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Corrupt Influence Removed
AND THE
CONSTITUTION RESTORED;
BY A
NEW PLAN OF
ELECTION AND REPRESENTATION
IN
ONE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT,
AND A
NECESSARY REFORM IN THE OTHER.
IN
TWO LETTERS TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

As to the making of any *further* laws, when the public interest and welfare require them, that is but repeating the *same power* in other instances, which they (the community) made use of before, in making their first laws: and as to *altering* or *repealing*, it is certain the power of making and unmaking here are *equal*. Beside, when men are incorporated, and live together for their mutual good, this *end* is to be considered at *one* time as much as at *another*; not only in their first constitution and settlement.

WOOLASTON.

Erat enim ratio profecta a rerum natura; quæ non tum denique incipit lex esse, cum scripta est, sed tum cum orta est. Orta autem simul est cum mente divina.

CICERO.

By the Rev. T. NORTHCOTE,
CHAPLAIN IN THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

L O N D O N :
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P R E F A C E.

THE Author of this publication, sensible of his unimportance, almost lost in speculative retirement, and not wishing to appear before his superiors, did not intend to prefix his name to it. But having experienced, upon a former occasion, how little attention is generally paid to anonymous performances, and conscious of the bold truths, the novel arguments and opinions, which he ventures to hold forth, in this crisis of our affairs, he thought it incumbent upon him, as an honest man, to avow his principles, which are genuine, disinterested, and independent.

To avoid offence, as much as possible, in a plan of reformation, which encounters so many powerful prejudices, customs, interests, and passions, he has endeavoured to confine himself to general principles, arguments, and conclusions, free from personalities. These he submits to candour, where only it is to be expected, among
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readers uninfluenced by power, unbiaſſed by party *.

The manly, judicious, and diſpaſſionate conduct of the County Meetings and Committees, places them in the moſt conſpicuous and honourable point of view, as guardians of the people's rights, and their laſt hope and reſource, under impending dangers, from domeſtic enemies. To them, therefore, this humble labour of a fellow-citizen, is moſt reſpectfully recommended for their patronage, ſo far only as it ſhall be thought to explain and defend the public rights, and to co-operate with their own virtuous attempts to enlighten, animate, and ſave their country.

• His ſtrictures upon the civil conduct of our Spiritual Rulers, will excite clamour among religious bigots, and ſuch as would uſe the Church for an engine of the State. If they are juſt, they can hardly be ſevere. Treachery to the public, under the maſk of piety and loyalty, will juſtify the cenſure.

When the Biſhop is ſunk in the Baron, and the Divine can be tempted by worldly honours and intereſts, to become leſs than honeſt, there can be no injury to him, or his flock, to wiſh his virtue greater, or his temptations leſs.

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P E O P L E O F E N G L A N D.

L E T T E R T H E F I R S T.

Countrymen, and Fellow-Citizens,

IN the ordinary revolutions of things, and the eſta bliſhed relation betwixt events and their cauſes, a corrupt and arbitrary ſyſtem of Government, planned by treachery, and adminiſtered by violence, ſeems near ſome important criſis, which may bring it back to its firſt principles and maſters, for correction and improvement. In this perilous ſituation of the Commonwealth, you will permit a plain man to throw out ſome general remarks upon the true ſources of our national corruption, depravity, and diſtreſs,

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distress, with the most obvious means of reformation, and remedy. A separation of the spirit from the forms of the Constitution is political death to a free State. To restore this vital spirit of public virtue, expiring under the weight and pressure of government influence, the people must rouse from their supineness, shake off the baneful charm of corruption, counteract treachery with prudence and caution, and meet tyranny with firmness.—When the public danger is pressing, it would be worse than folly to amuse you with curious speculations, or trivial reforms.

It is my design to lay the axe to the root of the evil.—To cleanse the impure fountains of law and government, by removing the very means and instruments of corrupt influence, in both Houses of Parliament; by restoring the true principles of the Constitution, with short Parliaments and equal representation in one, and finally annulling the unnatural union of an ecclesiastical polity with the civil, under one supreme head; who being the great patron of the Church's dignities and emoluments, gains by that means as decided a majority in the other.—The clipping and curtailing the people's most essential civil rights, and throwing all the power, the prejudices, and the influence

fluence of the church over mens minds and fortunes, into the hands of the Crown, hath so far annihilated that balance of power on which the Constitution rests, that the forms, and the very name of liberty could not have survived but as instruments of deception; to enable despotism to work by the surer mode of sap, rather than assault. The temporary restraint upon the natural progress of these united powers, arises from no change in their disposition, but from the fear and caution taught by the Revolution, and the safer policy of corrupting and undermining substituted for dragooning and burning. The natural hostility of Crown and Mitre to civil and religious liberty, has seldom varied in any age or country, but in proportion to the muzzle that has been put upon it, by the virtue and spirit of the people.—I will consider these two great defects of our Constitution with a freedom which it warrants, and the times demand.—And with regard to the right of representation, the whole Community or Commons of England have equally the *right*, or they have it not at all. They cannot derive a right from the powers they delegate. It is therefore an original, natural, and fundamental right, or it is nothing. It is not derived from, it *made* the Constitution, and consequently has the same power to *restore* it. Equal representation

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sentation is the corner stone, the rock on which the stately fabric of freedom is erected, which alone can repel the undermining waves of influence, and the storms of violence that assail it. When the constituent body is found, a great majority of it, as manageable by the power of the Crown, as the representative, common sense points out the sole remedy for this great evil, which is by enlarging and extending the elective body beyond the power of influence. The right of the people of England to choose representatives in parliament does not arise, as I have said before, from any kind of legal qualification, which, without consent of the people, for the time being, supercedes a right prior to Parliaments, on which alone they are founded, and which is the only constitutional sanction of their legislative acts; and a right contrary to natural justice can never be binding upon any principle but that which is the law of despotic power. It follows by a parity of reasoning, that the whole Commons of England have, or ought to have, as much controul over *their immediate representatives*, the constituent body, as *they* have over *their* representatives in Parliament; duly considering that the fitting Members are truly the representative of the *whole* people, *through* the constituent body: which they

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they could not be in any possible sense, if the whole people had no just controul upon the elective body. For when it appears that the Crown directly, or by its dependents, can render the constituent body as corrupt, and instrumental to its purposes, as the house they choose, the great end of this wise institution is subverted, together with the first principles of civil liberty. It is, indeed, worse than subverted, for the means of freedom are become the instrument and the *sanction* of tyranny. Parliaments are then chosen by the Crown, not by the people; and that, at an infinite expence and waste of the public money, which not only strengthens its usurpations, and conceals its secret plots, by preserving forms, but also enervates the kingdom by the corrupt example, and the loss of property, so far as to weaken its efforts in times of danger, for self-preservation and defence.

It is therefore evident, that the whole community only can and ought to apply the remedy to the depravity of their constituent, or *first* representative body, either by increasing their number, or limiting their authority to such stated periods as their discretion shall direct, to frustrate the wicked machinations of arbitrary and ambitious

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bitious Princes. But, perhaps, after all, the only effectual means to cut up so deep-rooted an evil, which has long grown into the forms of the Constitution, so as to be mistaken by some, and artfully misrepresented by others, as essential parts of it, is by utterly abolishing this corrupt body, and substituting in the room of it, annual elections of fitting Members, to be chosen in each parish for its respective county, by all adult natives, not being naturally or legally disqualified. This might be done all over the kingdom, before, or after harvest, with much less trouble than is commonly imagined. For, as I would root up those sinks of corruption, and strong holds of ministerial influence, the corporations and boroughs, as incompatible with *free* and *equal* representation, and would propose only county Members, the annual election of these would be like publishing the bans of marriage betwixt the counties and their deputies, whom natural interest, good character, and good behaviour, would then infallibly recommend, almost without a rival. Where there was but one interest to serve, and that a public one, party and influence must lose their hold, and all honest men, of all denominations, would then concur in supporting the candidate whose integrity was his recommendation.

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These county Members should be in proportion to their extent and population, which is the only fair rule of equal representation, calculated to keep pace with, and to controul that degree of influence arising to the Crown from the increase of people, taxes, and revenue. This is but the outline of a simple mode of election, which appears not only practicable but easy. It is as old as the natural rights of men, and is the first principle of our free Constitution, to guard against the abuse of power, by keeping their affairs and interests as much as possible under their own eyes, and in their own hands. But before so salutary a reform can take place, which overthrows the whole fabric of corruption, and the pernicious uses which Ministers and their creatures make of the Crown's influence, the people must be united and decided in their plans and resolutions.

The powers of the State being in the hands of the corrupt rulers, will probably be employed against the actual reform, as they are now combating, by every fallacious art, the principles of it; and a violent conflict may take place betwixt power and right, the forms and the spirit of the Constitution, before the deliberative powers of the Government can be rescued from the tyranny

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of the executive. Every thing *then*, that has gone wrong in the Senate, the prime mover of all affairs, being annually under the direct controul of the people, will be speedily set right. And when the *Masters* in the State look well to their servants, in every department, and bring them to short reckonings, their affairs will be well and uprightly conducted, for this plain reason, they will then be directed by the united virtue and wisdom of the whole nation, not by the partial folly, caprice, or ambition of one man, surrounded by crowds of sycophants and slaves, who will study to blind or pervert him, that they may first rob the kingdom, and afterwards tie it neck and heels. Under such a Parliament we should have few wars, which, like smaller *riots*, are generally made for the benefit of thieves and pickpockets. Wars are commonly the quarrels of crowned heads, from their own clashing interests and ambitious views, not for the welfare of the people. Negotiation would take place, and peace would reign under Monarchies, thus effectually limited and controuled, as experience shews it does in Republics, where the people have a due ascendancy over their executive Magistrates, and the grant of public money. Nor would it then be presumed, that

that one man in an office had a right to bring three millions of his equals to his dirty foot by force of arms, because they would not submit to be bound, at his pleasure, by the false charm of unmeaning words, ridiculous prejudices, and idle presumptions.

And among other happy effects of short and independent Parliaments, we should find the representatives of the people become their patrons and friends, as well as their landlords, from a conviction that the value of their lands must depend upon the virtue, freedom, and welfare of their tenants; which alone would induce them, had they no better motives of action, to prefer the country interest and independence, to the splendid vassalage, and the foul wages of civil prostitution. The Senate of England would then, once more, become venerable for wisdom and virtue; no longer a sink, and a *school* of profligacy, an asylum from public infamy and punishment; where the leader or Premier, being but the bloated bawd of the Crown's ambition, Courts become political brothels, and the first principles and ends of all Government are subverted to make one man great, by the debasement of millions;

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to raise a paltry tyrant upon the ruins of an empire.

The National Assembly thus happily purged of its filth and defilement, the people would as readily copy their good example as their bad one; and the corrupt sources of temporary extravagance once dried up, œconomy, and a more temperate enjoyment of life, would naturally succeed. Families would reside more in the country, and, of course, would become more orderly and correct. The calm pleasures, the social and self-satisfaction of domestic life, would be better relished; which would cure, in a great measure, the boundless profusion, dissipation, and licentiousness of the metropolis, and the consequent similarity of manners, and prodigality of expence, copied from it, through all ranks of the people, and in all parts of the kingdom. This will be called visionary by men sunk in the depravity of the times, the *purfiness* of vicious indulgence, and resolved not to amend themselves or their country.

But whatever *they* may resolve, the rod of Heaven's chastisement *will reform* where it is most felt, among the lower orders of the people. And when that great and important

important body, the sinews of our strength and support, are groaning under the severe gripe of oppression and penury, they will become the instruments of Providence to scourge their oppressors, and the means of reformation to the State. Public distress creates public union, resentment, and resistance; and these, when general and in good earnest, are the best reformers of corrupt and arbitrary rulers.

On this great occasion, my countrymen and friends, equally urgent from your present sufferings, and fears of futurity, I wish you to think like men, and Englishmen, not like Lawyers or Statesmen; to found your rights upon the great charter of Nature, not that of Runnymede, which is, at best, a very imperfect copy of the other. The right of representation is a natural right, the very basis of the community, the Constitution, and Government. All cannot actually govern, but all may do it virtually, by consent, and the free delegation of their powers to others, the most capable and trust-worthy; and thus they will be governed as *men*, by laws of their own constituting, not as *beasts*, by the arbitrary discretion and pleasure of masters. And this unalienable right, if we consider the natural propensity all men have to abuse power

power, for the sweets it produces, should be kept under the watchful eye, and the immediate check and controul, of the public, or they will certainly, in the event, find their deputies the principals, and their Stewards will elbow them out of their patrimony, liberty, and property.

There is nothing that an Englishman should more despise than searching history, statutes, or records, for those rights which he holds from God only, as a man, and a reasonable being; and instead of making liberty and rights the basis of law, appealing to any law but that of natural justice, as a ground of popular rights. The laws being commonly interpreted by the creatures of those who administer the Government, no favourable construction for the people's rights can be expected from men, whose natural *prey* is both on the rights and the people. It is an affront to common sense to call them independent, while farther honours and emoluments are in view, to be obtained by a sacrifice of the laws to power, *against* the rights of the people.

The Crown, like the libertine *Charles* the Second, may *beget* an house of Lords of its own, upon the prostitution of the law

law and the church. Any battered *harlot* of Westminster-Hall or Abbey, thorough paced, and hacknied in compliance, is qualified for Peerage. And if the point of intrigue can be carried against the virtue of the India Company, that fertile mistress will fill the other house with the same spurious issue, equally devoted to the same political parent. For it will be utterly impossible while the system of corruption prevails, and the rotten boroughs and corporations pollute the fountains of legislation, for any country gentleman to bid against Court Nabobs, with the plunder of the East in their pockets; with ministerial protection, honours, and douceurs, in view on one hand, and the rod of persecution impending on the other.

To restore, therefore, annual Parliaments for the counties only, and thus to recover the Constitution and liberty of England, by the sole use and end of Parliaments, a free and equal representation, I will now draw the outlines of a plan for that purpose.

1. A number not exceeding six hundred, nor less than five hundred and fifty, to constitute the House of Commons, and to represent the counties only.

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2. Middlesex, as containing about one tenth of the inhabitants, to send an equal proportion of Members.

3. The extent of the other counties relatively, may perhaps, one time with another, be a sufficiently accurate rule to regulate their number of representatives.

4. The whole to be called Knights of the Shire, and the qualification to lie in the county, otherwise to remain as at present.

5. The election for each county to be parochial, and annual, in the Parish Vestry, or Town Hall of each parish. The Church Wardens to be the returning officers, and the High Sheriff to receive the parish returns, as Returning Officer General for the county, and to publish them in the county news-papers upon declaring the election.

6. All adult male natives not being naturally, or legally disqualified, to be entitled to vote, or capable of a seat.

7. Idiots, lunatics, aliens, paupers, and prisoners, persons under any kind of influence from the Crown, or holding tenets subversive of civil or religious liberty, to be deemed *natural* disqualifications, incompatible

tible with the principles of a free election, and an independent representative: and all persons not natives of England, her Colonies, or Plantations, to be considered as aliens to the rights of election and representation.

8. All legal qualifications, tests and restraints, destructive of natural rights, to be abolished, and none to be considered as legally disqualified to vote, but such as are naturally so, not being native, free, and useful members of the community.

9. The old parliament not to be dissolved till the return of the writs for the new, which would render parliament perennial as well as annual.

10. The general election to be limited to a certain time before, or after harvest, as may be found most convenient. The candidates to be nominated as usual at a county meeting, to advertise in the London and county papers one month before the election, and not to canvass till then.

11. To guard against the influence of the Peers, too commonly devoted to the Crown, it should be deemed a breach of privilege, and a high misdemeanor, for

Peers openly to recommend, put in nomination, or canvass for any candidate; no Peer's eldest son should be eligible.

12. Officers in the army and navy having qualifications in the county to be equally eligible with other gentlemen, unless under the denomination of aliens.

This, as I said before, is apparently a slight sketch from a hand not used to such nice and complicated delineations. It has however in this rough state many evident advantages: It will be attended but with little trouble or expence. The business will be transacted at home, and in the most leisure part of the year—It will employ men already known and confided in, through all the parishes, and will create a very salutary check upon all the returning officers, and upon one another.—It will exclude adventurers, with plunder from an Indian butchery, a gaming table, or the public Treasury.—It will foster and cherish the natural landed interest, and make a reciprocal good understanding between the landlord and the tenant, the farmer and the labourer.

There will be little or no temptation to corrupt such a parliament, when the means are

are not only cut off, but when it becomes the first concern of the landlord to guard his constituents, his estate, and his parliamentary interest from ministerial encroachments. He will then probably soon learn to consider himself *at home* in his own house and lands, unmortgaged for court luxuries, and ministerial dependence; and like a true Englishman, will choose rather to stand on his own bottom, and ground, than any other man's. And if his estate be considerable, he will gain more by guarding himself and his tenants from ministerial rapacity, than by court favours. But it will probably be objected to this plan, as to most other national reforms, which combat prejudices, and particular interests, that the burghage tenures, boroughs, corporations, and freeholds, which I propose with so little ceremony to destroy, have been from time immemorial, the property of individuals, and cannot lawfully be taken from them. To which I answer, if the people of England have a right to freedom, they have a right to free and equal representation; and consequently no individuals, or subordinate bodies in the great community can have a right to obstruct or prevent such representation. If this be the great fundamental right of the whole people of England, on which both the Constitution

tution and government are founded, no inferior rights claimed under, and by virtue of it, which at the same time are incompatible with it, can be lawful and valid. Freeholders votes are no farther a right to individuals, than as the means of serving and securing the first sacred claim of the nation, to be free, and freely represented. The right is civil and social, not personal; it regards the citizen, not the man.—When therefore this right is corruptly perverted from the citizen to the private benefit of the individual, the right ceases with its public utility; for this obvious reason, a general right or benefit cannot yield to such as are private; nor while freedom is legal, can it be legal to destroy freedom. The same conclusive argument applies with still greater strength against the more venal privileges and franchises of boroughs and corporations; and stands in full force against the whole constituent body, when perverted from its duty, and influenced to betray those national rights, of which it has long been the inadequate, the treacherous guardian. Its powers therefore are self-annulled and void by the traitorous abuse of its trust and office. The same demonstrative truth abolishes septennial parliaments—a self-created usurpation upon the first principles of the constitution, which a *jesuitical impostor*

postor calls the “ground-work of it,” although its *sole ground-work* is the *peoples rights*, not the *forms* which *betray* them.

Nor is this argument confined to one house of parliament only.—Legislature and government are both amenable to the tribunal of the people—and when any man, or body of men, civil or sacred, in either house, are uniformly hostile to the rights of the people, and instrumental to the encroachments of the Crown, their rights and privileges are, *de jure*, forfeit to the public rights, under, and in aid of which only, all inferior rights are held. Civil rights and privileges are annexed to trusts and duties.—The duty neglected, the trusts betrayed, the tenure is void, the privilege lost.—A *Spiritual Baron*, for instance, that wages political war against his country's rights, under the sole banners of the Crown and Ministers, is recreant and apostate in both his characters.—His country and religion both disclaim him; and the sacred, unalienable rights of the whole do supersede and dissolve all powers and privileges inimical to the State and Nation, and subversive of that natural, parent authority, from which they originate, and must ever, in the order of truth and justice, be subservient. This truth, which came from
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God, does not fear an earthly throne.—Kings, entrusted with the executive powers of the State, and bound by oath, and by law, to use the peoples strength and wealth for their protection, and prosperity, if they pervert the solemn trust and office to their own aggrandisement, *against* those public rights which created the office, and limited the authority; should their *constant efforts* be to *subdue* and *enslave*, to annihilate the peoples rights, and usurp them to themselves, they are *self-deposed*.—Free born subjects owe the tyrants neither duty nor allegiance, but on the contrary, abhorrence, defiance, and resistance.—The *public weal* is the supreme law on which governments are founded, and by which, when perverted, they may be restored, and amended.—From these self-evident principles, which it is to be hoped, degenerate as we are, no Englishman will deny, it is clearly a gross absurdity to suppose a natural public right can become a legal private property.

The purchase of free mens civil rights is upon the face of it, illicit, because the traitor who sells is entrusted with other mens rights as well as his own. Natural rights which made government and laws, cannot be alienated, or annulled by them. Such purchases are void in themselves, if a county representation did not effectually
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prevent them. When men are sold like cattle, with the land; and the fee simple of free choice, of civil and moral conduct, goes to market with barns and pigsties, it is high time to assert the dignity of reason and freedom, or to renounce the Great Charter, and all other titles to humanity and virtue.

It is notorious that populous cities and corporations have sometimes had fewer constituents than members. Dr. M——y is said to have sublimated by chymical process, the whole power of the *venerable* corporation of BATH, into the small compass of his own person, nay, even to have carried it about in his *pocket*, as a precious essence, far exceeding the odour of roses.—And the same thing has been done for ages by Weymouth and Melcomb-Regis, to the great emolument of the T——r family, though not equally skilled in the arts of extracting, and sublimating, with the fore-mentioned *liberal* physician.

I say nothing about the SCOTCH representation, because I think the Members *principles* in as little danger as the people's *liberty*, or *property*. And their religion, like their thistle, is too splenetic and barren, to fear any attack. Their Peers who sit in
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Parliament, for the honour of their own country, and the safety of this, should be rendered less servilely dependent upon Administration, if it be in human policy to devise the means. But, I had forgot, that when one house is emancipated by popular virtue from ministerial tyranny, the other will not be worth the purchase, had he the means to make it.

I have now, as far as I was able, gone to the bottom of this great national concern; and have all along assigned the grounds and principles of the reform.

And as I am confident, folly and wickedness combined could not contrive a more partial, unjust, or defective system of representation than the present; more open to corrupt influence, more liable to defeat every purpose of the institution of parliaments, or more likely to be made the guard of despotism, rather than the bulwark of freedom, I shall make no apology for the magnitude of the object, the boldness of the attempt, or the novelty of the plan.— It is professedly a rough sketch, the chief design of which is to cut off the foul medium of corruption, the *constituent body*; whose only use in the Constitution, to which it does not naturally, or originally belong,

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seems to have been, to *invite* seduction and influence, to break the force of popular union and interests, and *betray* what could not be conquered, while every free man is his own constituent, and the equal guardian of his own birth-right inheritance, of freedom and property.

At present, an handful of corrupt beggars may enslave a great nation, generally virtuous, brave, and honest. This could not be done under county representations only, and annual parliaments, unless the Crown's revenue were sufficient to corrupt a majority of the people—which being utterly impossible, the very attempt to pack a parliament for the infamous purposes of despotism must cease when every man guards his own rights, and a single traitor in a rotten borough can no longer sell the liberties of an hundred honest men, to the eternal reproach of a nominally *free* Constitution.—

Artful and ambitious statesmen, who wish to avail themselves of the present *mis*-representation of their country (the bane of every principle of the Constitution) in order to use a constituent medium as the key of national wealth and power, will be ready to scout any system of reform that defeats their avarice and ambition. But I am per-

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suaded

suaded the plan is as practicable as it is patriotic, and may easily be improved into a perfection that must give stability to the constitution and liberty of England.

I leave it to more skilful and patient hands to mature, and pass on to the other great source of the Crown's corrupt influence, the union of the ecclesiastical polity with the civil, under one supreme temporal head, and a Constitution in CHURCH and STATE.

LETTER

LETTER THE SECOND.

Countrymen, and Fellow-Citizens.

IN my first Letter I have considered the civil disease under which the Constitution has long suffered and groaned, viz. the crushing influence of the Crown upon all its vital parts; and I have prescribed what appears to me, to be the only effectual remedy, annual parliaments, and equal, or rather a full representation of all, not naturally or legally disqualified, by the very principles and ends of representation. This plan is simple and uniform in its design, adequate to its object, neither local, temporary, or partial. It takes off the medium, constituent body, the instrument of corrupt influence, makes every man who chooses it the equal guardian of his own freedom and property, and by restoring the true spirit of the English Constitution, if any thing could give stability to human affairs, must render it immortal.

In order to guard this precious inheritance at all points, from corrupt *spiritual* influence, as well as temporal, which is moving

moving every engine to defeat the pious and patriotic reform, it is become necessary, and it is high time, that the unnatural union of the ecclesiastical and civil polities under the Crown should be dissolved.—This is the second source I mentioned at setting out, of the Crown's influence, which has long been regarded by the wisest men, and the best friends of their country, as the most rotten, and dangerous part of the Constitution, and no less prejudicial to religion and morals, than hostile to public liberty. Since it is shamefully apparent to all, that this *union* is in effect, a *corrupt dependence*, and instrumentality of the Mitre to the Crown, for purposes too well known to want an explanation.

A *mitre* is a *spiritual crown*, which indicates a rule over the mind and conscience. And a Constitution in church and state, is a *priestly dominion* in the first instance, supported and seconded by the civil powers.—A junction that is never necessary, but when the government is above the laws, and the religion above reason; that is, when they are both a *state juggle* to keep mankind in ignorance and slavery. It is peculiarly unfortunate for such a combination, when the author of the religion has pronounced his kingdom not of this world; and ordained humility, meekness, and the
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passive virtues as the great criterion of his doctrine, and badge of his disciples. But imposture is not easily abashed when wisdom connives, folly believes, and power protects.—I am sensible of my danger on holy ground.—It is more rotten and treacherous to the foot than any other bog.

Rinaldo in the enchanted wood, was not surrounded with greater perils, than the chivalry that ventures to assault the strong holds of priestcraft. The powers that be, as well as those that be not, are let loose against him. Imps of power, dæmons of darkness, goblins of hell, monsters, and hydras, and chimæras dire, are unkennelled to devour him. The very men who wallow in sensuality, in the pomp and vanities of this wicked world, as their chief apparent good, would appall their simple flock with bugbears and spectres, the airy machinery of priestly policy, and the peoples slavery of soul and body.

I am a friend to the church, and wish it always to prosper under the protection of the State, but not as a *part* of it.—The parochial clergy are highly useful, ornamental, and respectable. It is the dignified secular drone, who is, and always will be dangerous, and therefore obnoxious to the community.—It is indeed almost superfluous
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at this time of the day to remark upon the powerful influence arising from the forms and tenets of an established religion, when the Crown is the head and patron of the church, the great dispenser of the high dignities and emoluments of the superior clergy. And this patronage being further extended to parish preferments, to the universities, and great public schools, forms not only an extensive interest, but creates early prejudices in the mind, which lay the foundation for blind attachment, or corrupt servility in maturer life.

Had not the Church hatched and fostered under her wing, such men as LAUD, M---rk---m, &c. a free country would never have been disgraced with Filmers or Sm---ts, who blindly sucked in their bigotry and slavery from these nurses of superstition and tyranny; slaves at the liberal altars of Christianity and freedom, who prostituted their office below the Pagan priesthood, by giving divine honours to living princes! And yet, these holy sycophants, who flatter kings into tyrants, have the face to talk of the Constitution! Even the profligate, mitre-hunting bell-weather, who rings an *alarm* to Church and King from the peaceable petitions of the Counties to Parliament, *profanes* the name of Constitution; although the very word, which means
a compact

a compact between the governed and governing, is repugnant to every principle of his Tory creed, and the monstrous union of Priest and Prince, forming a many-headed papal power in a protestant country. For it signifies little whether these powers unite in one or more, so long as *they* all unite in the Constitution and government, and as the *patriot* BURKE insinuates, "can bind the conscience by statutes."

And we see in fact, that the rulers of the church, in all concerns of the State, move almost as obsequiously to the nod of the Crown, as if the Mitre were upon the same head. Being the creatures of the Crown, they are not wanting in piety, faith and homage towards *that* Creator. They compliment the Minister's devotion to the church, with their own civil powers and principles, and the rights of the nation, and do in fact betray, and surrender the Constitution, all but the *name*.

After poisoning the fountain-head of science, religion and government, they carry corrupt influence under the cloak of loyalty, to the seats of legislation, and the altar of God. These *Holy Barons* wage no war with "principalities and powers, or spiritual wickedness in high places." It is sufficient for them to blow the trumpet in
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proves to demonstration what use Ministers would make of Church power, if they dared. The Canada Bill avows it to be the wish of Government to people the great continent of America with idolatrous Papists rather than Protestant Dissenters. For it is a most unpardonable offence to the divine right of Crowns, and the divine commission of Mitres, for any people to think of governing themselves without a Royal licence, or to worship God without episcopal warrant: Royalty, tutored by prelacy, will scorn to originate from, or be accountable to, any thing under Heaven. And prelacy, having possession of the Fisherman's keys, will keep both its gates and wickets fast locked against all schismatics and heretics. These powers have often contended for the lead in *riding the people*. Sometimes the Priest has held the bridle for the Crown, at others, the Crown held the stirrup for the Priest. And in this contest for precedence betwixt the two Imp---rs, seas of human blood have been spilt. In England they have compromised the matter, after being both kicked out of the country at different times, and they are now mounted on one horse; but the Priest, to his great mortification, is compelled to ride behind. His stomach, however, is still great, and he supports the claim to his former dignity, although he waves the exercise of it—for the present.

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He has yet a silent spiritual Parliament, or Convocation; his spiritual prerogatives, courts, palaces, thrones, train-bearers, &c. and keeps his princely state above all subjects. The humble successors of honest Peter, not only take the uppermost seats in the Synagogue, but in the Senate; nay, they take the lead in the State. To shew that this Government is rather *sacerdotal* than civil, they have christened it a Constitution in *Church and State*; and whenever the Royal wisdom shall be pleased to appoint a Cardinal, or Episcopal Minister, his style will uniformly be, *Ego, & Rex meus*. Preposterous and unnatural unions are our bane. They cannot thrive in nature, and Providence will not bless them. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. The civil oak is stunted, poisoned, and withered, by the lewd, serpentine embraces of the ecclesiastical ivy. John Bull is devoured by Pharaoh's lean kine from the north; and our fertile cultivations of land, commerce, and arts, are choaked by the barren, hungry, invidious thistle. The Scripture says, ye cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon. But Churchmen give that text the lie, when they become the active tools of a profligate Minister, or the mutes of his Divan. Indeed, the whole system of ecclesiastical promotion from principles of policy, is a system of Christian profanation. It is horrible to think of unprincipled, time-serving

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erving men, being appointed by the civil power to the highest pastoral care of Christ's flock, merely to serve the base intrigues of Administration, and the wicked purposes of arbitrary power.

Can there be a greater insult offered to our holy religion, and its Divine Author, than Government's *bribing* the Ministers of it with episcopal revenues, dignities, and authorities? It is doing all in its power to make Heaven itself accessory to its crimes, by sacrilegiously employing sacred offices, and sacred property, to the most criminal of all purposes. It is like placing Judas Iscariot in the seat of Peter or Paul. Their temporalities are but little better, though so much greater, than the thirty pieces of silver. And such is the corresponding piety, and principle of Government, that Ministers seldom confer the cloven crown but where the cloven foot has already appeared. These spiritual Lords, the *humble* disciples of the Carpenter's Son, will condescend to own that their master's kingdom is spiritual. But they act as if they considered the spiritual kingdom as a little *chimerical*; and for fear of a disappointment, have very discreetly taken care to annex to that reversion, as much as they could of the powers of the State, and the property of the people. It is an earnest, and sort of fore-taste of the joys of Paradise; and there is
nothing

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nothing like a good earnest in hand, when a man has not the greatest faith in covenants and promises.—The Church might have been well contented with its large and strong hold upon our faith and lands, without coveting a share of the Civil Government also. But a Church militant here on earth, it will be said, required Church Barons; and these Barons might have been rather ridiculous had they not been armed by the civil power. The only good reason to be given for this union is, that the Church in less polished times, has been thought to want civilization, as much as Courts generally want religion. But, at a period, when the *piety* of the Sovereign is not less distinguished than the politeness of the Clergy.—When the *Keepers of the King's conscience are exemplary for every virtue*, and his Ministers of State vie with his Chaplains in *faith and devotion*, I see no reason why the Baron should not stick to his politics, and the Bishop to his text. The peerage will not mend the priest's humility. It will, on the contrary, adulterate and *spoil* the character, and give an itch of quality, pride, and presumption, where it can answer no other end than to make both the profession and the religion contemptible. A little liberality of sentiment, and honest pride of independence,
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would much better become them, than hunting after secular honours, bending the knee with implicit devotion before the shrine of Majesty, the idol of St. Stephen's Chapel, or the humbler altars of inferior patronage.

Such is the Crown's influence over the ecclesiastical establishment, that the very offices of religion are corruptly and wickedly framed against the spirit of liberty and the Constitution. A profligate hierarchy are not ashamed to declare before God and the people, in gross flattery of crowned heads, "that nothing less than the blood of Christ can expiate the *just* punishment of a *tyrant*, which is falsely called a murder, and a *Martyrdom*," and the bloody hypocrite is not only canonized in a Protestant Calendar, but most blasphemously compared with their Saviour, in many parts of the service.

Thus religion is prostituted to the shameless purposes of a corrupt and arbitrary policy, which destroys its influence and renders it contemptible, by shewing how little its highest Ministers regard it in practice, though they have the confidence to enforce it upon others, under sanctions of temporal and eternal punishments. The great revenues, temporal dignities, and powers,

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powers, annexed to the spiritual office and character, and to be acquired by servile submissions, and dishonest compliances, have the most direct tendency to defeat every civil as well as sacred purpose of religion, to the community. The great sinecure dignitaries, remnants of Popish tyranny, and gleanings of rapacity, ought to be abolished as a part of the Crown's corrupt influence, and the wages of sloth and sin. Those rich clusters of the ecclesiastical vineyard which now crown the vacant brows of the idle and sensual pluralist, should be given to men who have borne the heat and burden of the day; they should go to augment the small livings, and raise the Curate's penury to decent subsistence. Sinecures and pluralities which *oppress* some with shameful wealth and luxury, while they leave others to want and misery, prove the lax state both of principle and discipline in the Church, and call loudly on the justice and humanity of the nation to teach a Christian Hierarchy some bowels for their suffering brethren.

Tithes are an odious and invidious mode of support; a ground of perpetual contention. By rendering the parish Priest wholly independent of his flock, they have no check upon his behaviour, but must support the meritorious, and the worthless

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alike. For the priestly power being artfully interwoven with the State, the Priest, as well as the Crown, talks of *his divine right* of maintenance from the labours of those, who, possibly, neither believe his doctrine, nor respect his office. An established religion, and a corps of spiritual regulars, well disciplined and broke to Government service, may be as necessary to the Crown, as a regular army, although both of them, in the opinion of many, may not be very useful or necessary to the public.

Education by Clergymen only, with few exceptions, is another grand source of influence, by fostering those high Tory notions of kingly and priestly power, which a slavish priesthood first broached, and which would soon give way to a more liberal instruction, in other hands. Men will always take care of their own interests first. And as long as the Crown and Mitre have a civil connection, and joint interest in ruling the State, absurd mysteries will not be wanting to keep the people in ignorance and subjection.

A veil will be thought necessary to hide the splendour of Majesty, the arcana of State, and the mysteries of religion, though it should really conceal nothing but the
folly

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folly of one, and the knavery of the other. *Smeltism* is congenial with Gothic halls, inexplicable creeds, and superstitious rituals. And the effect of College education is, for that reason, most conspicuous among mere country gentlemen, who pass from the *common room* to their fox hounds and stables, and carry little with them but vociferous ignorance, and drunken prejudice, rooted and established on the most implicit credulity in conniving Priestcraft.

Such men (and such the kingdom abounds with) who, instead of being the ornament, are the disgrace of education and their country—bred, or rather *fed*, by the needy dependents upon the Crown, and its creatures, they have been, *de facto*, bred by the Crown for its own purposes and service, and a liberal supply of such *Sheriffs* and Magistrates as will be staunch to Church and King, whatever becomes of their country. Thus the minds of our gentry, and liberal youth, are early bent and biased by the Crown's influence, through the church, as much as if these young and tender branches of the community had been grafted into prerogative, and nailed to the church wall by a Markham or a Smelt, to bring forth fruit only for the supreme, and inferior heads of the Church. I would by no means be thought to attack
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the Hierarchy. On the contrary, I devoutly wish to see the Church more respectable and honoured, as it would be, if stripped of its borrowed plumes, Peerage and civil authority. In whatever concerns its spiritual functions, as far as consistent with liberty of conscience, the law of the land, and the spirit of a free Constitution, I am for granting the Church the same *toleration*, which, in the plenitude of its power, and its indulgence, was granted us, —when it could no longer be refused. In their own province and diocese, let them rule their inferior pastors and flock; but, in State matters, *they should not be tolerated*. The influence which religion gives them over the laity, is very sufficient, without annexing to it civil honours, and legislative powers, to disgrace the one, and betray the other.

Let them wield, in the name of Heaven, the pastoral staff, and the apostolic keys, if their disciples choose; but let not the balance of the State be lodged in the same partial, mercenary hands, to give the Crown the same ascendancy in one House, that a corrupt, unequal representation gives it in the other. If we must be betrayed and sold to tyrants, let not a Protestant Church become the Judas Iscariot!

It

It is dreadfully alarming to the friends of liberty and their country, to behold the Crown's universal influence in Church and State; which, considering the principles of the one, and the usurpations of the other, is little short of a general combination of both against all the rights of the subject—Parliaments are openly packed against the nation—Juries, and Courts Martial, *for*, or *against* individuals, as *they* are subversive, or obnoxious to Government. The dignified and parochial Clergy, the law, the Lieutenants, the Sheriffs, and Magistrates of counties and corporations, and the officers of the army, navy, and militia, are garbled, as far as art and influence can extend.

The public offices, revenue officers, and contractors, in all branches and departments, civil and military, are a leagued host of enemies to their country, as far as Government is hostile to it. Against this universal influence of the Crown and its dependents, in all relations and concerns, civil and sacred, what principle or power is left to the people, to stem so mighty a torrent of overbearing interest and authority over their minds, persons, and condition? There is only one remedy which Heaven has provided, in compassion to human frailty and depravity, for so fatal a mischief,

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mischief. The natural love of liberty and of country, when a people is subdued by corruption, will not avail. They are then doubly enslaved, by their passions and by power. But in this fallen and hopeless state, the insolence of oppression sometimes effects what popular virtue and resolution gave up. Power may safely proceed under the forms of Government, law, and religion, sweetened by bribes, to tie a people neck and heels, and, in that prone posture, their own indolence, and the artifice of their rulers, may persuade them they are free, at least, *as free as the nature of order, and good government will admit.* But, if in this humiliated state, the tyrants will proceed to add insult to oppression; to trample on the fallen; to gag the mouth of complaint; to rob even poverty, and wantonly murder the defenceless—If nature be not extinct, if reason be not become prone and brutish, they will then rouse to indignation, resentment, and resistance, and their recoil upon their oppressors will be in proportion to the weight of violence that pressed them to the earth.

But, alas! when we consider the multiplied powers of the invader, the habits of servile subjection, and how much almost every individual feels, directly or indirectly, his influence and controul, the prospect
affords

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affords but little comfort. In the quarrels of the Crown for power and dominion, honour or revenue, who is it that extorts the crushing tax, and violates the person of the subject, for instruments of its pride or vengeance? Does it not *itself*, by the mouth of bribed Senators, and mercenary Lawyers, justify the robbery and the outrage? Should the injured parties seek redress from the laws, are not *they* also fallen beneath the general influence, and become parties with the aggressor, and the wretched subject, already injured past reparation, redressed only by farther punishment, and fresh mockery of his sufferings?

I have thus, my countrymen, told you very freely my opinion of your situation—If you profit by it, I shall not have lost my labour. At any rate, I have done my duty.

F I N I S.

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