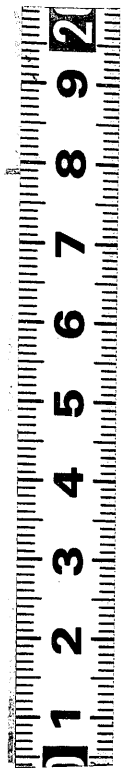


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Every Man His Own Law-Maker ;

OR, THE

ENGLISHMAN'S COMPLETE GUIDE

TO A

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM:

WHEREIN

THE ROAD TO NATIONAL CONFUSION IS MADE
PLAIN AND EASY TO THE MEANEST CAPACITIES.

FOR I

AT FIRST WAS MINE OWN KING

CALIBAN IN THE TEMPEST, ACT I,

THIRD EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE reason for troubling the Public with the following pages at the present moment, will be obvious. It was become a task of absolute necessity, to strike out some new idea for a Reform of Parliament. The Duke of Richmond had clearly demonstrated the absurdity of every plan of Reform, but his own *; which in return had been proved by other Reformers to be wholly inadequate, inefficacious, and impracticable. In this difficulty we looked in vain for assistance from the instructive lucubrations of the Dublin Congress. Those Gentlemen have not allowed us to profit from the result of their collective wisdom: and we have too much respect for such illustrious sages, to attempt to draw aside the oracular veil which covers their proceedings.

Pandere res altâ terrâ & caligine mersas. VIRGIL.

Under the impresson of this necessity, I have put together the following loose Thoughts.—The example of my fellow-labourers makes it very needless for me to apologize for want of abilities, and total ignorance of the subject: Like them, I feel it my duty to offer to my Countrymen, my crude and undigested ideas upon it. And I doubt not but this little work will prove a safe and invaluable guide, for the decision of day-labourers, porters, chimney-sweepers, shoe-blacks, and pick-pockets, on this important measure, to which they have hitherto been too little accustomed to turn their thoughts,

* Vide his Grace's Letter, page 29.

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although

*** Translations of this Work into the Welch, Manks, Cornish, and Erse Languages, are earnestly requested from the dignified Clergy resident in those Parts.*

His Excellency, the Right Reverend, General, the Lord Bishop of Derry, is expected to undertake for Ireland.

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although it is to them that we are principally to look for its final execution.

It will be observed, that I have taken no notice of the celebrated Proposal of Mr. Fox, for wresting from the Executive Magistrate the power of dissolving Parliaments: I certainly approve very much the spirit of such a measure; conceiving that it has the strongest tendency to overturn that constitution of which we all so justly complain. But in the present moment, I doubt its practicability. The late exercise of that prerogative has been so agreeable to the people, and they have shewn so strong a disposition to support it in the hands in which it is now vested, that I fear we must defer our attempt to some future and more auspicious reign; when the Gentleman who proposed this Reform, may possibly possess the power, and will doubtless retain the wish, to carry it into full execution. In the mean time, should Parliament be fearful of dissolution, it must be left to him to point out to them their constitutional remedies, and to save his country from ruin, by subverting her public credit, and by letting loose upon us an army unpaid, and freed from the irksome restraints of legal authority.

I cannot conclude, without expressing my satisfaction in the zealous endeavours of those who are joined with me in this glorious Cause throughout the three kingdoms. The same generosity in distributing gratis their invaluable publications, and the same spirit in braving the laws of their country, are common to them all. But there is one noble Lord, a native of North Britain, to whom our thanks are more particularly due. The daily exertions of this illustrious character, recall to our minds the glorious æra of June 1780, when the body of the people recovered (but alas! for a short time only) their

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their due weight in government: and the flames of Liberty burst forth in their genuine heat and lustre, to enlighten the inhabitants of this great metropolis.—When we see this zealous Patriot joining the band of hereditary Whigs, and going forth in the livery of Mr. Fox, to raise the spirit of the people, we may well hope for a repetition of the same blessings on ourselves, our houses, and our families: And we may prophecy to him that exaltation which he before so narrowly missed, to the great regret and disappointment of his country.

*Shakespeare Tavern,
Jan. 20, 1785.*

Ever†

Every Man His Own Law-Maker ;

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NO one is ignorant, that the great object of a Parliamentary Reform is to bring back society to its original state, and to restore mankind at large to the full enjoyment of their natural rights. In considering a plan, therefore, for this purpose, it is necessary to recur to the first principles of Liberty. Among these, none so immediately claims our attention, as that self-evident and universally received maxim, "That no man can be bound by any laws to which he has not given his individual consent, either in his own person, or by a deputy appointed by him for that purpose." And from hence a second maxim will inevitably follow: "That as no individual can claim a right to make laws to bind another against his consent, so neither can such a right exist in any number of individuals acting collectively." And from these it must necessarily be inferred, "That as every man has a right to obey such laws only as he shall himself consent to, so also has he a right to obey them, so long only as he shall himself choose to continue that consent."

These maxims must be allowed to be incontrovertible: for what right can superiority of strength, rank, property, information, or abilities, give to any man to make laws for another, by nature his equal? Or how can the
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natural and independent rights of any one person be taken away by the joint act of any number of others, born on the same footing with himself? Or, lastly, how can a man be subject to the operation of any law, after the circumstances have altered which induced him to agree to it, and he has withdrawn that consent, which alone rendered it binding upon him? It were therefore much to be wished, as well for promoting the measure before us, as for the general peace and good order of society, that such maxims could be universally circulated; and with this view, that all Judges and Magistrates would diligently inculcate them to the various persons that come before them; that husbands would repeat them frequently to their wives; that parents would instil them early into the minds of their children; that masters would teach them to their servants and apprentices; officers to their soldiers; and jailors to their prisoners.

Every plan which shall lose sight of these ideas, and leave us in the servile situation of paying obedience to laws subversive of the freedom of our wills, and inconsistent with the momentary bent of our inclinations, must be rejected as inadequate, and formed rather to quiet our demands than to GIVE US OUR RIGHTS. For this reason, I pass over all propositions of adding Knights, and enlarging Boroughs; of taking from one man and giving to another, as miserable palliatives, by which, after infinite disquiet, contention, and ill-blood, the same description of men, and almost the same individuals as at present, would be returned to Parliament. And I hasten to the consideration of more extensive and liberal plans, which may strike at the root of the evil, and not only make an entire change in the body of constituents,

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stituents, but effectually rid us of the present set of representatives*.

A noble Duke has given it as his opinion, that to allow every man a vote in his particular district, together with annual elections, would be the most effectual and permanent Reform of Parliament.

This plan, however, notwithstanding its seeming liberality, in professing to extend the election franchise to every man, yet by confining the exercise of it to their own particular districts, at one blow excludes a very numerous as well as respectable body of British subjects, known by the denomination of *Vagrants*. This is peculiarly oppressive; for if such a privilege is really of any value, surely they stand most in need of it, who, excepting what they occasionally steal, have never any thing of value in their possession. For it is judiciously observed in the Letters of the Constitutional Society†, “That they who possess nothing valuable but the rights of Englishmen, are more interested than any other in their preservation.” Nor can I imagine any apology for this omission, except that the noble Duke foresaw, that, however debarred by his plan from voting at any, they would in fact vote at as many places, and as often at each place, as upon a due consideration of the rewards proposed, they might think eligible.

But this exclusion seems to fall with particular severity on that enlightened body of foreign travellers, di-

* May we not here be allowed to express our just admiration of that *radical Parliamentary Reform* projected by *Guy Faux*?

† Vide Letters printed by order of the Society for Constitutional Information, page 41, l. 8.

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distinguished

tinguished by the name of *Gypsies*. It will scarcely be believed, that till within these two years, there remained on our statute-book, Acts of Parliament particularly affecting this class of Citizens (that is, subjecting them to be hanged wherever they could be caught) to which they not only had never given their consent, but there is the greatest reason to believe they would have refused it had they been consulted. And though these laws have been of late years repealed, yet such as are still left in force against them, under the description of Rogues and Vagabonds, (by which they may be whipped, and committed for hard labour), hitherto remain without this necessary sanction: And therefore till they shall have either given their approbation in person, or sent their Gypsy King to Parliament, with instructions to assent to them on their behalf, it will behove every prudent Magistrate to suspend their execution.

But the further we pursue this system of Reform, the greater are the defects that we perceive in it. It makes no provision to extend to those unfortunate constituents who happen, from casual circumstances, to be confined in certain strong houses in the several Counties of England, the exercise of their unalienable birth-right, either by removing the election for a few hours within the *gaol*, or by introducing them in some safe method upon the hustings*. How doubly unfortunate and pitiable must be the lot of felons and convicts, if they are to be hurried away to the hulk or the gallows, without being

* The last election for *Westminster* is the only one that approached at all to the spirit of these provisions: On which occasion we had the satisfaction to see the *King's-Bench* and the *Fleet* pour forth many hundreds of *Westminster Housekeepers* to poll for Mr. Fox. *Newgate*, however, was not allowed to supply its share to the support of this great Patriot.

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allowed to take their last affectionate leave of this dearest of all privileges! A privilege so particularly valuable to them while standing on the brink of eternity; since we are told by the Letters of the Constitutional Society, "That not only their temporal prosperity, but the virtues of their mind, and perhaps EVERLASTING FELICITY may be affected by it*."

But it may possibly be observed, that if they were brought upon the hustings, they might happen to communicate the itch, lousy disease, or gaol distemper, to numbers of their fellow voters. This is an idle objection, when it is considered how easily Gentlemen might fortify themselves against such apprehensions, by merely keeping about them a small bottle of *Thieves' Vinegar*. This excellent preservative against infections, could not be used on a more suitable occasion: And if it should be objected, that the receipt is not generally known, I should be very ready to furnish it; and it might be added as a schedule to the Reform Bill, or perhaps with more propriety inserted as an essential clause in the statute itself.

If however it was thought proper to remove the elections for a given time to the *prisons*, it might be considered whether the *hospitals* should not be included in the same plan; particularly that very celebrated and extensive seminary for moral and political lucubrations, at the bottom of *Moorfields*. For would it not be the highest ingratitude, to exclude *those* from the benefit, to whom we are principally indebted for the introduction of this measure? Not to mention how much their wisdom,

* Vide Letters, p. 42, at bottom.

in such an instance, should induce us to wish for the assistance of their counsels; and that in the more free and enlightened governments of Turkey, Barbary, Persia, and the East-Indies, particular regard is paid to the opinions of *sages* of this class, who by general consent are respected and almost worshipped as superior and inspired beings.

Thus far we have proceeded with spirit and effect to supply the omissions of preceding Reformers. Yet if we were to stop here, we should but have given freedom to one half of the community: The *fairer* and *more amiable* part would still remain in a state of slavery. No liberal mind can for a moment endure such a thought. Let us then fly to the aid of those unfortunate *free women*, those oppressed *votresses*, whose native weakness and modesty has so long prevented them from asserting their rights: Let us liberate them from the unconstitutional restrictions under which they have hitherto laboured; and secure to them freedom and independence in the choice of members.

Nor will this measure be new or singular: If we refer to the happy and incorrupt days of Queen Elizabeth, we shall there find it established in precedent and antient practice. So great was the influence of Ladies at that period, that, not content with the mere franchise of voting, they in some cases asserted the right of being the only voters; as a proof of which, there is still extant a Return * for a considerable town, made in the 14th year of

* This Return is preserved in the Chapel of the Rolls, and runs as follows:

“To all christian people to whom this present writing shall come. I, Dame Dorothy Packington, Widow, late Wife of Sir John Packington, Kt. Lord and Owner of the Town of Aylesbury, send greeting. Know ye ME, the said Dame Dorothy Packington, to have chosen, named, and appointed my trusty and well-beloved

of that Princess's reign, in which a lady claims the whole borough as her own personal right and property, and takes upon herself alone the double office of elector and returning officer: whence it is manifest, that the admission of the fair-sex to the franchise of election, is not only a restoration of their natural rights, but a renovation of the old British constitution.

But I cannot avoid dwelling with particular emphasis (though it is what will naturally have occurred to the judicious Reformer) on the superior claims of *pregnant women*, who, in justice to the embryo voter in their womb, should certainly be allowed a double franchise; for neither does the tender age of an unborn infant allow him to venture abroad for this purpose, nor can we presume to propose the same remedy in this case as in that of prisons, where the election was to be moved to the place of confinement.

A learned and accurate Judge informs us, that an infant in his mother's womb is supposed in law to be born for many purposes, and those by no means unimportant*. And we learn from the historians of the latter Roman empire, that when the crown of Persia descended to a person

beloved Thomas Litchfield, and George Burden, Esquires, to be my *Burgeses* of my said Town of Aylesbury. And whatsoever the said Thomas, and George, Burgeses, shall do in the service of the Queen's Highness, in that present Parliament to be holden at Westminster the eighth day of May next ensuing the date hereof, I the same Dorothy Packington do ratify and approve to be my own act, as fully and wholly as if I were or might be present there. In witness whereof, to these presents I have set my seal this fourth day of May, in the 14th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, of England, France, and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c.”

* Vide Judge Blackstone's chapter upon the absolute rights of persons; in which he tells us, that “an infant *in ventre sa mere*, or in the mother's womb, is supposed in law to be born for many purposes. It is capable of having a
“legacy,

person in this predicament, it was thought no reason for delaying the ceremony of his coronation †. Add to this, that it was with the approbation of the grave and venerable Doctors of the University of Paris, that infants in the same situation were admitted to the privileges of baptism †. And with these authorities in favour of their political and religious rights, it can no longer seem consistent with a free constitution to withhold from them, or their mothers in trust for them, the most essential of all rights, that of election. Such a privilege might, like the "jus trium liberorum" among the Romans, tend very greatly to the encouragement of population, at a time that the country has been much exhausted by a

"legacy, or a surrender of a copyhold estate made to it. It may have a guardian assigned to it, and it is enabled to have an estate limited to its use, and to take afterwards by such limitation, as if it were then actually born." —Why therefore should it not also be supposed in law to be born for that most necessary of all purposes, giving its vote at elections?

† Lord Bolingbroke quotes this instance in his Patriot King, as follows: "I have read in one of the historians of the latter Roman empire, that SAPHORA the famous king of Persia, against whom JULIAN made the expedition wherein he lost his life, was crowned in his mother's womb. His father left her with child, the magi declared that the child would be a male; whereupon the royal ensigns were brought forth, they were placed on her Majesty's belly, and the princes, and the satrapes prostrate recognized the embryo-monarch."

‡ Formerly, by the Romish Rituals, a child in its mother's womb could only be baptized when on the point of birth, and upon the proviso that some part or other of the child's body be seen by the baptizer: But the Doctors of the Sorbonne, by a deliberation held amongst them April 10, 1733, enlarged the powers of the midwives, by determining, that though no part of the child's body shall appear, baptism shall nevertheless be administered to it by injection, *par le moyen d'une petite canulle*. The reason assigned for this determination is equally convincing, and applicable to the present question: "Le Conseil estime que l'on pourroit se servir du moyen propose, dans la confiance, qu'il a, que Dieu n'a point laisse ces sortes d'enfants sans aucuns secours." The whole of these proceedings are detailed at length in Tristram Shandy, vol. I. p. 121. And to that philosophical performance we will refer such of our readers as wish to know more of this ingenious reform in baptism, to which millions yet unborn are largely indebted.

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ruinous war, and continual emigrations. Twenty-four hours on the eve of a general election, might alone repair all the havock which we have sustained in America. There would then be no occasion (particularly to Gentlemen of a hale and sound constitution) to resort to those troublesome methods of keeping up their election interest by grants of annuities, or conveyance of burgage tenures. And as for those ladies who might give a false account of this qualification, it would be easy to strike off their second vote upon a scrutiny.

But as nothing can take place so long as the franchises of boroughs continue to be tolerated, let us hasten to remove these obstructions. And here if any one should feel any sentiments of remorse or pity for their fate, or should question their evil effects, let me only remind them, how often they fall into the hands of men, who having monopolized immense tracts of land, and vast sums of money, ought not in conscience to pretend to any other advantages; and who are already so much interested in the prosperity of the state, that it cannot be necessary to connect them with it by any share in its legislation. Some of these places they are apt to represent themselves, or to consign to their nearest relations and friends; while others, perhaps, are handed over to such persons as, being possessed of great wealth, but no borough interest, are ready to pay a valuable consideration for the advantage of gaining a share in the legislature; and this upon the same mercenary views that merchants take out insurances upon their goods and houses. It must therefore be our endeavour to prevent those persons who have fortunes, interfering with the peculiar province of those who have none, to elect members to represent the kingdom in Parliament.

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Such being the evil of boroughs, it may well be asked, whence such nuisances derive their being? or, in other words, what is a borough? *A parchment with a lump of wax dangling to it*, constitutes its whole soul and existence! May we not therefore exclaim with that celebrated Reformer, *Jack Cade*, or with any other *Jack*, "Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment? That parchment being scribbled over should undo a man? Some say the *bee* stings; but I say, 'tis the *bee's wax*; for I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never my own man since*." In the same manner, from the scribbling upon parchment and the sealing with bee's wax, we may date the origin of borough representation, and all our subsequent misfortunes! We never have been ourselves from that period!

Let us away then with these parchments without delay or hesitation!—*No half-measures—No palliatives—Give us a system!* The just indignation of some Reformers would instantly commit them to the flames; but others, who on cooler reflection would not neglect such an opportunity of uniting œconomy with reform, advise rather to sell the skins to taylor, to be cut up into measures; and the seals to the chandlers, to be melted into wax-lights: While others, more compassionate, are content with proposing that they should be delivered up, with *all their lands, tenements, houses, warehouses, buildings, books, records, documents, acts, instruments, letters, papers, ships, vessels, goods, wares, merchandizes, money, securities for money, and all other effects whatsoever*; to the special care and disposal of seven Commissioners, for the benefit of the Corporations and the Public. I do not profess to be insensible to the merit of these several proposals; particularly the last, which

* Henry VI. Second Part.

must

must be allowed to be happily contrived for the extirpation of all abuses. Nor should I hesitate to consent to it, had I not some favourite expedients of my own in view; for every person must be excused for being partial to his own productions. And when it shall be considered, that my Plans have the superior merit of striking equally at *Borough Elections*, and at *Bribery* (the constant attendant of every kind of election) I shall be allowed to have good reason for my partiality.

The source of bribery has, in my apprehension, been this:—That a seat in the House of Commons has in latter times been attended with so much honour and advantage, as to become the ambition of almost every man of fortune; while the Electors of England have become so sensible of its value, that they have been determined not to bestow such a favour, without receiving some mark of acknowledgment and gratitude.

For if we look into History, every page of it will shew us how pure and exemplary those times were, when the Parliament were of scarce any consequence.*

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* The time when the evils of Boroughs and Bribery were least felt, was previous to the reign of Henry III., when there was no House of Commons at all, but the summons to Parliament was directed only, *Episcopis, Abbatibus, sanctisq; Regni Baronibus*. That Prince, by the advice of the Bishops, in order to break the power of the Barons, was the first who summoned Knights to Parliament: But as they were not called *ad consulendum*, but merely *ad consentiendum*, no dignity or advantage was annexed to their situation. Under such a Constitution, Bribery could not thrive; for a seat in the House of Commons was rather a burthen than an object of ambition. Accordingly, there is no instance of any election-job till the reign of Queen Elizabeth; when the Borough of Westbury was knocked down to Thomas Long, Gentleman, for the sum of four pounds lawful money of Great Britain. But under the reigns of the *Stuarts* we hear little more of enormities of this nature;

tested elections; no double returns; no marketing of Boroughs; no bribery. The contention, if any, was to avoid being returned; and the money, when any was spent, came out of the pockets of the Electors, to pay the expences of the elected. In order, therefore, to renovate the spirit of those happy days, nothing can be required but to restore the House of Commons to its primitive state of subordination and insignificance.

To effect this purpose, the most obvious method would be, to render back to the Crown the Prerogatives of which it was abridged by the Revolution, which could not fail to renew every symptom of purity previous to that event. But there unhappily exists in mo-

nature; a circumstance to be attributed to the constitutional exertions of those Princes, in the depression of their faithful Commons.

It grieves me to name the period when the monster *Corruption* first began to rear its head: The period was that of the great *Revolution*. King *William*, of glorious and immortal memory, may be considered as the father of *Bribery*. To him it was owing that the House of Commons attained that degree of dignity and estimation, which has since given rise to perpetual contentions for seats, and all their concomitant evils. In vain did he attempt, in the eighth year of his reign, to crush by statute the necessary effect of his own proceedings. Neither he, nor subsequent Princes, have succeeded in their endeavours for this purpose; for prohibitions are useless, while they leave the cause still to operate, and forbear to strike at the root of the evil.

In the Roman Commonwealth the same grievance arose out of the same causes: But that nation was more fortunate in their remedy. The entire subjection of the known world to the Roman government, had rendered a seat in its councils the highest aim of human ambition. Hence the predominance of that bribery, which *Cicero* lamented it was not in the power of laws to cure. "It is not (says he, in the 2d book of his *Offices*) above 120 years ago, that there were no laws against bribery; yet how many have been passed since that time, each more severe than those which preceded it! How many have been found guilty! How many condemned!" Had *Cicero* survived a few years longer, he would have seen the extinction of this evil, by the rise of the imperial power, and consequent degradation of the consular dignity.

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dern times, such a jealousy of *regal* power (certainly not founded in the abuse of that power, during the ten years of any former Administration) that it is not safe to make such a specific proposal. And perhaps there might be an objection to such a step on the part of his Majesty, who has manifested an uniform attachment to the established frame of our Constitution, and whose present situation can hardly tempt him to engage in such experiments. But though his Majesty might wish to be excused, and the conduct of his present servants will not suffer us to look to them; yet, upon diligent enquiry, there might be found among the Champions of the People, some Ex-minister, who, upon the prospect of such a benefit to the public, might be willing to offer his services.

This, therefore, is the ground-work of my Plan: To make a person of this description Minister, with supreme power over the three present branches of the Legislature: A measure which might be accomplished either by a regular Act, openly creating him Protector, or Dictator; or more quietly, but with equal effect, by transferring to him, or to Seven Trustees for him, the whole property, stock, and influence of the East India Company*. To such a step there could be no objection, as this property lies entirely useless in the hands of its

* If any person should doubt the sufficiency of this influence for the purposes intended, let him contemplate the following heads (stated in Mr. Pulteney's Pamphlet), of which that influence consists, viz. offices to the value of two millions annually; trade, purchase of goods, shipping, stores, recruits, sales, mode and time of payments, debts in India, bringing home and recovering fortunes, promotions, contracts, inland trade, intimidation with regard to acquisitions, and inquiries into conduct; foreign Companies, foreign-States, and Indian Princes, who have an influence in this country; and other sources of influence innumerable.

present possessors; and by this means it might be turned to a national service. The present mercenary House of Commons would be instantly thrown at his feet; and he might then say, with his grand Prototype in Shakespeare, "Away, away, burn all the records of the realm! My mouth shall be the Parliament of England!" The effect would instantly follow, that gentlemen of property, sensible of no use, and seeing much disgrace from sitting in such an assembly, would leave the elections every where undisputed, to this Minister and his Creatures.

But in case such a plan should meet with any unforeseen difficulties, a second still remains; but of a nature very opposite, and perhaps less open to cavil. Instead of making the Minister supreme, it is to enable him to carry on the Government, by divesting him of all power and influence whatsoever. With this view, I should propose to abolish all places and pensions; to make it flat burglary to take salaries; and grand larceny to accept of peerages: And lastly, to institute a Commission, to inspect and controul the accounts of his Majesty's housekeepers, purveyors, and necessary-women. Surely in these spirited times, there cannot be wanting footboys and cook-maids, who will serve the Crown for nothing. These several Regulations would effectually damp the present rage for seats in the House of Commons.

Though this last expedient has not the advantage of *experience* in its favour (no government since the creation having ever been attempted on such a plan), yet we must consider that this deficiency would be amply compensated by the merit of *originality*. And we should consider it as

* Henry VI. Part II. Act 4.

its

its best recommendation, if it proved the means of bringing back the community to that point of equality, from which it originally proceeded.

It is needless to enlarge upon the effects which would immediately follow the adoption of such a proposition. In the scarcity of fit and able candidates, the electors might be put to the pleasing necessity of *hiring* persons to undertake their service; so that Mr. *Martin* would at length see the return of those pure and constitutional times, for which he so ardently pants*, *when the constituents would pay their representatives*†.

But its most excellent effect would be, the certain and immediate destruction of *Boroughs*. For, when those interested bodies of men began to feel the trouble and expence to which they would be put by the possession of their charters, they would not only surrender them without struggle or resistance, but would petition, as the wise Borough of *Doncaster* is said to have done formerly, to be relieved from the intolerable grievance of representation.

The rotten boroughs being thus annihilated, and their charters in the possession of the people, it will be asked, in what manner they should be distributed? The great cities and towns of the North may perhaps put in their claim for some: But I should propose, as a proper punishment for their provoking indifference on this question, and for their backwardness in sending up petitions and remonstrances to Parliament, when most called for, that they should forfeit their share; which would afford us a fund for rewarding the deserving and meritorious.

* Vide his Speech, June 1784.

† This would no doubt be highly popular, and in the present state of the *Fara Bank*, peculiarly acceptable at *Brookfield*.

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That portion, therefore, which might have been given to *Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Halifax, Manchester*, and other culprit towns, might be disposed of in gratuities either to the *Chapter of St. Asaph* for the exertions of its virtuous *Dean*, to the *Nottingham Militia* for the use of its Major, or to the *Licentiate in Physic*, as a proper fee for the disinterested attention which some of them have shewn to the very crazy and consumptive constitution of this kingdom. I should also submit for consideration, whether the Constitutional Society, the Whig Club, the Westminster Association, the Dublin Congress, the Aberdeen Committee, and other Patriotic Meetings, should not each be complimented with a charter or two—in return for their unwearied endeavours to rescue mankind from the encroachments of civil society, and restore them to that free and independent state in which Nature originally placed them.

But before this fund should be exhausted, though I might waive my own personal claims for having written this Treatise, yet I should beg leave to put in a word for an antient and loyal town, whose superior pretensions have been too long overlooked—I mean the extensive and populous town of *Wapping*, whose fate must seem particularly hard, when compared with its natural ally, the ward of *Billinggate*, which is represented not only in Parliament, but also in the Court of Aldermen; and has even the advantage of sending Mr. *Josiah Dornford* to the venerable Assembly of Common-Council. With what pleasure should we behold a body of men, who have hitherto dragged out a miserable existence without ever tasting the refined and exalted gratification of choosing representatives, revelling in the delights of their new acquisition!

The

The rights of representation being adjusted, let us figure to ourselves what a glorious scene would everywhere present itself on the great, the important day of election! How flattering to the pride, the consequence, the dignity of Englishmen! to behold upon one spot an innumerable body of day-labourers, journeymen, apprentices, weavers, miners, soldiers, sailors, welch-deans, vagrants, poachers, paupers, militia-majors, smugglers, swindlers, pimps, rogues, gypsies, protestant-affociators, thieves, housebreakers, murderers and lunatics, interspersed with an equal number of females of correspondent denominations, bawds, harlots, duchesses, ballad-fingers, fortune-tellers, sailors' doxies, fish-women, and women of the people, all met together to exercise the highest faculties of which human nature is capable, those of delegating the precious trust of their birth-right to some favoured citizen, and instructing him what laws to make, what taxes to impose, and what ministers to support! No court favourite, no sordid monopolizer of land and money would dare to face such an assembly. The friends of the people would everywhere have the field to themselves, and would alone be successful and triumphant; so that a decisive blow would be struck to the predominance of a hateful aristocracy †.

† Perhaps this would more than renovate the spirit of the elections in antient times, which are thus described in the Act of Henry VI. for confining the right of voting to 40s. freeholders: "Whereas elections of knights have been made with great outrages, and excessive number of people, of which most part was people of no value, yet pretend a voice equivalent to worthy knights and esquires, whereby many riots, manslaughter, and division among gentlemen shall likely be, Our Lord the King hath ordained, that knights be chosen by people dwelling in the counties, every one of them having lands or tenements to the value of 40s. per annum."

The

(24)

The Representatives being returned, there may seem to be a difficulty, how the Electors are to give them those occasional instructions that must be necessary, upon the various public questions likely to arise after they are seated in Parliament. For before that time a considerable part of the constituent body may be hanged; another part may be gone on their travels to America; and a third fled from the hue and cry of thief-takers; some may be carried on board a tender, to serve his Majesty; and others may be gone volunteers to Senegambin: So that upon summoning another meeting, an entirely fresh succession of men would appear, consisting of those just returned from transportation, deserters from the army and navy, out-laws from foreign countries, or refugees from prisons; who would not be competent to decide, in the room of their absent friends: And out of all the original Electors, we should only be able to learn the opinions of those for whom the Ordinary of Newgate might vouch, as having died in, or renounced the Coalition Faith; or who might be found, from a reference to their pedigrees, to have an hereditary right to Whig principles. To all this the solution is easy; that the Elections being annual, one would not be finished before the other began; so that there would be a constant Court of Constituents, if I may so say, ready sitting; to determine all appeals upon constitutional questions at the shortest warning. To this we may add another advantage, that there would be no interval for a *scrutiny*; so that the Champions of the People might be secure from this mode of Ministerial Persecution; and the chaste *Penelope* of the day might weave her web of *convuls* in Covent Garden, without any danger of seeing it unwoven in the parish vestry-rooms.

Let

(25)

Let us here pause, and reflect for a moment on the happy consequences of such a system! What might not be done with such a Parliament thus instructed! Then they would at last turn their thoughts to objects worthy consideration! Then nothing would be going forward day after day, but impeaching Ministers and repealing Taxes! The Receipt Tax would be repealed! The Gin Tax would be repealed! The Window Tax would be repealed! A mercenary standing army would be disbanded! And a griping set of excisemen and collectors abolished! Those who talked of laws and levies, should be rewarded with halters and axes! And Temple Bar should be crowded with the heads of Lords of the Realm and Privy Counsellors! Or, to sum up all in the emphatical words of *Dick the Butcher*, and his friend *Jack Cade*, "Sin would be struck down like an ox, and iniquity's throat cut like a calf. All the realm should be in common, and in Cheapside should our palfries go to graze; there should be no occasion for money; all should eat and drink on the public score." We should then at last behold the extinction of tyranny, corruption, and law; and hail the golden reign of The MAN and MAJESTY of the PEOPLE.

F I N I S.

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ADDRESS

London, May 6th, 1788.

AT a meeting of the London Committee
for conducting an application to Parliament,
on the subject of the Reform of the Internal
Government of the Royal Burghs of Scot-
land, Sir Thomas Dundas, Bart. M. P. in
the Chair:

RESOLVED, That since Mr. Pitt has
not answered Mr. Graham's letter, in Fe-
bruary, 1787, as Chairman of the Commit-
tee of Convention of Delegates from the
Burgeffes of the Royal Boroughs of Scot-
land, it is the opinion of this Committee,
that Mr. Graham should again address him
in a public letter, explaining the present situ-
ation and sentiments of the Burgeffes.

THOMAS DUNDAS, *Chairman.*

THOMAS BELL, *Secretary.*

0426

