling of indignation and resentment such unworthy and wanton persecution might have produced in his mind.

In the mean time the huge Babel of Talents, which seemed to bid defiance to time or combination, came toppling down from its aerial height, and presented to the astonished nation a desolate ruin, which could have resulted only from internal convulsion, or some inherent and irresistible principle of self-destruction engendered by the incongruence of its parts.

The consequence of this catastrophe was the formation of the Portland administration, in which you, Sir, bore a conspicuous part. Events of great magnitude, and of the highest interest to the country, passed in rapid succession during the period of its existence. The united nerve and talent of the empire would have been well employed in meeting them; and it was unquestion-

ably incumbent upon ministers, under such circumstances, to rally round them all the resources which consistent policy could embrace. Whether Lord Melville was applied to, or whether the accession of his powerful aid was sought in the hour of difficulty, it is not for me to say. Reports to that effect were circulated and credited, and the country could scarcely believe that under the existing state of public affairs, such an aid and resource could have been neglected. We are, however, to presume that if any application was made, his Lordship did not think proper to accede to the proposal; and the assurance of his friends, that he no longer desired to be engaged in public business, may have been strengthened by the result of such negotiation, if it ever existed.

The death of the Duke of Portland, and the disputes in the Cabinet, the consequence of which was the secession of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning from office, forming a new epoch, placed you at the head of the administration, which it was your policy, necessarily, to strengthen as much as possible. The powerful aid of Marquis Wellesley you were fortunate enough to conciliate;

still, further strength was necessary, to meet the phalanx of Opposition, and decreased popularity: but by a blind policy, as it seems to me, you appear to have made the acknowledgement of weakness a plea with Lords Grey and Grenville, your political adversaries, (whose great object had been, ever since the accession of your party to power, to crush and overwhelm it,) for deserting their adherents, and uniting to save you. If, as some of your friends (injudicious friends I must consider them) represent the case, you merely applied to those noblemen for the purpose of making their refusal a ground of appeal to the country, I think your policy is even more questionable; for surely no men can be expected to bring water-buckets to quench a conflagration they have been heaping faggots to increase. We could scarcely call upon *a friend* to prop a falling house, at the risk of being buried in the ruins: but an appeal, under similar circumstances, to *an enemy*, could scarcely be considered as seriously made. Lords Grey and Grenville rejected your propositions, and *then* (how seasonably I have before explained) Lord Melville, as a last resource, was applied to.

Now, Sir, the result of this application has, I presume, not been favourable to the object you had in view, as his Lordship is still unemployed in the public service. Your proposition, therefore, either must have contained in it something objectionable, or his Lordship must have annexed some unreasonable conditions as the price of his support, or he must have finally resolved to reject all overtures for a return to office.

From the complexion of the reports which have, I repeat, been circulated, detailed in your hearing in the House of Commons, and suffered to assume the character of facts, by your tacit admission of their authenticity, I am induced to think that it is neither to his Lordship's resolution to retire, nor to any unreasonableness in his conditions, that the failure is imputable, but wholly and solely to the nature of the proposition originated by you.

These reports say, that this correspondence was shewn to a young orator of the lower house, as a plea, I presume, for his taking high office. This, however, failed, and the application was as fruitless in this as in the former instances. But one result was inevitably produced; the corre-

spondence ceased to be secret, and the seal of confidence was broken. Whether you consider it to your advantage that it should have been so, it is not for me to decide: it is my intention merely to consider the nature of the proposition, and the situation, at the time, of the Noble Lord to whom it was made.

You are reported then, Sir, to have stated the many difficulties which stood in the way of his acceptance of office, and to have thrown particular emphasis upon the unpopularity of his Lordship. Now, Sir, if this really be the case, what are we to think of a proposition being made to an individual, principally for the purpose of proving that it is inadmissible, or at best impolitic. It was not necessary to force yourself into the retirement of Lord Melville, to tell him that his enemies had not yet sated their vengeance: it was not necessary to obtrude yourself upon him, for the mere purpose of telling him you wished for the powerful aid of his abilities, but that you had not courage to avail yourself of them, even if he would condescend to exert them in your favour. This pitiful plea, indeed, might have been set up

against his Lordship, had he endeavoured to force himself into power: but this is not even pretended. You surely made a false estimate of the character of that nobleman, and conceived that you might persuade him, that whilst he was rejected and detested by the world, you, of all men, were the only one who truly appreciated his worth, and were willing to bestow your voluntary admiration upon him---you admired his talents, thought him an honest man, and would, forsooth, make his cause your own, (in private;) but that you dreaded a too intimate union, lest it should overwhelm you with unpopularity. Really, when we look back to the stations held by Lord Melville, and to the importance, the vital greatness of his exertions in the service of his country, there is something revolting in the idea of his being subjected to the insulting tone of qualified approbation, or an abatement of respect due to the first-rate talents of the day from any but those who are the acknowledged dupes or panders of an interested faction.

That there will be an outcry if Lord Melville is ever induced to take office, there cannot be a doubt: it is not to be supposed that men who



have laboured to destroy, will patiently or silently endure a re-edification. The cowardly partizans of faction will dread to encounter the object of their persecution, in the full zenith of restored power. *They* will vilify and calumniate, but the public will take no part in their animosity. The views of the party are developed, and it is not to gratify the paltry malice of a few ambitious men that the people will long be satisfied under the absence of one of the first statesmen in Europe from the councils of the country.

It might have required resolution and firmness to meet the first assault of this powerful coalition, which would no doubt have deprecated the return of Lord Melville to power, upon the grounds I have before stated; but does it not require firmness and resolution to take the helm of public affairs? Are they not the essential talents of a statesman, and more especially of a minister, in such times as these? And do you suppose it possible to stand the unequal contest to which you are exposed, by temporizing or by half-measures? No, believe me---broad, bold, and open measures can alone save the country, or uphold an administration under the circumstances of the day. But,

Sir, the history of the country would have furnished you with precedents, and the experience of past times supplied you with facts abundant, in illustration of the persecution of Lord Melville, and of the restoration of great men, traduced, calumniated, and impeached by their political opponents; and not only would you have found yourself armed with these important *authorities*, but have further illustrated the existing instance by the additional fact, that the objects of *factionous persecution, since the revolution, have almost invariably been selected from among the best and greatest characters of their age!*

When the political opponents of the great Lord Somers had gained the ascendant, they resolved to crush a man whom they equally dreaded and hated. Not only were charges, too frivolous to impose upon the most credulous of human beings, exhibited against himself, the gallant Russell, and Portland, but some members of the House of Commons tampered with witnesses, and went the length of endeavouring to implicate him in crimes\* of

\* When Kidd, the pirate, lay under sentence of death, several of the members inimical to Lord Somers visited him in

which they did not deny they knew him to be innocent.

Still fearing, however, that the victims of their factious persecution might escape them, and that their impeachments might terminate in acquittal in the House of Lords, the leaders in the Commons resolved to proceed against their accused adversaries in the more expeditious and effectual way, of branding their reputation. *They voted and presented an address to King William, to remove them from his councils and his presence for ever.* The House of Lords, offended at this most unjust mode of proceeding, presented a counter-address, beseeching the King "*not to pass a censure upon the accused Lords until they should be tried upon their impeachments, and judgment be given according to the usage of parliament.*" The enemies of the illustrious noblemen thus stigmatised by their intrigue and cabals no longer pressed their impeachments, but were satisfied with having disqualified

Newgate, and endeavoured to drill him into an admission that his Lordship had encouraged him in his depredations: but, as the historian says, "finding him unfit for their purpose, they left him to the course of law, and he was hanged with his accomplices."

them from being further impediments to their political objects. The Lords, however, forced them to proceed, although by every species of evasion the managers of the impeachment endeavoured to stay the business. A day was at length fixed; but the Commons refusing to appear as their accusers, the Lords Somers, Oxford, and Portland were fully acquitted by their peers.

Hallifax, who, as a member of the administration in 1697, was declared by a vote of the Commons to have deserved his Majesty's favour, for his good services to the government, was within four years afterwards impeached by the Commons, then controlled by an opposite faction, and declared guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors: but when called upon for evidence, his enemies drew back, and he was acquitted by his peers, for want of prosecutors. A subsequent attempt was made, to fix upon him the charge of fraud and peculation, which was attended with no better success; and his great talents, contrary to their hopes, and in defiance of their vote, when the country needed them, were called forth in its service, and he again touched the goal of the highest ho-

nours his ambition could covet, or his Monarch bestow.

Shall we be blind enough to impute to error or patriotism the conduct of the persecutors of these illustrious statesmen? or, with the hypocritical cant of modern candour, profess to believe that they were actuated by motives of duty and principle? Time has withdrawn the veil which false delicacy might place before too recent a transaction, and the motives and object, here at least, stand confessed: why then, in the name of common honesty and common sense, when we find acknowledged worth, the first-rate talents, and the most exalted patriotism invariably the objects of factious persecution, should we be base enough to join in the cry? or rather, why should not every honourable mind in the empire rally round the destined victim of political intrigue, and tear away the painted cloak of patriotism which conceals the dagger of the assassin\*?

\* It is amusing to look back to many occurrences of that period of our history which the ignorant multitude are taught to gaze at with a sentiment approaching to veneration, and which the noisy declaimers of Hackney or Palace Yard, either through

Are the instances to which I allude solitary or insulated in our history? or let me rather ask, do

a most inveterate opacity of intellect, or the more base and artful purposes of a low, grovelling ambition, call the good old times. Lord Somers was, amongst other frivolous charges, accused of having set the seals to the Partition Treaty, which, as Chancellor, he was not at liberty, having the King's warrant, to refuse; and he was criminally prosecuted for this, and for having advised the treaty, although it was notorious that he had, in the discussion of the question, opposed several particulars of it. But he was *impeached, and previously disqualified from serving his country*, by a vote of the House of Commons, because it was necessary to the purposes of an opposing faction.

Lord Orford (the gallant Russell, the victor of La Hogue, from which action we may date the decided sovereignty of the British flag) was charged with having received exorbitant grants from the Crown; with being connected with Kidd the pirate; with having been guilty of abuses in victualling and managing the fleet off Spain; and lastly, with having advised the Partition Treaty. His defence was undeniably true: that he had received no grant from the King, except a distant reversion, and a present of 10,000l. after the defeat off La Hogue: that he had no connexion with Kidd as a pirate, although he had been legally concerned in the equipment of Kidd, as an officer in the English service, and had sustained a heavy loss thereby: that his accounts respecting the fleet had been regularly examined and passed, and that he was ready to justify himself in every particular connected with the transaction; and further, that he had not given any advice upon the question of the Partition Treaty. But he was *impeached, and previously declared incapable of serving his King*, by a vote of the House of Commons, because it was necessary to the purposes of an opposing faction.

Lord Halifax was condemned for possessing a grant in Ire-

they not characterise our chronicles, and degrade a people, otherwise liberal and generous, by their

land, without paying the produce of it, as lately enacted by parliament: for having another grant in the Forest of Deane, to the waste of timber, and prejudice of the navy: with having held places---(let The Talents and the shadow-hunters of Mr. Fox look to this) with having held places incompatible, by being, at the same time, Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer: and with having advised both the Partition Treaties. I say he was condemned upon these charges, although the facts opposed to them were, that, first, the payments upon the Irish grants, enacted by parliament, did not extend to the one he possessed; and that in point of fact, he had never received 400l. from it. Secondly, that as his grants in the Forest of Deane extended to weedings only, it could not possibly occasion any waste of timber, or prejudice to the navy. Thirdly, that the Auditor's place was held (mark this) by another person, until he obtained the King's leave to withdraw from the Treasury. And fourthly, that he never saw the first Partition Treaty, nor was his advice ever asked upon it; and that as to the second, he never heard of it till it was concluded! Yet he *was impeached, and previously voted incapable of ever serving his King again*, by a vote of the House of Commons, because it was necessary to the purposes of an opposing faction.

It is natural to enquire what became of the charges against the Earl of Portland. This immaculate House of Commons--- these illustrious patriots of the good old times---declined exhibiting articles of impeachment against *him, out of respect to his Majesty!* Of this subserviency to the wishes or feelings of the Monarch the patriots of our times cannot, assuredly, be taxed, however they may be disposed to admire it in their great archetypes! But this is not all. The same House of Commons notoriously and in the face of the country, whilst they brought forward impeachments against Somers, Orford, and Halifax, re-

frequent submission to the deceptive practices of bawling patriotism?

We find, indeed, that the inveteracy of party, and the subtlety of intrigue, however successful in attaching the populace for a season to their purposes, are not, in general, so fortunate in perpetuating the prejudices they may succeed in originating. The depressed Somers, one of the fathers

solved to screen Lord Jersey, Sir Joseph Williamson, and Mr. Vernon, who were equally concerned as the others with the transactions to which the charges referred.

If we refer to the philippics uttered by the great parliamentary projectors of Lord Melville's impeachment, and compare them with the points of fact to which they pretend to refer, we shall perceive a sacred adherence to the great examples in our history which had been selected for the occasion, and the aptitude and facility of appropriation which they displayed upon the occasion.

As no man was less scrupulous than Walpole in availing himself of this mode of *taking off an enemy*, so no man better knew the strings and motives by which those who resorted to the same measure were actuated. In his memorable answer to Mr. Pulteney, upon the opening of the session in 1739, he observes, that the charge of corruption is the common refuge of the disappointed and disaffected, ever since government had a being; and that it is an accusation, like all other charges, though unsupported by proof, if advanced against the best and most disinterested administration; and pushed with *becoming violence, and a pretended zeal for the public good*, will never fail to meet applause among the populace.

of the revolution, rose again, superior to his persecutors. He was afterwards the projector of the great measure of the Union of Scotland, and again presided in the councils of his country. Faction could not affect his fame, though it succeeded in driving him, for a time, from office. Think, Sir, how dastardly would the Whigs of that day have appeared, if, when their Monarch needed the talents of such a statesman, they had refused to avail themselves of them, and had assigned as a motive, the fear of incurring unpopularity by an union with this man!---a man, who has been described by the historian as one of those divine persons who, "like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly. All the traditional accounts of him, the historians of the last age, and its best authors, represent him as the most incorrupt lawyer and honest statesman, as a master orator, a genius of the first taste, and as a patriot of the noblest and most extensive views; as a man who dispensed blessings by his life, and planned them for posterity." Yet was this man, this illustrious patriot, impeached by a faction in the state; declared, by a vote of the House of Commons, incapable of ever serving

his King; charged with peculation, fraud, piracy, and malversation, before the most august tribunal of the empire! If posterity should be at a loss, and ask whence such proceedings could originate, let them read the catalogue above recited of his virtues and his powers, and the real motive will stand confessed.

The instance of Harley, the great Lord Oxford, is not less a case in point. A statesman of the highest order, who had adorned the greatest offices of the state, and controlled the destinies of nations, overpowered, at length, by the jealous rivals of his power, and opponents of his policy, was charged with the foulest crimes, and proclaimed, unheard, guilty of treason by acclamation, thrown into prison at the risk of his life, (as sworn by his medical attendants,) detained there nearly two years, and only on his petition, and the tardy exertions of his friends, brought to trial, and acquitted by his peers! Acquitted, because his persecutors, conscious of their inability to convict him of treason, did not choose to put upon record the total absence of truth from their charges, although they had cherished the hope of wringing evidence, from

the perversion of documents, for the establishment of a charge of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Under the same persecuting spirit of Walpole we see Bolingbroke and Ormond, both men of high talent, and ornaments of their native land, driven into banishment, and, in one instance, to hostility against the powers they would probably have shed the last drop of their blood to have protected. But, alas! what are worth, talents, integrity, and patriotism, in the eye and estimation of a faction? Just so much against the possessors, in the scale of their deserts. To dare to deserve well of his country is a crime which party cannot pardon in an opponent. If they cannot pull down, they will at least endeavour to undermine.

Marlborough and Walpole might both, perhaps, have given some cause for the charges blazoned forth against them: but though their adversaries endeavoured to tarnish the laurels of the greatest warrior, and perhaps one of the greatest statesmen, the country had ever known, they could not prevent his regaining lost dignity, nor affect his glory with posterity, nor could they prevent their rival,

“ whose talents and zealous activity,” says the historian, “ rendered him very troublesome to them, from rising to the highest rank in the state, and swaying its councils through a succession of years \*.”

You will see, Sir, in these allusions, no invidious distinctions of party. Each, during the period of history which embraces these transactions, as it gained the ascendant, sought to maintain its influence by the depression or annihilation of its opponents. In the above instances we have seen the persecutors become the persecuted, and the pro-

\* “ Walpole had distinguished himself too ably in the House of Commons, and by his publications had proved himself too warm a friend of the fallen ministry, and too powerful an adversary to the present administration, not to be singled out as one of the sacrifices to be made at the shrine of party vengeance. His expulsion from the House of Commons, therefore, was resolved, and a meeting held by the leaders of the opposite party, for the purpose of consulting on the means of proceeding. But the injustice of the act was esteemed so flagrant, and the imputations of guilt so faint and false, that many of those who had united to overturn the late administration declared their aversion to this malicious design. Bromley, however, [I had almost written Whitbread] removed their scruples, by declaring that the expulsion of Walpole was the *unum necessarium*, as they could not carry on the business if he was suffered to continue in the House.” *Coxe's Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 60.

scribed rising to supreme power : we have seen them losing sight of the great questions of policy, in the petty gratifications of overwhelming a political adversary ; we have seen one set of men stigmatised for making war, indeed, and another impeached for concluding peace, but without any dispassionate reference to the true state of the question ; these points being considered simply as engines of policy, cherished in proportion as they could be employed to overwhelm a party, or displace a ministry \* : we have seen all the baseness, profligacy, and ingratitude of the Grecian republics revived in our own country ; and the vices of a barbarous policy, whose deformity appears to every really enlightened mind, through even the sacred rust of

\* It is curious to observe, and indeed I am induced to attribute to the general good feeling of my countrymen, the trifling majorities by which questions of impeachment have in general been carried : these, even, being created by exaggerated statements, unfounded deductions, or the more technical modes of political manœuvring. The impeachment of Somers was carried by a majority of 10, and that of Hallifax by 23. In the case of Walpole, indeed, the main question passed with a majority of 57, but that for his expulsion with 22, and that for committing him to the Tower was carried by only 12. It will be recollected that the resolutions against Lord Melville were carried by a majority of one, the casting vote of the Speaker, which, upon any other point, would have been considered tantamount to the loss of the question.

antiquity, transplanted from Athens, Sparta, and Rome to the more generous and honest soil of Britain, where, though frequently revived, we have yet to thank God they have never thoroughly taken root. It has been the trick of all ages, to hold up the great and noble few to the contempt of the many : but it is the trick of the worst governments, in the worst of times ; and it is not the absurd trumpery of French philosopheme, nor the ungrammatical jargon of Paine or Cobbett, that can ever gloss over the glaring unfitness of ancient or modern republican principles to the comfort, prosperity, or peace of communities. When we read, in the catalogue of names proscribed by the ancient republicans, a Miltiades, a Pericles, an Aristides, a Manlius, a Camillus, a Tully ; and in that of their servile copyists a Somers, a Hallifax, and a Marlborough ; we need little reflexion to convince us that virtue is not the idol of republicanism, nor patriotism a shield against its baseness.

Against this principle it is the first duty of every man, not bewildered by the vertiginous glare of false, but imposing and plausible declamation, to

contend. It is already undermining us; and if unchecked, will burst upon and overwhelm us.--- Still the mass of the people reason upon and see their danger. It is the opinion of these that has so long kept the boasted junction of Talents out of place. It is this which has supported, and will continue to support, the school of Pitt against the spirit of false philosophy: it is this which may effectually oppose, when the crisis shall arrive, the spirit of innovation. But, Sir, it must be kept alive, and on the alert; and it is not by subserviency to your opponents, nor by a timid qualification of your principles and sentiments, that this spirit, which the immortal Pitt may truly be said to have inspired, can be maintained bright, pure, and ardent.

Either the restoration to power of my Lord Melville, in the present crisis, was necessary, or it was not. If it was not, why call upon him, or why enter into disquisitions that can scarcely be separated from insult? If it was necessary, then no obstacle, no dread, no apprehension should have stood in the way of your object. I mean, that having justice on your side, and the feeling and

sentiment of every honourable mind with you, you ought not, as minister of the country, to have suffered the mere consideration of party to have influenced your decision. You avow your principle of standing by the King, and I applaud you for the manly declaration. It has roused the indignation, and excited the scurrility of your political opponents, but it has done you no harm in the estimation of the mass of the people. A manly creed, however, must be established by correspondent vigour; and it is not by profession alone that effect can be given to principles, however good. The people are loyal, and are attached to the Monarch: they are peaceably disposed, and care little for the cabals of party, the petty contests for power, or the ridiculous pantomimes exhibited by the stay-tape and buckram politicians of the city. Cobbett may write treason, Waithman may recite it, and the man in the Morning Chronicle may *trim it* for the purposes of his party; but still the people, when the day of struggle arrives, will stand by their King, and disperse the factious, cold-blooded speculators and adventurers who have been starved or disappointed into the profession of patriotism.



What but this universal sentiment could have so long excluded from the councils of state a party possessing great personal consideration, great property, and much, though not *all, the talents* of the country? What but their evident disposition to avail themselves of any popular clamour or factious spirit, to extend their influence and strengthen their party? What but the total neglect of high, undeviating principle, whenever it was counter to the interests of the Junto? What but their ready admission of any partizans, and their adoption of any vagabond question, regardless of future consequences, so that it answer the temporary purpose to which it is applied? What then, Sir, must be the feelings of the sound part of the community, when they behold you professing, nay, publishing to the world, your weakness, and seeking a coalition with those whose principles and policy you absolutely profess yourself to be placed in the gap to oppose; whilst the aid of an enlightened statesman like Lord Melville, who for twenty years proved himself the most able supporter of our constitution at home, and our character abroad, is not only not sought by you, but he is studiously informed by

yourself that you are fearful of employing him, and for reasons which the slightest reference to the history of past times would have satisfied you were altogether nugatory?-- The virulence of party has at all times since the revolution, with the exception of that portion which was occupied by the mild but vigorous administration of Pitt, sought to overpower an adversary by unjust charges and impeachments.-- That great man disdained such subterfuge, and the usage died away.-- But the Whigs, or opposition, having for twenty years been kept out of office by the united powers of Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville; and at length, when the golden prize appeared within their grasp, being again driven back within their former limits, by the bold and *really magnanimous resolution of those great statesmen to stand by their Sovereign*, their disappointment was proclaimed, and their thirst for vengeance uncontrolled and unchecked.-- By the fair display of talent they hoped not to regain the ground they had lost-- they hoped nothing from themselves-- the destruction or division of the administration formed their only hope.-- They searched the record, and found the expedients of desperate factions!

they traced their effects in the ancient republics, and in modern history, up to the dissensions of parties during the last century, and confirmed the justice and intrinsic excellence of their policy, by their splendid illustrations in the succession of patriots during the convulsions in France.-- The great Lord Somers they found had been impeached upon points which even official tampering with evidence and subornation of witnesses could not shadow into crimes; and this in the face of his established character for incorruptible integrity and paramount ability. They traced the persecution of Lord Halifax, and the frivolous charges which his enemies were incapable of substantiating, and discovered that they were able to rid themselves of a formidable adversary, without even a shadow of justice, by obtaining a vote of the House, upon the bare assertion of his guilt, for an address to the King, desiring that he would remove him from his councils for ever.

Under the influence of such precedents, zeal for the public service, called loudly for the impeachment of Lord Melville, who, it was discovered, had been guilty of neglect in some of the details of

office\*, was, upon the precise ground of the aforementioned precedents, magnified into participa-

\* It is difficult to retain in our memory all the links in a chain of evidence, necessarily induced by a few strong and repeatedly asserted charges; but it should be remembered, that although we have heard of Lord Melville's "delinquency" in every Jacobin meeting since the year 1805, not one word has ever been offered of the defence by which this foul imputation was rebutted and overturned.

Lord Melville was accused of converting public money to his own use; of having diverted certain sums from their right channel, and thus enriching himself at the country's expense; and thirdly, that the means of effecting this scheme lay through a breach of an act of parliament first introduced by himself.

In the first place it will be admitted that the solemn asseveration of an honourable man is to have the weight of truth, if opposing evidence of superior authority do not tend to overthrow it. Lord Melville, when addressing the House of Commons upon the subject of the resolutions drawn up against him, stated certain facts, and denied *in toto* the justice of the inferences arbitrarily drawn in those resolutions. He asserted his innocence upon the question of his having converted public monies to his own use, and defied his persecutors to prove that a guinea had found its way unfairly to his pockets. As no labour or ingenuity were thought too great in the prosecution of the enquiry, as garrets and cellars were ransacked for evidence, and the very sweepers of office cajoled, to discredit and disprove his Lordship's assertion of his innocence, and as it is notorious that the prosecutors were, with all those exertions, unable to establish one solitary instance of peculation against him; his Lordship must stand acquitted, upon every principle of honour as well as of justice.— Upon the point of Lord Melville's having permitted a sub-official to retain balances in his hands, contrary to the act

tion in fraud, appropriation of public money, and gross corruption. This they, to do them justice, assiduously and fervently endeavoured to establish; but still, with the precaution of their illustrious exemplars, a string of resolutions was drawn up, and carried by a casting vote of the House of Commons, declaratory of his Lordship's guilt, without an opportunity being afforded to him of defending himself. The plea for this mode of proceeding was, that the House, acting in its inquisitorial capacity, discharged the office of the

of parliament introduced by himself, it is barely necessary to recall to the recollection of those who have only an ear to calumny, and none for charity, that the question was referred to the twelve Judges, who returned their unanimous opinion that Lord Melville was not guilty of the breach of the act of parliament imputed to him. It is scarcely possible to believe that any men of honourable sentiments, and of fair dealing upon every other topic in life, should, in their party zeal, thus overleap, without compunction, every principle of rectitude towards an individual, because opposed to their political views, or projects of ambition.

The observation of Plutarch upon Aristides, when he had adjusted the knotty and difficult point of allotting and arranging the tribute to be paid by the Grecian States, for their general defence against the great king, is equally applicable to Lord Melville and to Mr. Pitt, in their political lives. "Poor," says the Grecian, "when he set about it, but poorer when he had finished it."

Grand Jury, found a bill, and sent it before the competent tribunal, where the accused would be heard in his defence. This is all very plausible; and if, upon the acquittal of Lord Melville, these resolutions had been rescinded, the appearance of conformity with usage and equity might have been claimed by the victorious faction, which forced its way into power by the death of one, and the unsubstantiated charge of corruption against another, of the great bulwarks of the state, through a period of the most appalling danger, that ever impended over the country. But no! these men refused to rescind the resolutions drawn up and voted in the moment of fermentation, because (and I have never heard a more substantial reason assigned) there was nothing else to keep their dreaded opponent out of office. But, Sir, it is the province of the statesman, who takes the lead in the operations of a government, to meet an adversary at his own weapons; and availing himself of those precedents which have been resorted to for the purpose of embarrassing him, to retort them back, in order to confound the schemes contrived against him.

Do you imagine that Mr. Pitt would have suffered his great compeer, after such an acquittal as that given by the House of Lords, to remain unemployed, when the exigencies of the state required his services? Do you think the straight-forward rectitude and unshaken energy of his mind would have been deterred from what he considered a duty to his country, by an apprehension of the coarse fermentation of Mr. Whitbread's disappointment, or the acrid philippics of Mr. Tierney?—No, Sir, be assured, if it be really your object to follow the great outlines of character exhibited by that first of patriots, you have greatly mistaken them upon the late occasion.—He would have told these professing patriots that, following the precedents they had taken as their guide, he would fill up the blanks which they had left.—He would have pointed to Somers, in his restoration to power, and illustrated the return of Halifax to augmented influence and glory, by the just restitution of those honours which had unjustly been torn from the escutcheon of Melville; and thus have added once more to the many instances of retribution upon false patriotism and political intrigue.

Indeed, Sir, I find it impossible to trace your proceeding to any fair or just principle; and I am the more surprised that you should have been betrayed into the adoption of sentiments so prejudicial to the interests you profess to espouse, since the administration in which you before held office did in effect acknowledge and act upon those of a decidedly opposite tendency, when they advised his Majesty to recall Lord Melville to his seat in council, in consequence of his honourable acquittal upon all the charges exhibited against him. The principle of justice was there acknowledged, I repeat, and acted upon.—Is it possible, then, that you can have permitted your fears to operate in so forcible a manner upon your judgment and integrity, as to discard an undoubted rule of right, for the assumption of a measure weak and inefficient in itself, and insulting and injurious under the circumstances by which it was accompanied, to the only man of high political character who has consistently adhered to the principles which identified him with Mr. Pitt?—If you can still contradict the report, hesitate not to do so, for it will be lastingly injurious to you, and, as it is

suginau lscisdeq

has already been, as a subject of reproach, even by your enemies.

You will perceive, Sir, that I have forborne to touch upon that part of the report which speaks of your proposition to his Lordship of advancing him in the peerage:--I can hardly suppose that, after the reasons you are reported to have assigned for not soliciting his Lordship to take office, you could have thought him capable of selling his support (which you had there stated to him you could not conciliate by legitimate means) for a transmuted coronet! I can still less believe that, under the conviction or impression that a really popular dislike to Lord Melville existed in the country, sufficient to satisfy you that it would be hazardous to your own political existence to invite him to take office, you could have entertained the preposterous idea of advising his Majesty to bestow a signal mark of his royal favour, under such circumstances, upon his Lordship; and thus, as a corollary, transferring the unpopularity of the act from your own shoulders to those of the King:-- It is, I say, almost incredible that any man, hold-

ing an efficient seat among the advisers of the Crown, could err upon such a point; so that I will leave that part of the question just where I found it, and reconcile it to my mind as one of the few *playfulnesses* of invention exhibited by Mr. Tierney, as a parliamentary orator.

And now, Sir, having entered more at length into a most interesting subject than I at first intended, I have only to hope that I have not been so prolix as to preclude you, in your present arduous situation, from reading and pausing upon what I have presumed to address to you. I am friendly to your general objects, and shall regret to see you driven from your present situation, but I have no hesitation in saying, that had your conduct been more decisive, manly, and unequivocal; had you conciliated the support, and courted to your assistance, the talents and abilities which still exist on your side of the question, the difficulties you have now to encounter would have been considerably diminished, if not wholly averted; and the cause which the mass of Englishmen have at heart, and cherish as the palladium of their solid liberties and essential rights, have appeared in

a more dignified and gratifying point of view.---  
 The citadel may, by this neglect, be betrayed into  
 the hands of the enemy; and the King's closet  
 forced by the motley junto of Whigs, Tories, Ja-  
 cobins, and Saints; and unless your administration  
 contain within itself the principles of regeneration,  
 (which I hope and believe it does,) and sincerely seek  
 the accession of all the talent, virtue, and influence  
 which the real and genuine principles of Mr. Pitt  
 have appropriated, there is no saying to what a  
 state the country may be reduced, under a coa-  
 lition which contains all principles, but appears  
 to be actuated by none.

Bethink you, Sir, of the hazardous acknowleg-  
 ment you have made of the power of a desperate  
 faction to dictate rules of action to the govern-  
 ment. Bethink you of the tribunal you have con-  
 tributed to erect, which is to supersede the deci-  
 sions of the legislature, and the supreme law of  
 the land! Bethink you of the precedent your  
 recent conduct towards Lord Melville has esta-  
 blished, which may be, *will be*, employed against  
 yourself; and that impeachment is impending  
 over you, and may possibly precipitate you from

your dangerous elevation! Bethink you of the  
 mill-stone you have wantonly linked to your fall,  
 which must prevent your ever rising again.---In  
 fine, Sir, look to the result of the suggestions of a  
 timid policy, which have led you to the brink of a  
 pit into which your enemies appear about to drive  
 you; which, had you boldly leaped, would have  
 become a trench in which those enemies might  
 have exercised means of annoyance, but from  
 which no serious assault could have been made  
 upon the citadel.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your very obedient servant,

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

THE END.

Your dangerous situation! Believe me of the  
millions you have miserably lived your life  
which must prove your own living again--in  
And, Sir, look to the end of the situation of a  
kind policy, which have had you the best of a  
his late which you have never seen about to die  
you) which, and your life, would have  
become a man in which there would be  
have enough means of earnings, but from  
which to various means could have been made  
from the right.

I have the honor to be

Your very obedient servant

WILLIAM W. WATSON

1857

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