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## MEMOIRS

OF

HENRY HUNT, ESQ.

Written by Himself,

IN HIS MAJESTY'S JAIL AT ILCHESTER,

*IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET.*

Volume 3

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,  
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.  
In every work regard the Writer's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend;  
And if the means be just, the conduct true,  
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due."  
POPE.

MEMOIRS OF HENRY HUNT.

This wanton outrage was perpetrated in the presence of those, who will, perhaps, blush when they read this. I do not say that this was done by the Magistrate; but it was done by the gang that surrounded him, and I know the villain who did it. The poor thing lay senseless for some time; no one of the

numerous spectators daring to go to her assistance. When she came to her senses, she was covered from head to foot with blood, that had flowed from the wound, which was on the scalp, and was four inches in length. In this state she came running to me, and made her way up to the front of the procession:—we halted, horror-struck at her appearance. The blood was streaming down her snowy bosom, and her white gown was nearly covered with the crimson gore; her cap and bonnet and clothes had been torn to rags; her fine black hair reached her waist; and, in this state, she indignantly recounted her wrongs. O God, what I felt! There were from four to five thousand brave Bristolians present, who heard this tale, and with one accord they burst forth in exclamations of revenge; every man of them was worked up to such a pitch of excitement by the cruelty of the atrocious act, that they would have instantly sacrificed their lives, to have executed summary justice upon the cowardly authors of it. I own that I never was so near compromising my public duty, by giving way to my own feelings, as I was at this moment. Burning with indignation, I half turned my horse's head; but, recovering my reason, I took the fair sufferer by the hand, and led her forward, admonishing my friends not to be seduced into the trap, that had been so inhumanly set for them. In this state we proceeded through the streets of Bristol; the poor girl streaming with blood. I took her to my inn, sent for a surgeon, and had the wound dressed and the scalp sewed up. She never failed to attend the election every day afterwards, and she displayed as genuine a specimen of female heroism, as ever I met with in my life.

I could relate a hundred such instances of the manly conduct of my loyal opponents during the election, if I chose; but, in spite of their baseness, we continued steadily and resolutely to attend the poll, from nine till four, for fifteen days; our enemies writhing with the expense that was daily incurred, and groaning under the lash of my daily exposures.

The above-named Mr. Goldney was, in his private character, esteemed a very worthy man; but when he gave way to the baleful system of factious politics, he became as great a tool, and as blind a bigot to the over-ruling power of intimidation, as any one of the execrable gang that composed the Members of the White Lion Club. "But list! O list!" Amiable as Mr. Goldney is, he could not resist the temptation of *coming to Ilchester*, out of his own County of Gloucester, forty miles, to *have a peep at the captive in his cage*. I, however, felt just as much superior to him, when I saw him here, as I did when he was running about with Burn's Justice in his hand, exclaiming, "Stop, and hear the Riot Act read!" If he meant to gratify himself, by having a peep at him, whom the *Courier* calls *a fallen leader of the rabble*, he never was more disappointed in his life; for he came just at the time that I had substantiated before the Commissioners all my charges against the Gaoler and the Magistrates.

Every evening, after coming from the hustings, I went to the public Exchange, and delivered an oration to the assembled multitude, who always came there at that time to hear an account of the transactions of the day; for the Guildhall was not capable of containing a fiftieth part of the inhabitants who were interested in the election. It will be recollected, and let it never be forgotten, that not only the whole press of Bristol, but the whole press of England was employed in traducing and vilifying me; for I was daily exposing the two factions who had united against me: in fact, that has been always the case, both the factions have always united against *every* friend of the people, whether in or out of Parliament. Mr. Oldfield, in his History of the Boroughs, gives this short account of this election: "Henry Hunt, Esq. of Middleton Cottage, in Hampshire, offered himself as a candidate, upon the old constitutional system, of incurring no expenses, nor canvassing votes. He was received with every demonstration of popular enthusiasm, though the newspapers were hired to traduce him, and every measure was resorted to, that the ingenuity of his opponents could devise, to injure him in the public opinion."

This is a brief, but a true, history of the case; this election was, perhaps, one of the most severe and expensive contests that the White Lion Club, or Tory Faction, ever had to encounter; and, for the purpose of shortening it, every art, trick, and manoeuvre was resorted to, in the vain hope of drawing me off from the main point, that of being always present upon the hustings, and keeping open the poll. They flattered themselves, too, with the idea, that it would be physically impossible for me to hold out. I was, indeed, very ill, for I had caught a cold, and laboured under an irritation of the lungs, which bordered closely on inflammation, and was aggravated by daily speaking. The papers announced, that I was suffering under a very severe fit of illness, although I never quitted the hustings. This reached my family at Rowfant, in Sussex, and they began to grow uneasy upon the subject. Fortunately, they set off to Bristol the very day before one of the most diabolical acts of malice and cowardice, that ever disgraced the character of a human being, was put into execution by my despicable opponents. One of the cowardly wretches wrote into Sussex, a letter to one of my family (it was to a female too!) in the name of the Chairman of my Committee, to say, that I had fallen a sacrifice to the fury of the mob, whose rage had been turned against me by some circumstance. The caitiff described, in very pathetic language, the distress of my friends, and requested instructions for the funeral of the mangled corpse. This letter was written in the most plausible manner; the hand-writing and name of the Chairman of my

Committee was forged, and every thing was admirably calculated to give the impression, that it was genuine truth. But, fortunately, this fiendish scheme failed of its purpose; for, as my family had left Rowfant before the letter arrived, the letter was never opened till we returned together after the election was over.

The day subsequent to the closing of the election, Mr. Davis was to be chaired; he having been returned by a very large majority, only *Two Hundred and Thirty-five* freemen having voted for me. I left Bristol on that day for Bath, as I by no means wished to interrupt the ceremony of chairing Mr. Davis, who was so very unpopular, that half the city were sworn in as special constables on the occasion, and all the avenues were barricaded and blockaded with three-inch deal planks, to prevent the populace from making any sudden rush upon the procession. He was chaired amidst the hisses, groans, and hootings of an immense majority of the population. I had promised to return to dine with my friends the day following.

The White Lion Club immediately printed and posted up a large placard, containing the names, trades, and places of abode, of all those persons who voted for me. This was done to injure them in their business, by pointing them out to the malice and the vengeance of my opponents. But I will now publish a list for a very different purpose, to hand their names down to posterity, as follows:

*Bristol. July 22, 1812.* A LIST OF THE PERSONS WHO VOTED FOR MR. HUNT AT THE LATE ELECTION.

*Those marked fr. are Freeholders, and voted as such.*

Attwood John, cabinet-maker, Castle Precincts. Atkins George, tiler and plasterer, St. Mary, Redcliff. Allen William, shipwright, St. Mary Redcliff. Anderson George, gentleman, St. James (fr. St. James). Barnett S. A. carpenter, St. Philip and Jacob. Baker Thomas, cordwainer, St. Paul. Baker John, cordwainer, St. Paul. Baker Joseph, cordwainer, St. Paul. Brown Charles, sailcloth-maker, St. Philip. Burge Samuel, cooper, St. Paul. Bartlett Robert, cordwainer, St. Philip. Belcher Joseph, tailor, Castle Precincts. Bright Newman, brickmaker, St. Philip (out). Brown George, brightsmith, St. Philip. Brewer Richard, ironfounder, St. Philip, Ballard John, tobacco-pipe-maker, St. Philip. Broad William, freestone mason, St. Philip (fr. St. Paul). Bansill John, brazier, St. James. Buffory Mark, tyler and plasterer, St. Augustine. Brownjohn William, peruke-maker, Castle Precincts. Biddell John, printer, Temple. Bright William, cutler, St. Philip. Bennett Elisha, labourer, St. Philip. Briton William, house-carpenter, St. John. Bush Peter, turner, Kingswood. Bright William, brightsmith, St. Paul. Beale John, glasscutter, St. Mary Redcliff. Brookes Samuel, mason, Bitton, Gloucestershire. Bowles Peter, cordwainer, Temple. Blacker Henry, carpenter, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) Bennett Francis, brazier, Temple. Beckett Charles, cooper, St. Paul. Bower William, tailor, St. James. Clark W. N. carpenter, St. James (fr. St. James). Cardwell Thomas, gentleman, St. Philip (fr. St. Michael). Codrington John, corkcutter, St. Mary Redcliff. Cole Joseph, butcher, St. James. Coles John, upholsterer, St. Paul. Cork John, victualler, St. Augustine. Coombs John, brightsmith, St. Philip. Coombs John, baker, St. James. Crew Solomon, coal-miner, Bitton, Gloucestershire. Cunningham B. B., cordwainer, St. Mary Redcliff. Coddington Richard, corkcutter, Bath. Clark John, toymaker, St. Philip. Dolman Charles, brightsmith, Christ Church. Duffett John, brushmaker, St. Philip. Daniel Samuel, barber-surgeon, St. Philip. Duffy Jonathan, labourer, St. Paul. Davis James, miller, St. George. Daniel Thomas, painter, St. James. Davis David, mason, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul). Davis William, victualler, Castle Precincts. Duffett Daniel, brushmaker, St. Philip. Docksey Thomas, peruke-maker, St. James. Ellis John, cordwainer, St. Philip. Edmonds Richards, barber-surgeon, St. James. Elliott Alexander, tailor, Temple (fr. Temple). Emers James, mason, St. Paul. Ellis James, brightsmith, St. James. Eagle William, tailor, St. Philip. Francis James, cooper, St. Michael. Foot John, cordwainer, St. Philip. Fudge George, mason, Temple (fr. St. Philip). Fenley John, bookseller, St. James (fr. St. James). Ferris John, tailor, Bath. Godwin John, wire-worker, St. Thomas. Griffin John, shipwright, St. Michael. Grimes John, silk-weaver, St. James. George John, stone-cutter, St. James. Green William, mariner, Bedminster. Hughes Benjamin, blacksmith, St. Philip. Hobbs James, mason. St. James. Hobbs William, mason, St. Philip. Haycock William, tailor, St. Philip. Harding John, gentleman, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul). Hewlins Moses, currier, St. Philip. Hopwood William, labourer, St. Philip. Hunt James, cordwainer, Temple. Hole James, shoemaker, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul). Hughes Joshua, cordwainer, St. Paul (fr. St. Michael) Hurst Joseph, mason, St. James. Hope John, labourer, St. Michael. Hardwick Robert, waterman, Hanham. Hone James, tailor, St. James. Haskins Samuel, plasterer, St. Michael (fr. St. Michael.) Hemmings James, maltster, Castle Precincts. Hunt William, hooper, Clifton. Autchinson, John, currier, Temple (fr. Temple). Jones Richard, joiner, St. John. James Thomas, brewer, St. James. Jewell William, smith, St. Mary Redcliff. Jeremiah Edmond, wheelwright, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) Jennings Benjamin, carpenter, St. Mary, Redcliff. James John, tailor, St. James (fr. St. James.) James Philip, pin-maker, St. George. Jennings James, tailor, St. Thomas. Jones Isaac, plumber, Temple. James John, shipwright, St. Augustine. Kennecott Nicholas, tobacco-pipe-maker, Bedminster. Knight William, labourer, St. James. Knight Joseph, broker, St. Thomas (fr. St. Thomas.) Lovett John, waterman, St. Philip. Liscombe Robert, carpenter and joiner, St. James (fr. St. James.) Lewis John, mason, St. James.

Lansdown William, hooper, St. Philip. Lewis Matthew, mason, St. James. Leonard William, pork-butcher, St. James (fr. St. James.) Lewis Edward, plumber, Redeliff. Languell Thomas, mason, St. James. Lawful Francis, sawyer, St. Philip. Lancaster James, cordwainer, St. James. Lewis John, joiner, Bridgewater. Liddiard James, turner, Temple. Martin John, rope-maker, Temple. Morgan William, carpenter, Redcliff (fr. St. Mary, Redcliff.) Meredith James, confectioner, St. Stephen. Morgan William, glazier, St. Philip. Milton Francis, printer, St. James. Mittens Thomas, cabinet-maker, St. Paul. Mountain Abraham, blacksmith, St. Philip. Mutter Joshua, carpenter, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) Moore Joseph, crate-maker, St. Mary, Redcliffe. Mitchell James, sawyer, St. Paul. Melsom William, cheese-factor, St. James (fr. St. Paul.) Norris John, tobacconist, St. Peter. Oliver George, victualler, St. Mary, Redcliff (fr. St. Paul.) Owens Lewis, tailor and mercer, St. Michael. Owen Robert, tiler and plasterer, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) Pymm Thomas, currier, Christchurch. Phelps James, gardener, St. Philip. Perry James, jun. Cooper, St. Peter. Parker William, yeoman, St. Paul. Primm Jacob, cordwainer, St. Michael. Prescott William, carpenter, St. Philip. Palmer William, hat-maker, St. Philip. Pymm William, tailor, Christchurch. Parfitt Thomas, cabinet-maker, St. Thomas. Perry Charles, labourer, Frenebay. Pearce Joseph, cordwainer, St. Paul, (fr. St. James.) Perrins John, potter, Temple. Parker James, carver and gilder, St. James. Phillips Samuel, glass-maker, St. Philip. Parker Edward, grocer, St. James (fr. St. James.) Philips Christopher, victualler, St. Nicholas. Prigg Francis, iron-founder, St. Philip. Poole William, tailor, St. Michael. Phillips William, plasterer, St. Phillip. Price William, tiler and plasterer, St. Philip (fr. St. Paul.) Pollard William, blacksmith, St. Nicholas. Penny Thomas, painter, Castle Precincts. Phillips Thomas, saddler, Bath. Perrin Robert, painter, St. Michael (fr. St. Michael.) Perrin William, jun. Cooper, St. Paul. Philips James, turner, St. James. Palmer William, brass-founder, Bedminster. Price James, shopkeeper, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) Roberts John, baker, St. Philip. Rate John, shoemaker, St. Paul. Rowland Thomas, carver, St. Stephen (fr. St. Stephen.) Rosser John, turner, St. James. Rogers Churchman, yeoman, St. James. Rumley Benjamin, labourer, Temple. Ravenhill Robert, bellows-maker, St. Philip. Rivers James, potter, Temple. Rees David, stationer, Christchurch (fr. St. Paul.) Rogers John, cooper, St. Mary, Redclif. Robins Charles, cabinet-maker, St. James. Reynolds John, wheelwright, Castle Precincts (fr. Castle Precincts.) Reed William, cordwainer, St. James. Radford Joseph, brass-founder, Temple. Rawle William, cordwainer, St. Philip. Stanmore Samuel, shipwright, Temple. Sexton, Daniel, trunk-maker, Temple. Sheppard John, brazier, Temple. Stinchcomb William, cabinet-maker, St. James. Simms Thomas, glass-cutter, Nailsea. Sheppard William, hatter, St. Philip. Stringer Thomas, confectioner, St. Philip (fr. St. Philip.) Sheppard Benjamin, clothier, Frome. Skone William, grocer, St. Paul. Smith John, pewterer, St. Michael. Slocombe John, glazier, St. James. Sayce Thomas, carpenter, St. Paul. Smith Thomas, shopkeeper, Temple. Stephens James, carpenter, St. Augustine. Stokes John, joiner, St. Paul. Stretton William, cooper, St. Nicholas. Sweet Thomas, potter, St. Philip. Stokes Henry, cordwainer, Chepstow (fr. Temple.) Simms William, glassman, Wraxall. Sims James, glass-maker, Nailsea. Skammell R. V. tiler and plasterer, St. James. Searle Benjamin, plasterer, St. Philip. Simpkins George, cordwainer, St. Paul. Smith William, ironmonger, St. Mary, Redcliff (fr. St. Mary, Redcliff.) Snig William, box-maker, St. James. Shackell Robert, cordwainer, Frampton (fr. St. James.) Thomas Timothy, tallow-chandler, St. Stephen (fr. St. Stephen.) Taylor James, brushmaker, St. Mary, Redcliff Thomas John, brushmaker, St. Mary, Redcliff Tilly John, block-maker, St. Stephen. Tippet James, shipwright, St. Augustine. Tilley William, crate-maker, Temple. Thomas Thomas, carpenter, St. Paul. Tiler William, gentleman, Bedminster (fr. St. James.) Taylor Thomas, glazier, St. Peter. Underaise James, merchant tailor, St. James. Vaughan John, gentleman, St. Paul (fr. Temple,) Walker Richard, accomptant, St. Michael (fr. St. Michael.) Westcott James, cabinet-maker, St. Michael (fr. St. Michael.) Wood William, twine-spinner, St. Philip. Whittington Thomas, carpenter and joiner, Temple. Williams Isaac, carpenter, Mangotsfield. Weetch Robert, undertaker, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) White John, mariner, Temple. Welsh John, butcher, St. Philip. Williams Robert, cordwainer, St. Augustine. Watts William, cordwainer, St. Paul. Watts Thomas, cordwainer, St. Philip. Wilmot W. W. glass-cutter, Temple. White William, carpenter, St. Paul. Wipperman Christopher, baker, St. Augustine (fr. St. Paul.) Wells Robert, wheelwright, Bath. Wilson William, Accomptant, St. Paul. Ware George, cordwainer, St. Paul (fr. St. Paul.) Webb George, carver and gilder, St. Michael. Woodland William, turner, St. Philip (fr. St. Philip.) Welch James, brickmaker, Binegar. Waters Benjamin, wine-hooper, St. Philip. Wood John, clerk, Newton St. Loe. Young George, cutler, St. Philip. Yearbury R. A. cordwainer, Frome.

I have recorded the names of these brave men, for the purpose of handing them down to posterity, as a specimen of genuine patriotism and disinterested love of Liberty. Men who, in the nineteenth century, regardless of every personal consideration, and anxious only to perform conscientiously what they considered to be a sacred duty to their country, had the courage and the honesty to give their votes agreeable to the dictates of their hearts, in spite of the terror and threats of lawless power; in defiance of the corrupt influence of the corporation, the clergy, and the merchants of Bristol, and all the bribes that were held out to seduce them from giving me their support. Men such as these deserve to be remembered with honour. I am bound to declare that, during the election, I witnessed as great a degree of enthusiasm as was ever exhibited by the people upon any occasion; and I beheld such daily individual acts of heroism as would have done honour to the character of the most revered Roman or Spartan patriot. My worthy friends Williams, Cranidge, Brownjohn, William Pimm, and many others,

were incessant in their labours to assist me, and most cheerfully braved the anger and the ungovernable rage of our opponents. We had daily to encounter the most artful and unprincipled manoeuvres, which were put in practice to entrap and mislead us. There was no mean and despicable art, nothing which was likely to irritate and inflame, that was not tried, for the purpose of throwing me off my guard; and all those who chose to try these experiments upon my patience and my temper, let them commit any atrocity however glaring, were sure to be shielded by the authorities. There was no law, no protection for me or my friends; and we had only to rely upon the goodness of our cause, our general forbearance, or our prompt and courageous resistance to lawless violence. One day, towards the latter end of the contest, a person introduced himself into my room (for any one who asked was instantly admitted), and, after behaving in a very improper manner, he placed himself in a boxing attitude, and commanded me to defend myself, or he should floor me. I had no inclination to have a set-to with a perfect stranger, and was about to request his immediate departure, when he struck me a smart blow upon the chin, and then affected to apologise for the insult, or rather assault, by saying, that it arose entirely from the want of my keeping a proper guard. I, however, instantly spoiled his harangue, by retaliating in a way that he little expected: I seized the gentleman, and, having sprung with him out of the door, I gave him, in spite of the most determined resistance, a cross-buttock, and pitched him a neat somerset over the banisters, into the landing-place of the ground-floor, before my friend Davenport had scarcely left his seat. This being witnessed by some of my friends, who were standing at the bottom of the stairs, and saw the fellow come flying over the banisters, with part of my coat in his hand, which he had seized hold of, and held fast in the struggle; they, without farther ceremony, began "to serve him out" in proper stile, as he was immediately recognized to be a sheriff's officer, and a notorious bruiser, belonging to the White Lion faction; and if Mr. Davenport had not rushed to his assistance, and secured him by consigning him to the custody of two constables, he would have paid very dearly for his insolent frolic; and, as it was, he came off very roughly, with several bruises and a dislocated shoulder.

I had given my word to my friends, that on the day after the chairing of Mr. Davis, I would return from Bath, and dine with them. I kept my word, and I was met at Totterdown, about a mile from the entrance of the city, and conducted through the streets in the most triumphant manner. I was taken to the Exchange, where I protested against the illegal manner in which the election had been carried by the lawless introduction of the military force, and I pledged myself to petition Parliament against the return of Mr. Davis; this pledge was received with every demonstration of applause, and promises of pecuniary support were reiterated from every quarter. I dined with a very large party of my friends, and thus ended a contest as severe as ever was maintained at any election upon record.

From this contest there resulted one benefit, which amply paid me for my toils. During fifteen days, the people of Bristol had an opportunity of hearing more bold political truths, than they had ever heard before; both the factions of Whigs and Tories were exposed, and their united and unprincipled efforts to deceive and cajole the people were freely canvassed, and rendered incontrovertible.—There had always been in Bristol two factions, nearly equally divided between the Whigs and Tories; and the whole of the politics of the people consisted in supporting these two factions, which were designated the *high* and the *low* party. The opposition, or Whigs, had always contrived to make the people believe that they were their friends, and that the Government, or Tory faction, were their enemies; that the Whigs were every thing that was pure and honourable, and disinterested and patriotic; but that the Tories, or Blues, were every thing that is the reverse. During these fifteen days, this delusion was dispelled, and the actions of the Whigs were as rigidly discussed as those of the other faction; in fact, more so, for the people all well understood the practice as well as the principles of the Tories, but they had not till now been enlightened upon the subject of the Whigs, so as plainly to see and understand their situation. The task of enlightening them on this head, I made it my business to accomplish, and, aided by the Whigs themselves, I did accomplish it effectually. At the appearance of such an antagonist as I was, all the leading Whigs, united with those whom they had heretofore made the people believe to be their greatest enemies, their chiefs of the low party, now left that party, and joined the high party, though hitherto it had been the constant study and care of both these factions, to make the people give credit to the sincerity and purity of the opposition. To banish this delusion was my grand object, in which I flatter myself, that I succeeded to a miracle. I not only recounted the famous acts of the Whig administration, and dilated upon the sinecures, pensions, and places of profit, that the Whigs enjoyed out of the earnings of the people; but I also caused the list of them to be published and placarded. There were the sinecures of Lord Grenville and his family, the Marquis of Buckingham and others, placed side by side with those of Lord Arden and the Marquis Camden; *Whigs* and *Tories* were blended together; and when this light was thrown upon the business, the people soon saw through the mist of faction, by which they had been kept in utter darkness. This mode of proceeding, of course, drew down upon me the maledictions of both factions; nor was this all, for they joined heartily in misrepresenting me, and fabricating every species of calumny against me. There was no falsehood too gross to serve their turn. They seem to have acted on the old rascally maxim, of throwing as much dirt as possible, in the presumption that *some* of it will stick. Perhaps, since the invention of printing, no man had ever

been so grossly attacked and belied as I was, by the whole of the public press; with the exception of Mr. Cobbett, who stood manfully by me. I do not know a single public newspaper in the kingdom that did not vilify me, and labour in all ways to sully my character, and to depreciate my exertions. The liberal and enlightened editor of the *Examiner*, took the lead in making these attacks upon me, and professed to be desperately alarmed, lest the public should imagine that he was the vulgar candidate for Bristol, of the name of *Hunt*. He not only disclaimed all connection with me, or even knowledge of me, but he professed to lament, as a misfortune, that *his* name was "Hunt." This being the subject of conversation one night, when Sir Francis Burdett and some other friends were spending the evening with Mr. Cobbett, in Newgate; the Baronet, speaking of this foul abuse from Mr. Leigh Hunt, said "that the editor of the *Examiner* was not worthy to wipe the shoes of his friend Hunt." This was what I was afterwards told by those who were present. Nothing, indeed, could be more unfair than the conduct of Mr. Leigh Hunt upon this occasion, because he was not writing from his own knowledge, nor from the knowledge of any one that he could rely upon; but all his information must have been derived from the venal press; and to be sure, I was bespattered and misrepresented as much by the opposition press, as I was by that of the ministerial hacks. I freely forgive Mr. Hunt, however, as I have no doubt that he was imposed upon, in fact, he has long, long since, honourably done me ample justice, and made amends for his former attacks and mis-statements.

After the election was over, I returned by the way of Botley, in Hampshire, on purpose to pay a visit to my friend Cobbett, who had just been liberated from Newgate, after having been imprisoned there for *two years*, if it might be called imprisonment, though I can scarcely call it imprisonment, when compared to my incarceration in this infamous bastille. I do not hesitate to say, that one month's imprisonment in this gaol, is a greater punishment than one year's imprisonment in Newgate; and that I have suffered many more privations during the FORTY DAYS Of my solitary confinement here, than Mr. Cobbett suffered during the whole of the two years that he was in Newgate. As I have before said, his sentence was not much more than living two years in London in lodgings. To be sure, he paid dear for that accommodation, but actually little more than he would have paid for ready furnished lodgings, of equal goodness, in any other part of London. He would have paid just as much for good lodgings upon Ludgate-Hill; and his lodgings in Mr. Newman's house were equal, if not superior, to any on Ludgate-Hill. All his friends had free access to him, from eight o'clock in the morning till ten at night, and his family remained with him night and day. As I visited him a great deal, I know how well he was at all times accommodated. When I knocked at Mr. Newman's door, and asked for Mr. Cobbett, I was received with attention by the servant, and introduced immediately; in fact, the reception given by Mr. Newman's servants to Mr. Cobbett's visitors, was much more respectful, and more attentive and accommodating, than they ever experienced from the servants of Mr. Cobbett at his own house; at least it always struck me so, as my friend Cobbett's servants were not always the best mannered in the world, I mean his domestic servants, those who were not under his management altogether, but under the direction and management of the female part of his family. In truth, I do not remember ever going to Mr. Cobbett's house twice following, without seeing new faces, or rather new maid servants. Mrs. Cobbett was, what was called amongst the gossips, very *unfortunate* in getting maid servants; they seldom suited long together. But not so with Mr. Cobbett; it was quite the reverse with him: his servants about his farms always lived as long with him as they conducted themselves with propriety; he was, indeed, what is called very lucky the choice of his servants. For years and years, and years together, when I went to visit him, I found the same faces, the same well-known names. The same tenant occupied the same cottage; the same carter drove the same team; the same ploughman held the same plough; the same thrasher occupied the same barn; and the same shepherd attended the flock. The names of Dean, Jurd, Coward, and Hurcot, and many others, were for a number of years, as familiar to me as the names of my own servants. The editors of the venal hireling press, and the enemies of Mr. Cobbett's political writings, have always represented him as a bad master, and as being capricious, cruel, and tyrannical amongst his servants and poorer neighbours; and by means of as foul a conspiracy against him as ever disgraced the age in which we live, or as ever disgraced the courts of justice in any country. The calumny about *Jesse Burgess* was propagated from one end of the land to the other, by the whole venal press of the kingdom, sanctioned by the dastardly conduct of the hireling barristers of the day, particularly by the infamous conduct of Mr. Counsellor, now Judge Burrough. The whole of this was a base, fraudulent, and infamous transaction. Mr. Cobbett has behaved very ill to me ever since his return from America; his desertion of me at a time of danger and difficulty, and his neglecting to aid me with his pen, in the herculean task which I have had to perform in this bastille, must to every liberal mind appear unpardonable. Such a struggle, and made by a prisoner under such circumstances too, to detect, expose, and punish fraud, cruelty, tyranny, and lust, perpetrated within the walls of an English gaol, surely deserved the assistance of every enemy of oppression.—Mr. Cobbett having failed to render me the slightest assistance, and by his silence having even done every thing that lay in his power to counteract my exertions, and to encourage my cowardly and vindictive enemies to destroy me, it will not be imagined that I shall write with any degree of undue partiality towards him, or that I can be prejudiced so much in his favour as to exceed the bounds of truth. But I have a duty to perform to myself, and a duty to perform to the public, and no feeling of personal irritation on my part,

arising from neglect on his, shall induce me to withhold the truth. I most unequivocally and most solemnly declare, from my own personal knowledge, that Mr. Cobbett was one of the *kindest*, the *best*, and the *most considerate masters*, that I ever knew in my life. His servants were indeed obliged to work for their wages, as it was their duty to do; but they always had an example of industry and sobriety set them by their master; they were always treated with the greatest kindness by him; they were well paid and well treated in every respect; and the best proof, if any were wanting, after what I have said, that they were well satisfied with their employer, is, that they all lived with him for very long periods, and that those who left his service did so not in consequence of any dislike to their MASTER, and were always anxious to return to him.

While on the subject of servants, I may be allowed to say a word respecting myself: I was never accused, even by the venal hirelings of the press, of being a bad master; but, on the contrary, I was always proverbial for being a good one. The fact that I was so, is abundantly proved by one circumstance. When I left my farm in Wiltshire, and went to reside at Rowfant, in Sussex, my old servants followed me there, a distance of nearly one hundred miles, so that in Sussex I had the same servants, the whole time I remained there, that had lived with me and my father for, from ten to thirty years before; they all followed me into Sussex at their own risk, and they remained with me as long as I lived in that county; and when I left it to go into Hampshire, they also all left it, and accompanied me. This is the best evidence that can be given of my being a good master; yet I have no hesitation in saying, that there never was a better master living than Mr. Cobbett. I was, however, *more fortunate* than he was in my domestic servants; for in twenty years I have only had three cooks, three housemaids, and three men servants, each of them having lived seven years, and none of them having left us till they married and settled; and, thank God, it is a great satisfaction they have all done well, improved their situation in life, and got up in the world. The man servant and two maid servants, whom I have now remaining with me, to take care of my cottage, have lived with me, I think it is now nearly eight years.

During the whole time that Mr. Cobbett was in Newgate, I was in the constant habit of visiting him; there was never a month, and seldom a fortnight passed, that I did not go to London to see him. Up to this period I had always received from Mrs. Cobbett the greatest civility and attention, in return for my attention to her husband. I was never an evening in London but I passed it with my friend who was in prison, and very delightful and rational parties we used to have in Mr. Cobbett's apartments; these parties consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Cobbett, Sir Francis Burdett, Col. Wardle, Major Cartwright, Major Worthington, Mr. Peter Walker, Mr. Samuel Millar, and a few other select friends, all staunch assertors of the cause of Liberty. I will relate two circumstances which occurred at these meetings, because I have always considered them to have had a very important share in creating the political hostility that has since existed between Sir F. Burdett and myself, and to have ultimately led to that coolness which has been so visible in the conduct of Mr. Cobbett towards me, during the last two years. There is no breach of confidence in my mentioning them, and the narrative will shew by what trifles important results may be produced. One evening, Sir Francis and Mr. Cobbett were speaking in very warm terms of my exertions in procuring a Requisition which led to the first County Meeting held at Wells, in Somersetshire; and the former was giving me great credit for having roused such a large, long, dormant county, and for having made such a favourable impression upon the Free-holders, in the cause of Reform. With the intention of putting an end to such overwhelming praise bestowed on me to my face, I replied, that I was a zealous and devoted political disciple of the Baronet, that I would continue to follow his praiseworthy example, and never would desert the cause in which we were embarked. "But," said I, "remember, Sir Francis, that at the same time that I promise you never to withdraw my zealous and faithful support to those principles which you advocate, and of the partizans of which principles you are deservedly the leader; yet, if ever you should *stand still*, so far from promising you, that I also shall *halt*, I assure you that nothing shall deter me from proceeding; then, and only then, shall I leave you." What induced me to utter this speech, I cannot tell; I certainly had not the slightest opinion or suspicion that the Baronet would ever *stand still*. It was the farthest thing in the world from my intention to say any thing to create surmises, or to give the slightest offence. My words were merely a sort of involuntary, random-shot effusion of the heart, meant only to evince my sincerity, and to silence the praises which were bestowed upon me to my face. It certainly had the latter effect; it immediately put a stop to the conversation altogether. I saw that I had unintentionally committed a blunder; I saw, or thought that I saw, Mr. Cobbett look at me with a most inquiring eye, endeavouring to discover whether my words were meant to convey an impression that I really suspected that the Baronet would ever *stand still*. God is my witness, I had not at the time the slightest idea of the sort; for Sir Francis Burdett, in his professions and conversation, if not in his actions, always appeared to desire for the people the full extent of that liberty for which I was contending, namely, the representation of the whole of them in the House of Commons. Sir Francis Burdett drew up instantly, and I perceived that I had, without meaning it, cast a damp upon the cheerfulness that had previously prevailed. There was, however, no room for explanation. I looked grave myself, and my mind was occupied with such thoughts as had never obtruded themselves before; not created by what I had said, but by the

impression which it appeared to have made upon my hearers. Whether it was imagination, or whether there was any just ground for it, I do not know, but I always fancied, from that time forward, that the Baronet was not so familiar as he was before; and, although we continued upon the best of terms, that he manifested a degree of reserve that I had never previously observed.

The other blunder which I made was as follows:—one evening, when there was a large party, and Mr. Cobbett had been keeping us in a roar of laughter by his wit and vivacity, the very life and soul of the company, which he always was when he chose, all at once, in the midst of our mirth, he exclaimed, addressing himself to me, "Hunt, I have a *particular* favour to ask of you; will you promise to grant it me?" This was said with great earnestness, and with peculiar emphasis. I replied, "if it is any thing in reason and within my power, I will; but let me know what it is, and I have no doubt that I shall gratify your wish." He urged me again and again to promise him before-hand—all eyes were fixed upon me, and Mrs. Cobbett appeared by her looks to desire that I should comply with her husband's request, evidently indeed shewing that she anticipated what it was he wished me to promise him. This earnestness made me press him to explain, and at the same time I repeated my assurance that I would comply with his wish, if within my power. I own I expected that he was about to get me to promise him, in the presence of our mutual friends, that I would accomplish something of importance; as he knew if I once gave my word, that nothing would deter me from endeavouring to carry my promise into effect. Expectation was upon the tiptoe, every one seeming anxious to know what was the object of such a serious and almost solemn request. "Well," said he, "*promise me then that you will never wear white breeches again!*" Every one appeared thunder-struck, that the mountain had brought forth such a mouse. I had on a clean pair of *white cord breeches*, and a neat pair of top boots, a fashionable, and a favourite dress of mine at that time. There was a general laugh, and as soon as this subsided, all were curious to hear my answer. It was briefly this: "I certainly will, upon one condition." "What is that?"—"Why, that you will promise me never to wear *dirty breeches* again." Cobbett at the time had on a remarkably dirty pair of old drab kerseymere breeches. The laugh was now turned against my friend, and I instantly felt sorry for the *repartee*. I saw that my friend was hurt. He thought it unkind, and dropped his under lip. Mrs. Cobbett's eyes flashed the fire of indignation, and she was never civil to one afterwards. Nothing could be farther from my intention than to hurt the feelings of my friend; it was an ill-natured and thoughtless, although a just retaliation. At all events I was very sorry for it, and it called to my recollection an old saying, which was very commonly used by my father, "a fool's bolt is soon shot."

In consequence of Mr. Cobbett having given me the support of his able pen previous to the Bristol election, every exertion was made to induce him not to write upon that occasion in my favour. On the day that I was going down to Bristol, I was sitting with Mr. Cobbett, in his room in Mr. Newman's house, in Newgate, and consulting with him about the best plan of operation, when a gentleman was introduced; he was a stranger to me, and Mr. Cobbett rose hastily, and said, "walk this way, my Lord," and instantly took him into the next room. After having remained with him some time, and then sent him down the back stairs. He returned to me, laughing, and informed me that it was Lord F——c, who had been endeavouring to prevail upon him not to support me for Bristol, but to give his aid to Sir Samuel Romilly. The reader will, however, have seen by the letter, and the observations published in my last two numbers, selected from Mr. Cobbett's Register at that period, how little weight those attempts to injure me in his opinion had upon him. But my enemies took a more effectual course to injure me with Mr. Cobbett, by whispering calumny to those who were more ready to listen to it than he was; they assailed *Mrs. Cobbett*, and endeavoured to injure me in the estimation of my friend, by poisoning the ear of his wife. I may, perhaps, relate a few instances of this sort hereafter. But there was one act of baseness that ought to be, and shall be recorded, to enable the world to form a proper judgment of the villain who could be guilty of it. It occurred at the latter end of the year 1811 or at the beginning of the year 1812, at the time when there was such a desperate attempt made to impose upon the public, by endeavouring to persuade them that a one pound note and a shilling, were equivalent to a guinea, although the latter was selling in the market at the time for twenty-seven shillings.

As I have alluded to the paper system, I may as well, before I proceed to my promised story, mention one circumstance connected with it. To expose that system was always a favourite scheme with Mr. Cobbett, and he was now anxious to try the question with a country banker, to shew that, notwithstanding the Bank of England was protected against paying in specie, yet the country banks were liable to pay in gold. If you carried 50 l. to the Bank of England of their notes, scribbled over with the lying formula "I promise to pay," instead of giving cash for them, they only give you other paper of "I promise to pay," in exchange. If you carried 50 l. of country notes to the bank which had issued them, instead of giving you cash, they gave you Bank of England notes in exchange. Mr. Cobbett very much wished to have this question tried, and, at his request, I promised him that the first time I went into the country I would do it. Being at Bath soon afterwards, and having received, in payment of rent, some of Sir Benjamin Hobhouse's bank notes, I took my tenant with me to the Bank, and tendered twenty-six pounds worth of their notes, for which I demanded cash in payment. They refused to give it,



and tendered in return twenty-six pounds in Bank of England paper. This I declined to receive, and persisted in my demand for cash. One of the partners was called; and, upon my peremptorily demanding payment in coin, he as peremptorily refused to pay it, and once more offered me Bank of England paper. This I again declined to take, assuring him, that if he did not pay me the amount in cash, I would bring an action against him for the debt, and compel him to do so. This then he treated with great levity, and I left his shop and the twenty-six pounds of bank notes together. I immediately went to an attorney in Bath, and instructed him to bring an action against the firm of Hobhouse and Co. for a debt of twenty-six pounds, to which I offered to make an affidavit. When I explained the circumstance, the Bath attorney declared that he would not act. I then applied to my own attorney in London, who politely declined the honour of conducting such a suit, as he very honestly said, that if he did conduct it, he must never expect to have another bill discounted, or any accommodation from one of these formidable country bankers. At length, after some difficulty, Mr. Cobbett procured me an attorney in London, who commenced an action against the firm of Hobhouse and Co.

I will now proceed to my story, which is, indeed, connected in some degree with what I have just related. While I was in the country, at Glastonbury, I let several little odd lots of land by auction, specifying that those who might become tenants should find security for payment of the rent. Mr. John Haine, a perfect stranger to me, took the manor-house, orchard, and the fishery within the manor, for thirty-six pounds a-year, for three years. The next morning, when he came to sign and complete his contract, I told him, that, as he was a stranger to me, and as I had great trouble in collecting my rents, I must require him to give security for the payment of the rent. Mr. Haine, who was a man of considerable property, felt very indignant at this proposition, and certainly expressed his indignation in no very equivocal terms. In the course of some rather warm conversation, I told him, that I should expect he would pay the rent in cash, if he were called upon to do so. He contended that I could not compel him to do that; however, to shew me that he was a man of property, and to get rid of all difficulty about finding security for the payment of the rent, he pulled out of his pocket several hundred pounds in bank notes, and offered to pay me down the three years' rent, amounting to one hundred and eight pounds, which money he tendered to me upon the table, saying, that it was no difference to him, and that it would at once save trouble and the expense of drawing up any agreement or lease, as I should have nothing to do but to give him a receipt. At first I declined to do this, but a person who was with me suggested, that, if I allowed Mr. Haine five per cent. for the money, nothing could be more equitable on both sides. This was at once assented to; I threw my tenant back five per cent. and gave him a receipt for the three years' rent; we had, therefore, no occasion for any settlement till the three years were expired, when we renewed the agreement, and never had a word of dispute as to the rent afterward.

This, however, led to the following misrepresentation, by one of those persons who had been very pressing to induce Mr. Cobbett not to write in my favour on my becoming a candidate for Bristol, but to support the cause of Sir Samuel Romilly. This man, one William Adams, a currier, of Drury Lane, one of the pillars of the Westminster Rump, had frequently been traducing me to Mr. Cobbett, who always dared him to the proof of any of the calumnies that he urged against me; and, in order to get rid of the fellow's impudent and malignant representations, told him plainly, that he should not be prejudiced against me without proof. "But," added he, "Adams, I promise you, that if you will bring me proof that Mr. Hunt has ever been guilty of a dishonest or dishonourable act, I will give him up instantly, and will have no more to do with him: but, till you do this, I beg you will refrain from all your little tittle-tattle about his wife, of whom you appear to know nothing."

Adams took his departure, but called again some time after, saying, that he had been to Bristol fair, and he now could substantiate, upon unquestionable authority, that I had been guilty of a most flagrant act of dishonesty to all my tenants at Glastonbury. "Well," said Cobbett, "let us hear what it is." Adams proceeded as follows:—"Mr. Hunt went down to Glastonbury, and under a threat of compelling all his tenants to pay their rent in specie, he induced them to advance him three years' rent, for which he gave them receipts. But, no sooner had they paid him their rent, than the mortgagee came, and made them all pay it over again, so that all his tenants were paying double rents." "Well," said Cobbett, "if this be true, it is a very dishonourable act; but, as I have ascertained that the last story you told me, about his having turned his wife out of doors to starve, without making her any allowance, is a fiction, or, to speak plainly, I have ascertained it to be a most scandalous and wicked falsehood, you must excuse me if I do not believe one word of this affair, about his tenants, till you bring me some better proof than your bare assertion." At length, Adams confessed that he was only told so by a person with whom he met at Bristol fair. The fact was, that Mr. Haine had related the circumstance at Bristol amongst his friends, just as it happened; Adams heard of it, and out of such slender materials, he manufactured as base and as unfounded a lie as ever defiled the lips of an inhabitant of Drury-Lane or St. Giles's. Mr. Cobbett saw at once through the villainy of this Mr. Currier Adams, and he always afterwards treated him; as he deserved, with merited contempt. This Adams is the person who, in the Court of King's Bench, upon the trial of "*Wright versus Cobbett*," for a libel, (if Wright's and the other reports are true,)

swore that he had several times assisted in turning Hunt out of the room at public meetings. This is a most bare-faced falsehood as ever was stated in a court of justice; and Mr. Cobbett, who knew that it was false, should have indicted the fellow for perjury. No human being ever laid hands upon me in the whole course of my life, to turn me out of a room, either public or private, with the exception of the ruffians who endeavoured to drive me and my friends out of the theatre at Manchester, in the year 1818. The very idea of Mr. Currier Adams ever attempting to do any such thing, is absolutely ludicrous. If the ruffian had said that he had often been hired to assail me at the Crown and Anchor meetings, for the purpose of preventing the truths that I delivered being heard there, he might have told the truth; but to swear that he or any of his gang had ever dared to lay hands on me, either at a public or a private meeting, is as arrant a falsehood as ever was uttered at the Old Bailey.

As I observed before, when the election was over at Bristol I returned to Rowfant, in Sussex, by the way of Botley, in Hampshire, to congratulate my friend upon his release from Newgate, and to talk over the election at Bristol. When I arrived there with my friend Davenport, Mr. Cobbett received us with that hearty welcome which he was accustomed to give; but the other part of the family behaved in the most rude, unhandsome, and disgusting manner, both to Mr. Davenport and myself. I shall not descend to particulars; but I am sure my friend Davenport will never forget it, as long as he lives. There is, however, no accounting for the conduct of some women. Mr. Cobbett was always, as far as I was capable of seeing, a kind and indulgent husband, as well as a most fond father, and this he carried even to a fault; and it now appeared very evident that he began to feel his error. But perhaps Socrates would never have proved himself so great a philosopher, if he had not been blessed with the little *rippings* of Xantippe.

I returned to Rowfant, where every thing had gone on pretty well in my absence, under the care of my brother and my old Wiltshire servants. The hay was all made, and the harvest was near at hand. I soon recovered from the excessive exertion which I had undergone at Bristol, an exertion, such as few men ever overcome, and in consequence of which, my family always said, I was seven years older. It is a fact, that my hair turned grey during the three weeks that I was at Bristol, and I have no doubt but it was occasioned by excessive mental and corporeal efforts. On our arrival at Rowfant we found the infamous letter, which was written from Bristol to my family, giving a detailed and sanctimonious account of my death. I have met with a great number of base scoundrels during my political life, but it was reserved for the gentlemen of Bristol to find among them a monster in human form, capable of committing so detestable and cowardly an act as that. The people of Bristol are proverbial for their bravery; witness the Belchers, Pierce, Neate, &c. but what is called the *gentry* of Bristol, with a very few exceptions, are the most mean, dastardly, selfish, and cowardly of their species. Burke's definition of a Bristol merchant is truly characteristic. "He has no church but the Exchange; no Bible but his ledger; and no God but his gold!!!" Burke stood a contested election for Bristol, and represented that city many years in Parliament, and he well knew the character of the dominant classes. I believe that this race of Bristolians are greatly degenerated since Burke's time. The people, the populace, are brave, generous, and humane; but the merchants and gentry, as they are called, are the most selfish, the most corrupt, the most vulgar, the most ignorant, the most illiberal, and the most time-serving race that are to be found in Europe. It is said that a Bristol man is known all over the world for his underhanded, tricking, overreaching, sharper-like dealing; he is described to be exactly the reverse of a Liverpool merchant; and it is added, (and the sarcasm is not too bitter) that you may know a Bristol merchant, by his always sleeping with one eye open. There are, of course, some very honourable exceptions, though I am compelled to say, that I met with very few instances of liberality, Christian charity, or even common honesty amongst them, while I was there. The Corporation is the richest in the world, perhaps, except London; while the freemen, whose property goes to enrich the said Corporation, are the very poorest freemen in the world. Queen Anne granted a charter to the city, by which the daughters of a freeman confer upon their husbands the right of voting at an election. Tradition says, that the Queen, when at Bristol, took notice that the women were so remarkably plain, that she conferred this boon upon them as a sort of dower; so that whoever marries the daughter of a freeman, is himself immediately entitled to the freedom of the city. So that the freedom of Bristol may be gained by birth, by marriage, or by servitude. While, however, I relate this circumstance, I do not mean to concur in the assertion, that the women of Bristol are proverbially ugly; on the contrary, some of them are very pretty; and I recollect that, when I was a young man, Bristol justly boasted of having given birth to one of the handsomest women of the age. Miss Clementina Atwood, who was a native of Bristol, was, at the period when I knew her, universally esteemed, and in my estimation was the most beautiful, elegant, and accomplished female in the British dominions. I remember riding from Enford to Bristol and back again, a distance of ninety-two miles, on the same day, only for the chance of passing a few hours in her society; and the worst of it was, that I was disappointed at last, as she had left Bristol for a few days, with her friend Miss Rigg, whose mother was just deceased. But I passed the day with her cousins, and returned home in the evening.

I now directed my attention towards the management of my farm, with as much zeal as I had recently

directed it to the concerns of the election. My natural disposition, my taste, and my habits, all led me to the enjoyment of domestic comforts, in a rural sphere. I was always doatingly fond of the country, country pursuits, and a country life. The sports of the field—hunting, shooting, &c., to me afforded the most captivating delight. The pleasures of cultivating the soil, and attending to the growth and progress of the crops, can only be known to, and can only be estimated by, one who has a perfect knowledge of agricultural pursuits. Then, the domestic felicity enjoyed in a quiet, cheerful country house, surrounded by one's own family, and every now and then a good neighbour and sincere friend dropping in, has always been to me that sort of exquisite enjoyment which I could never find in any other situation, or in any other occupation. My natural taste is so domestic, that I should not wish, on my own account, ever to mingle in the busy haunts of man. I could freely remain in the country, and never enter a city or a town again. Nothing but a sense of public duty should ever induce me to sacrifice myself by residing in a town; and if I could once see my country free, and the people happy, and honestly represented, the greatest blessing I could wish for, would be, to pass uninterrupted, a tranquil old age in the country, far away from the harassing turmoil, danger, and misery of boisterous, unprofitable politics. But the man who would immolate the interest, the honour, the freedom, and the happiness of his country, to gratify his own love of ease and comfort, is unworthy the name of patriot. I can scarcely hope to be permitted to enjoy such unmixed bliss, such delightful tranquillity, during the remainder of that short race which I have to run in this sublunary world; neither shall I sigh and pine after that, which it appears fate has forbidden.

In the early part of this year 1812, there had been great riots in the North; great mischief was done at and near Nottingham, by the Luddites destroying knitting frames. On the 9th of January, a number of those Luddites were taken up at Nottingham, for breaking frames, and they showed a spirit of resistance, and had several skirmishes with the military. On the 16th of March, the Spanish constitution was settled by the Cortes, which Cortes abolished the Inquisition in Spain, on the 20th of June. On the 9th of May, *Napoleon left Paris for Poland*, and entered upon that fatal campaign which ended in his ruin. The Senate met in Paris, and decreed extraordinary levies of soldiers, and an immense army was formed, to attempt the subjugation of Russia. Both Prussia and Austria had now signed treaties of alliance with France. A negotiation was entered into between France and Russia, but without success; and the latter power concluded treaties with England and Sweden. Having passed the Vistula, Napoleon declared war against Russia on the 22nd of June. The French then advanced, and entered Wilna on the 28th of June; upon which the Russians formed a plan of a gradual retreat, and the invaders pursued them towards the Russian frontiers. Many partial actions took place, and on the 17th of August, the Moscovites sustained a severe defeat at Smolensko, which city they set on fire before it was entered by the French. A second battle was fought at Viasma; but that at Borodino, on the 7th of September, was most decisive in favour of the French; when the Russians, having been completely routed, left open the road to Moscow, into which city Buonaparte entered on the 14th; Rostophin, the Russian Governor, having taken the dreadful resolution to have it set on fire in various quarters, previous to the entry of the French army. He accomplished his purpose by means of criminals, whom he employed under the promise of having their lives saved. It is said, that 30,000 Russians were burnt in this city, whose wounds rendered them incapable of escaping from this terrible conflagration. Half the city was destroyed before Napoleon and his troops entered, and the work of ruin was nearly completed before a stop could be put to the flames. Napoleon ordered the execution of all those that were detected in spreading and increasing the fire. This city being mostly built of wood, nothing could equal the dreadful ravages which the flames committed.

Calculating too confidently upon the character of the Emperor Alexander alone, which he knew well to be timid and indecisive, and anticipating that the moment he approached his capital, the Russian sovereign would sue for peace, in which case the French troops might take up their winter quarters in Moscow with perfect safety, Napoleon had pushed on to Moscow so late as the 14th of September, the time when a Russian winter was already approaching. In thus calculating upon the fears of his enemy, Napoleon was perfectly correct, and it was well known that Alexander would come himself, with open arms, as he had before done, to ask for terms of peace from Napoleon, the moment after the decisive battle of Brorodino, if he had not been prevented by his nobles. It was by his not taking the nobles into the account that the French Emperor failed in his calculations. It is confidently said, and I can readily believe the fact, that Alexander was threatened with sharing a similar fate to that which was inflicted upon his *Father Paul*, if he offered to make any terms with Napoleon; these nobles having determined to burn riot only Moscow, but, if necessary, Petersburg itself, and three-fourths of the inhabitants, in order to harass and destroy the French army by the frost, as they well knew that they could not conquer it by arms.

I will now leave Napoleon amidst the ruins of Moscow, and return to what was passing in the southern parts of Europe; and if I dwell a considerable time on the events of this year, my readers must recollect that it was the most interesting period in the history of the world, and that more important events occurred in this year than in any other that I have recorded.

In England, the manufacturing population began to suffer the greatest distresses, and consequently rioting and Ludditism were the order of the day. Great and destructive riots occurred at Macclesfield, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, and various towns in the North: the people were ignorant of the cause of their distresses, and they wreaked their vengeance upon the knitting frames, machinery in general, and destroyed the property of their employers. These excesses they were, no doubt, led to in consequence of the delusions and deception practised upon them by the venal hirelings of the public press, under the influence and controul of the Government. Every particle of the real liberty of the press was nearly destroyed; almost every liberal writer in the kingdom had been prosecuted by the *ex-officio* informations of the vindictive and remorseless tyrant, Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Attorney-General, encouraged by the equally cruel and remorseless Chancellor of the Exchequer, Spencer Perceval. Mr. Cobbett, Messrs. Hunts, of the *Examiner*, Mr. Drakard, of the *Stamford News*, Mr. Peter Finnerty, and other literary characters, were incarcerated in the dungeons of the borough-mongers. Under this system eight persons were executed at Manchester for rioting, and many others suffered death in various parts of the country.

While Napoleon in person had been successful in every battle that he fought, and had penetrated even to the Russian capital, his Generals in the south had been much less successful, probably in consequence of the main energies of the empire being directed to the great object of subduing the powerful Autocrat. The French armies in Spain sustained several signal defeats. Ballasteros defeated the French, and the grand combined army, under Wellington, stormed Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos. This army also took Salamanca on the 16th of June. On the 1st of July it was ascertained that the number of prisoners of war in England was 54,517. Another battle was fought at Salamanca, on the 23d of July, when the French were again defeated by Wellington's army. On the 11th of August, Lord Wellington entered Madrid, and on the following day the French evacuated Bilboa. On the 19th of August, Soult abandoned the siege of Cadiz, and on the 27th Seville was taken by the combined army of English and Spaniards. It is necessary to record the fact, that during the whole of the war in Spain, whenever the French obtained possession of a place, the inquisition was abolished; whenever the English got possession, the inquisition was restored with all its terrors, until at length the Cortes formally caused it to be abolished, in the latter end of June, in this year. While these things were going on abroad, an event occurred at home that caused a great political sensation throughout the whole kingdom. On the 11th of May, Mr. Spencer Perceval, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was shot in the lobby of the House of Commons, by Mr. John Bellingham. It is an extraordinary coincidence, that Mr. Perceval should thus come by his death, at the threshold of the House of Commons, on the anniversary of the ever-memorable day on which Mr. Maddocks made his motion, in the House of Commons, charging him and Lord Castlereagh with having been concerned in trafficking for the seat of Mr. Quintin Dick, in Parliament, into the grounds of which motion the Honourable House refused to inquire. Bellingham never attempted to make his escape, which he might easily have done in the confusion which the event created. After the consternation had a little subsided, some one present, who had been brought out of the House by the report of the pistol, inquired who was the murderer? Bellingham replied, "I am the man that killed Mr. Perceval;" upon which he was seized and searched, and another pistol loaded was found in his pocket. He was then taken into the House of Commons, and being examined, he admitted the fact, adding, "I have been denied the redress of my grievances by Government; I have been ill-treated, I sought redress in vain, and I feel sufficient justification for what I have done." The fact was, that Mr. Bellingham was a merchant of Liverpool, and had, while in Russia, been wrongfully accused and thrown into prison by the Governor-General. He applied to the English Consul, Lord Leveson Gower, for redress, but his application was fruitless. He had suffered great pecuniary losses in consequence, and when he returned to England, he laid his case before the Government, who at first treated his application with neglect, and ultimately refused to grant him any redress, or to inquire into the cause of his complaint. He was then induced to draw up a petition to be presented to Parliament; but he was informed, that it was necessary to obtain the consent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, before his petition could be received, as it prayed for pecuniary remuneration. He applied in vain; and, in his own words upon his trial, "he was bandied about from one Minister to another," till he became desperate. He then wrote a letter to the Magistrates at Bow-street, to inform them, that unless his case was inquired into, "*he should feel justified in executing justice himself.*" "Justice, and justice only," said he, "was my object, which Government had uniformly denied me, and the distress it reduced me to, drove me to despair. In consequence, and purely for the purpose of having this affair legally investigated, I gave notice at the Public-Office, at Bow-street, requesting the Magistrates to acquaint his Majesty's Ministers, that, if they persisted in refusing justice, or even to permit me to bring my just petition into Parliament for redress, *I should be under the imperious necessity of executing justice myself?* At length I was told, by a Mr. Hill, at the Treasury, that he thought it would be useless for me to make further application to the Government, and that I was at full liberty *to take what measures I thought proper for redress.* Mr. Beckett, the Under Secretary of State, confirmed the same, adding, that *Mr. Perceval had been consulted, and could not allow my petition to come forward.* Thus a direct refusal of justice, with a *carte blanche* to act in whatever manner I thought proper, were the sole causes of the fatal catastrophe; *and they have now to reflect upon their own*

*impure conduct for what has happened.*" Mr. Bellingham was found guilty and sentenced to death, and was executed in the front of Newgate, on the Monday following. Previously to his being taken upon the scaffold, one of the Sheriffs put some very impertinent and unfeeling questions to him, which he answered with great coolness and dignity. In fact, from the time of his committing the deed, he conducted himself with the greatest calmness and courage; he made a most eloquent defence, always acknowledged the fact, but vindicated it to the very last moment of his existence. No man was treated with greater neglect, no one endeavoured more to gain a hearing and a fair inquiry into his case; but, alas! justice was denied him; and injustice will drive the soundest mind to acts of desperation. His answer to a most unfeeling and impertinent question of one of the Sheriffs was,—"I bore no resentment to Mr. Perceval as a man—and as a man I am sorry for his fate. I was referred from Minister to Minister, from office to office, and at length refused all redress for my grievances. It was my own sufferings that caused the melancholy event; and I hope it will be a warning to future Ministers to attend to the applications and prayers of those who suffer from oppression. Had my petition been brought into Parliament, this catastrophe would not have happened." SHERIFF—"I hope you feel deep contrition for the deed?" Upon which the prisoner drew up, and said, with a severe firmness, "I hope, Sir, I feel as a man ought to feel." After the cap had been drawn over his face, at the moment when he was going out of the world, his ears were saluted with "God bless you! God Almighty bless you!" issuing from the lips of thousands. He met his fate with the greatest fortitude and resignation, and left the world apparently with an unchangeable impression that he had only committed an imperious act of necessity, an act of justice. I am one of those who will never assent to the justice of taking away the life of man in cold blood, upon any other principle than that of law, and laws made, too, by *universal consent*. A man put to death in cold blood, deliberately executed, in pursuance of any law that is not made by *common consent*, that is, by the *assent* of the *whole community*, I shall always hold to be murdered; this consideration alone is quite sufficient to justify the demand for universal suffrage. If the laws had been made by persons chosen by the whole people, Mr. Perceval would not have been shot; it was the want of an honest House of Commons that made Mr. Perceval a tyrant; it was the protection that he was sure of receiving, from a corrupt majority of a corrupt and packed House of Commons, that induced him to persevere in denying justice to Mr. Bellingham; and if ever a man received the reward of his own injustice, it was Mr. Perceval. I repeat, that I by no means defend assassination; but in examining an act we must be careful to inquire whether some palliation of it may not be found in the motive by which it is prompted. This was an extreme case; Bellingham had been grievously oppressed, he could not obtain justice from the Government; he could not even make his case known in any way except by means of a petition to Parliament; and, as he had asked for remuneration for his losses, his petition could not, according to a rule of the House, be presented without the consent of the Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the end of eighteen months of hope and fear and agony, Mr. Bellingham found that the consent of Mr. Perceval was positively refused; he was driven to despair, and he shot him. It may not be amiss to say a few words here respecting Mr. Perceval. He had become, most unexpectedly, Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was a lawyer, and had been hired as the advocate of the Princess of Wales. During the "delicate investigation," he had not only made himself master of all her secrets, but, it is said, had also obtained the knowledge of all the private history of the Royal Family, particularly of the Prince of Wales. When the "delicate investigation" was closed, and the Commissioners had acquitted the Princess of all the charges brought against her, the *Morning Post* announced that two gentlemen of the Bar had been employed by the Princess, to draw up a report of the matter, which would *speedily* be published. The fact is, that Mr. Perceval did print this book, but he suppressed it, and became Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury. If he did not betray his mistress, the Princess of Wales, which is doubtful, there can be no doubt that he at least deserted her for place and power. All his family and political connections, of course, lamented his death; but it cannot be disguised that the people were far differently affected by it, and, in many parts of the kingdom, they openly testified their feeling by acts of public rejoicing. There was a woeful howling set up by the writers of the Ministerial press, about the great loss of Mr. Perceval, on account of his being such an excellent husband. According to the statement of these hirelings, there was not such another husband in the kingdom; and a very large pension was in consequence settled upon his wife; it being urged in the House of Commons, that, as the loss sustained by Mrs. Perceval was not only irreparable, but beyond all precedent, that loss ought to be made up to her in the magnitude of her pension—an argument worthy of the sound sense and honourable principles of those by whom it was urged. The best answer, however, to these hypocritical pleadings, was given by Mrs. Perceval herself; for, in a very few months after the decease of that best of all possible husbands, that nonpareil of married males; yes, in a few short months after her irreparable loss, his disconsolate widow concealed herself in the arms of another and a younger husband!

I had not long returned from Bristol before I repaired to London, and formally presented a petition to the House of Commons, against the return of Richard Hart Davis, Esq., as Member for Bristol. The petition charged him with bribery, intimidation, and the introduction of a military force during the election, contrary to the statute law of the land. I also entered into the proper recognizances, and gave security for trying the merits of the election, before a committee of the House of Commons.

In the mean time Mr. Cobbett published a second letter, as follows:—  
TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF BRISTOL.

Gentlemen,—If I have not to congratulate you upon the return of Mr. Hunt as your representative, I may well congratulate you upon the spirit which you have shown during the election, and upon the prospect of final success from the exertion of a similar spirit. That another contest will take place in a few months, there can be no doubt; for, the law allows of no exceptions with regard to the use of soldiers. The ancient common law of England forbade not only the use, but the very *show* of force of any kind, at elections; and, the Act of Parliament, made in the reign of King George the Second, is quite positive as to a case like yours. That Act, after stating the principle of the Common Law as to soldiers in an election town, says, that, when an election is about to take place in any city or borough, wherein there are any soldiers stationed or quartered, the soldiers shall be removed out of the said city or borough; that they shall go out one day, at least, before the poll begins; that they shall not return till one day, at least, after the poll has closed; that the distance to which they shall be removed, shall be two miles at least. There are a few exceptions, such as Westminster or any other place where the Royal Family may be, who are to have their guards about them whether there be an election going on or not; and also, in case of fortified towns, where, though there be an election going on, soldiers are to remain in sufficient number to take care of the works.

Now, then, as Bristol is neither a place of residence of the Royal Family, nor a fortified town, it is clear, that, if soldiers have been suffered to remain in, or to return to, your city within the periods above described, the election must be void; or, there is, at once, an end to the abovementioned Act of Parliament, and also to the ancient common law of England in this respect, and the very show of freedom of election is gone. It has not only been stated to me from the best authority; but, it has been stated in print by your well-known enemies, that soldiers were not only brought within the precincts of your city, during the time that the poll was open, but that they actually were stationed, with bayonets fixed, in the very Guildhall; and, in short, after the first or second day of the election, the city was, under the control of military armed men.

This being the case, there can be no doubt of the election being declared void; or, if it be not, there will, at any rate, be no disguise; it will become *openly declared*, that soldiers, under the command of men appointed by the King, and removeable at his sole will, can be, at any time, brought into a place where an election is going on, and can be stationed in the very building where the poll is taken. Whether, amongst the other strange things of our day, we are doomed to witness this, is more than I can say; but, at the least, it will be something *decisive*; something that will speak a *plain language*; something that will tend to fashion men's minds to what is to come. But, I have heard it asked: "would you, then, in *no case*, have soldiers called in during an election? Would you rather see a city *burnt down*?" Aye would I, and to the very ground; and, rather than belong to a city where soldiers were to be brought in to assist at elections, I would expire myself in the midst of the flames, or, at least, it would be my duty so to do, though I might fail in the courage to perform it. But, why should a city be *burnt down*, unless protected by *soldiers*? Why suppose any such case? Really, to hear some men talk now-a-days, one would be almost tempted to think that they look upon soldiers as necessary to our very existence; or, at the least, that they are necessary to keep us in order, and that the people of England, so famed for their good sense, for their public spirit, and their obedience to the laws, are now a set of brutes, to be governed only by force. If there are men who think thus of the people of England, let them *speak out*; and then we shall know them. But, Gentlemen, it is curious enough, that the very persons, who, upon all occasions, are speaking of the people of England as being so happy, so contented, so much attached to their government, are the persons who represent soldiers as absolutely necessary to *keep this same people in order!*

To hear these men talk, one would suppose, that soldiers, as the means of keeping the peace, had always made a part of our government; and, that, as to elections, there always may have been cases when the calling in of soldiers was necessary. But, the fact is, that soldiers were wholly unknown to the ancient law of England; and, that, as to an *army*, there never was any thing of an army *established* in England till within a hundred years. How was the peace *kept then*? How were riots suppressed in those times? We do not hear of any cities having been burnt at elections in those days. I will not cite the example of America, where there are elections going on every year, and where every man who pays a sixpence tax has a vote, and yet where there is not a single soldier in the space of hundreds and thousands of miles; I will not ask how the peace is kept in that country; I will not send our opponents across the Atlantic; I will confine myself to England; and, again I ask, *how the peace was kept in the times when there were no soldiers in England?* I put this question to the friends of Corruption; I put this question to Mr. Mills, of the Bristol Gazette, whose paper applauds the act of introducing the troops, This is my question: how was the peace kept at elections, how were towns and cities preserved, how was the city of Bristol saved from destruction, *in those days when there were no soldiers in England?* I put this question to the apostles of tyranny and despotic sway; and, Gentlemen, we may wait

long enough, I believe, before they will venture upon an answer.

I have heard it asked: "What! would you, then, make an election void, because soldiers were introduced, though one of the candidates would have been killed, perhaps, without the protection of the bayonet? Would you thus set an election aside, when it might be evident, that, without the aid of soldiers, the man who has been elected, would not, and could not, have been elected, on account of the violence exercised against him? If that be the case, there is nothing to do but to excite great popular violence against a man; for, that being done, you either drive him and his supporters from the polling place, or, if he call in soldiers, you make his election void." This has a little plausibility in it; but, as you will see, it will not stand the test of examination. Here is a talk about exciting of violent proceedings; here is a talk about burning the city: but, *who*, Gentlemen, were to be guilty of these violent proceedings? *who* were to burn the city? Not the horses or dogs of Bristol; not any banditti from a foreign land; not any pirates who had chanced to land upon the coast. No, no; but "the *rabble*, the *mob*;" and *what* were they? Were they a species of monsters, unknown to our ancient laws and to the Act of George the Second? Or were they men and women? If the latter, they were, in fact, *people of Bristol*; and, the truth is, that if the people of Bristol abhorred a man to such a degree that it was unsafe for him or his advocates to appear on the hustings, or in the streets; if this was the case, it was improper that that man should be elected, since it must be clear, that, if elected, he must owe his election to undue, if not corrupt, influence. What! and do the advocates of corruption suppose, that our law-makers had not this in their view? Is it to be imagined, that they did not foresee, and, indeed, that they had not frequently seen, that elections produced fierce and bloody battles? They knew it well, and so did the legislators in America; but, still they allowed of no use of soldiers. They reasoned thus, or, at least, thus they would have reasoned, if any one had talked to them of soldiers: 'No; we will have no soldiers. The magistrate has full power to keep the peace at all times, not excepting times of election, when assaults and slanders are no more permitted by law than at any other time. The magistrate has all the constables and other inferior peace officers at his command: he can, if he find it necessary, add to the number of these at his pleasure; and, if the emergency be such as not to allow time for this, he can, by his sole authority, and by virtue of his commission, which is at all times effective, call upon the whole of the people to *aid and assist* him in the execution of his duty, and for refusing to do which any man is liable to punishment. Having endued the magistrate with these powers; having given him a chosen band of sworn officers, armed with staves; having given him unlimited power to add to that band; having given him, in case of emergency, the power of commanding every man, of whatever age or degree, to aid and assist him in the execution of his duty; having thus armed the magistrate, how can we suppose him to stand in need of the aid of *soldiers*, without first supposing the country in a state of rebellion, in which case it is nonsense to talk about *elections*. To tell us about the *popular prejudices* excited against a candidate, is to tell us of an insufficient cause even for the calling out of the possé; but, if this prejudice be so very strong, so very general, and so deeply rooted, that the magistrate, with all his ordinary and special constables, and his power to call upon the *whole of the people* to aid and assist, is unable to protect him from violence, or, is unable to preserve the city against the rage excited by his presence and pretensions; if there be a prejudice like this against a candidate, we are sure that it would be an insult to the common sense of mankind to call such a man, if elected, the *representative* of that city; and, therefore, we will make no new law for favouring the election of such a man.' Such, Gentlemen, would have been the reasoning of our ancestors, such would have been the reasoning of the legislators of America, if they had been called upon to make a law for the introduction of *soldiers at an election*; which, let the circumstances of the case be what they may, and let the sophistry of the advocates of corruption be what it may, is, after all, neither more nor less than the forcing of the people to suffer one candidate to be elected and another to be set aside. The soldiers do, in fact, decide the contest, and cause the return of the sitting member; unless it be acknowledged, that his election *could have been effected without them*; and, then, *where is the justification for calling them in?* I have heard of nobody who has attempted to anticipate any other decision than that of a void election; and, indeed, who will dare to anticipate any other? For, if the return be allowed to stand good in favour of Hart Davis, does any man pretend that there can ever exist a case in which soldiers may not be brought in? They are brought in under the pretence of quelling a *riot*; under the pretence of their being necessary to preserve the peace, and where is the place where this pretence may not be hatched? It is in any body's power to make a row and a fight during an election at Westminster, for instance; and, of course, according to the Bristol doctrine, it is in any body's power to give the magistrate cause for calling in soldiers, and for posting them even upon the very hustings of Covent Garden. In short, if Hart Davis, his return being petitioned against, be allowed to sit, we can never again expect to see a candidate of that description unsupported by soldiers; and, then, I repeat it, the very show, the mere semblance, of freedom of election will not exist.

It being, for these reasons, my opinion, that the return of Hart Davis will be set aside, and, of course, that another election for your city is at no great distance, I shall now take the liberty to offer you my advice as to the measures which you then ought to pursue; first adding to what I said in my last a few observations relative to Mr. Hunt.

At the close of my last letter I observed to you, that it was owing to this gentleman, and to him alone, that you had *an election*. You now know this well, You have now seen what it is to have at your head a man of principle and courage. With all the purses of almost all those in Bristol who have grown rich out of the taxes; with all the influence of all the corrupt; with all the Bristol newspapers and almost all the London newspapers; with all the Corporation of the City; with all the bigoted Clergy and all their next a-kin, the pettifogging Attorneys; with all the bigots, and all the hypocrites, and all alarmist fools; with all these against him, and with hundreds of bludgeon-men to boot; opposed to all this, and to thirty or forty hired barristers and attorneys, Mr. Hunt stood the poll for the thirteen days, in the face of horse and foot soldiers, and that, too, without the aid of advocate or attorney, and with no other assistance than what was rendered him by one single friend, who, at my suggestion, went down to him on the sixth or seventh day of the election. Gentlemen, this is, as I verily believe, what no other man in England, whom I know, would have done. There may be others capable of the same exertions; and, let us hope, that England does contain some other men able to undergo what he underwent; but, it falls to the lot of no country to produce *many* such men. At any rate, he has *proved* himself to be the man for you; he has done for you what none of the milk-sop, miawling orators at Sir Samuel Romilly's meetings would have dared even to think of. *They* talk of freeing the city from the trammels of corruption; *they* talk of giving you freedom of election; *they* talk of making a stand for your rights. What stand have they made? What have you had from them but talk? They saw the enemy within your walls; they saw him offer himself for the choice of the people of Bristol; they saw preparations making for chairing him as your representative on the first day of the election; and what did *they* do to rescue you from the disgrace of seeing him triumph over you, while you were silent? Nothing. They did, in fact, sell you to him upon the implied condition, that he, as far as he was able, should sell his followers to them when the time came. You have been saved from that disgrace; you have had 14 days of your lives wherein to tell your enemies and the enemies of your country your minds; you have had 14 days, during which corruption trembled under your bitter but just reproaches; you have had 14 days of political instruction and inquiry; you have had those who affect to listen to your voice 14 days before you, and in the hearing of that voice; there have been, in your city, 14 days of terror to the guilty part of it. This is a great deal, and for this you are indebted to Mr. Hunt and to him alone. Your own public virtues, your zeal, activity and courage, and your hatred of your country's enemies did, indeed, enable Mr. Hunt to make the stand; but, still there wanted such a man as Mr. Hunt; without such a man the stand could not have been made; without such a man you could not have had an opportunity of giving utterance to the hatred which you so justly feel against the supporters of that corruption, the consequences of which you so sorely feel.

That a man, who was giving such annoyance to the corrupt, should pass without being calumniated, was not to be expected. Every man, who attacks corruption, who makes war upon the vile herd that live upon the people's labour, every such man must lay his account with being calumniated; he must expect to be the object of the bitterest and most persevering malice; and, unless he has made up his mind to the enduring of this, he had better, at once, quit the field. One of the weapons which corruption employs against her adversaries is calumny, secret as well as open. It is truly surprising to see how many ways she has of annoying her foes, and the artifices to which she stoops to arrive at her end. No sooner does a man become in any degree formidable to her, than she sets to work against him in all the relationships of life. In his profession, his trade, his family; amongst his friends, the companions of his sports, his neighbours, and his servants. She eyes him all round, she feels him all over, and, if he has a vulnerable point, if he has a speck, however small, she is ready with her stab. How many hundreds of men have been ruined by her without being hardly able to perceive, much less name, the cause; and how many thousands, seeing the fate of these hundreds, have withdrawn from the struggle, or have been deterred from taking part in it!

Mr. Hunt's *separation from his wife* presented too fair a mark to be for a moment overlooked; but, it required the *canting crew*, with a Mr. Charles Elton at their head, to give to this fact that deformity which it has been made to receive. Gentlemen, I wish to be clearly understood here. I do not think lightly of such matters. When a man separates from his wife there must always be ground for regret; it is a thing always to be lamented; and, if the fault, in this case, was on the side of Mr. Hunt, it is a fault, which, even in our admiration of his public conduct, we ought by no means to endeavour to palliate. But, Gentlemen, I do not, and the public cannot, know what was the *real cause* of the separation of which so much has been said. Mr. Hunt has, upon no occasion that I have heard of, attempted to justify his conduct, in this respect, by stating the reasons of the separation; but, I am sure that you are too just to conclude from *that circumstance*, that the fault was wholly his. It is impossible for the public to know the facts of such a case. They cannot enter into a man's family affairs. The tempers and humours of wives and of husbands nobody but those wives and husbands know. They are, in many cases, unknown even to domestic servants and to children; and, is it not, then, the height of presumption for the public to pretend to any knowledge of the matter?

But, be the facts of the case what they may, I am quite sure, that as a candidate for a seat in



Parliament, they have nothing to do with the pretensions of Mr. Hunt, any more than they would have had to do with his claims to a title for having won the battle of Trafalgar. There is a Mr. Walker, who, I think, is an Attorney at Bristol, who has written a pamphlet against Mr. Hunt, in which pamphlet he argues thus: 'Mr. Hunt has, by quitting his wife to live with another woman, broken his plighted vows to his own wife; a man who will break his promises in one case will break them in another case; and, therefore, as Mr. Hunt has broken his promises to his wife, *he will break his promises to the people of Bristol.*' These are not Mr. Walker's words, but you have here his reasoning, and from it you may judge of the shifts to which Mr. Hunt's adversaries are driven. As well might Mr. Walker tell you that you will break any promise that you may make to your neighbours, because you have not wholly renounced the Devil and all his works, and all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, as you, in your baptism, promised and vowed to do. If Mr. Walker's argument were a good one, a man who lives in a state of separation from his wife ought to be regarded as a man dead in law; or, rather, as a man excommunicated by the Pope. If his promises are good for nothing when made to electors, they are good for nothing when made to any body else. He cannot, therefore, be a proper man for any body to deal with, or to have any communication with; and, in short, he ought to be put out of the world, as being a burden and a nuisance in it.

There is something so absurd, so glaringly stupid, in this, that it is hardly worth while to attempt a further exposure of it, or I might ask the calumniating crew, who accuse Mr. Hunt of *disloyalty*, whether they are ready to push their reasoning and their rules up to *peers* and *princes*, and to assert that they ought to be put out of power if they cease to live with their wives. They would say, no; and that their doctrine was intended to apply only to those who had the boldness to attack corruption. The man who does that is to be as pure as snow; he is to have no faults at all. He is to be a *perfect Saint*; nay, he is to be a great deal more, for he is to have no human being, not even his wife, to whisper a word to his disadvantage. "You talk of mending the *constitution*," said an Anti-jacobin to Dr. Jebb, when the latter was very ill, "mend *your own*:" and I have heard it seriously objected to a gentleman that he signed a petition for a Reform of Parliament while there needed a reformation amongst his servants, one of whom had assisted to burden the parish; just as if he had on that account less right to ask for a full and fair representation of the people! After this, who need wonder if he were told not to talk against rotten boroughs while he himself had a rotten tooth, or endeavour to excite a clamour against corruption when his own flesh was every day liable to be corrupted to the bone?

After this, Gentlemen, I trust that you are not to be cheated by such wretched cant. With Mr. Hunt's family affairs you and I have nothing to do, any more than he has with ours. We are to look to his conduct as a public man, and, if he serve us in that capacity, he is entitled to our gratitude. Suppose, for instance, the plague were in Bristol, and the only physician, who had skill and courage to put a stop to its ravages, was separated from his wife and living with the wife of another man; would you refuse his assistance? Would you fling his prescriptions into the kennel? Would the canting Messrs. Mills and Elton and Walker exclaim, "no! we will have none of your aid; we will die rather than be saved by you, who have broken your marriage vows!" Would they say this? No; but would crawl to him, would supplicate him, with tears in their eyes. And yet, suffer me to say, Gentlemen, that such a physician in a plague would not be more necessary in Bristol than such a man as Mr. Hunt now is; and that the family affairs of a Member of Parliament is no more a matter of concern with his constituents than are the family affairs of a physician a matter of concern with his patients. When an important service had been received from either, it would be pleasanter for the benefited party to reflect that the party conferring the benefit was happy in his family; but, if the case were otherwise, to suppose the benefit less real, or the party conferring it entitled to less gratitude, is something too monstrously absurd to be entertained by any man of common sense.

The remainder of my subject I must reserve for another Letter, and in the mean while, I am, Gentlemen, your sincere friend, Wm. COBBETT. *Botley, July 27, 1812.*

By the insertion of these letters, which were published at the time, I shall give the reader a pretty clear insight into the whole of my exertions at that period. My doing this will show that I entertained and avowed exactly the same principles of politics at that moment which I do at this moment, and that I have not deviated to the right or to the left ever since; and thus I think I shall be enabled, by unquestionable documentary proof, to shew that I have been the consistent undeviating friend of universal liberty up to the present day.

It was generally imagined that the return of Mr. Davis would be rendered void by a committee of the House of Commons, and I was preparing my case and ready to attack him, as one of the most corrupt and unprincipled pillars of a corrupt administration, when the Parliament was dissolved, by proclamation, on the 29th of September, which at once put an end to my labours relating to that petition. As soon as the Parliament was dissolved, I addressed a public letter to the Electors of Bristol, promising them to be at my post on the day of election; which promise, as will hereafter be seen, I scrupulously observed.

As a petitioner, who had given the proper securities to try the merit of his appeal, I was entitled to a seat below the Bar in the House of Commons, and I occasionally availed myself of this privilege. During the latter part of this Parliament, an interesting discussion took place in the House of Commons, upon the subject of the treatment of prisoners in Lincoln Gaol, to which Mr. Finnerty and Mr. Drakard had been sentenced by the Judges of the Court of King's Bench (Lord Ellenborough, Judges Grose, Le Blanc, and Bayley,) for the term of eighteen months each, for *Libels*. Mr. Finnerty had previously sent up a petition, but this discussion arose upon Sir Samuel Romilly presenting a petition from Thomas Houlden late a prisoner for debt in the said Gaol of Lincoln. Sir Samuel moved for a committee of the House, to inquire into the grounds of the complaint preferred by Mr. Houlden against MERRYWEATHER, the Gaoler and Dr. CALEY ILLINGWORTH, a Parson Justice, and Visiting Magistrate. In the 22d volume of Cobbett's Register, a full and ample account of this interesting debate is given, accompanied by some very just and most appropriate remarks. In speaking of Mr. Finnerty's conduct, in bringing this affair before the public, Mr. Cobbett says, "By his courage and perseverance he has not only bettered his own condition, but that of others also; and is now, I hope, in a fair way of doing the public a still greater service. The conduct of the Magistrates, as they are called, but of the Justices of the Peace, as they ought to be called, stands in need of investigation more than that of almost any other description of men in authority; the powers which they possess are, when one reflects on them, really terrific; if their conduct is not to be investigated, what responsibility is there? What check is there? And in what a state are the people who are so much within their power?" This was Mr. Cobbett's opinion in 1812, but it appears that similar dreadful evils in 1821 and 1822, are not worthy Mr. Cobbett's attention, neither have they been thought of sufficient import to excite the interest of his readers, even although they have been grappled with and exposed in a much more efficient manner, within the walls of Ilchester Gaol. I have not the least doubt in my own mind, from what I have heard from the most respectable authority, but that the Gaoler, MERRYWEATHER, and the Parson Justice, Dr. CALEY ILLINGWORTH, were at *that time* equally criminal with the Gaoler BRIDLE, and the Parson Justice Dr. HUNGERFORD COLSTON, at the *present* time.

I believe, through the exertions of Sir Samuel Romilly, a commission was sent down to Lincoln, to inquire into the conduct of the Gaoler, &c., and from that time forth the affair was completely hushed up, and the said worthy Gaoler was considered as a much injured calumniated man. This gentleman Gaoler, it seems, has feathered his nest pretty handsomely. With a handsome salary, besides pickings, "cheese parings and candle-ends," &c. he has an elegant garden of two acres, fitted up with hot-houses, &c. equal to any nobleman's, the finest wall fruit, &c. &c.; the fruit from which walls and hot-houses finds its way upon the *table* of the Visiting Justices. By these and other means, Mr. MERRYWEATHER, I am told, contrives to lead the Worthies as completely by their noses as Bridle did some of the Somersetshire Worthies.—When, however, we call to mind who and what these said Magistrates are, and how they are appointed, this is not to be wondered at so much. It should always be kept in recollection that ONE HUNDRED POUNDS a year qualifies any man for a Magistrate; and that they are all appointed by the Lord Chancellor, at the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, who is appointed by the Ministers of the Crown; and that, therefore, the Lord Lieutenant take cares to recommend *gentlemen* whose principles and politics are well known. In most counties they also take care to have a sufficient sprinkling of Parsons in the Commission of the Peace, a precious and overwhelming sample of which breed we have in this county. I have frequently been admonished, by some very worthy men, for making use of the term PARSON so often, it being looked upon as rather derogatory to the CLOTH; but, really, gentlemen must excuse me. If the Clergy do not degrade themselves, nothing that I can say will ever bring them into disrepute. Why, it was only the other day that I saw, by the Police Report, published the 19th March, 1822, I think it was, that a Clergyman of the Church of England was committed to one of the Prisons of the Metropolis, as a ROGUE and VAGABOND! I have accidentally laid my hand upon it, and I will insert it as a proof of what a Parson can be. GUILDHALL.—*R.S.—*, a clergyman who, we understand, once enjoyed considerable popularity, was brought before Alderman BROWN, on a charge of having committed an act of vagrancy. Mr. Dunsley, hosier, Cheapside, stated, that on the previous night the prisoner came to his shop, and begged charity for himself and family. He stated that he had not himself for a considerable time tasted bread, and that his wife and children were lying in a deplorable condition at some place in Ratcliffe-highway. The prisoner was in a disgraceful state of intoxication. The complainant, who knew him, remonstrated with him upon disgracing himself as an ordained clergyman, by presenting himself in such a condition. The prisoner upon this changed his tone, said he would have relief before he quitted the shop, and became so violent in his abuse, and so outrageous in his conduct, that the complainant was under the necessity of availing himself of the protection of an officer, to whom he gave the prisoner in custody. This, the prosecutor said, was the third time he had been so treated by the prisoner. The prisoner, in an eloquent address, deprecated the wrath of the prosecutor, by admitting that his conduct had been most disgraceful. But he declared it was done without the slightest reflection, and that his aberrations were occasioned by a contusion which he received on the brain whilst on service in Egypt. His family, he admitted, were well provided for, and he promised if he were this time forgiven, to retire to the country, and endeavour to live upon his half-pay of fifty-four pounds per annum, in solitude and

repentance. All the eloquence of the unfortunate Divine on this occasion proved unavailing. Mr. Dunsley pressed the execution of the law, stating that he had on former occasions received promises of this kind, which were never thought of by the prisoner after his release. The Alderman expressed great pain at seeing a Clergyman in such a situation, but found himself compelled to put the law in force. He committed the prisoner to the Compter for fourteen days, as a "rogue and vagabond."

I could exhibit some living specimens of Clergymen of the Church of England, in this county, that would not only be a match for the worthy described in this police report, but would far surpass in infamy what is here held up as an example to the world. I could produce an instance of a man, or at least a thing in the garb of a man, the opprobrium and scorn of human nature, dressed up on a Sunday in the robes of priesthood, mounted in the pulpit and defiling the very show of religion, by pretending to read and preach lessons of holiness and godliness to those who, the night before, had witnessed him in a state of beastly intoxication, at a common village alehouse, not only degrading the character of a clergyman, but even that of the lowest and most abandoned of the human species, by exhibitions of his person, most indecent and most revolting to humanity; nor am I alluding to this as a solitary instance of such conduct, but to his common practice in the presence of the lowest of his parishioners. I am not drawing the picture of an imaginary monster, but of a living clergyman of this county; and I could describe others equally disgusting. These are pretty examples of morality; these are pretty specimens of clerical purity! There is seldom a week passes over my head that I do not receive some evidence of the abandoned behaviour of some of the clergy; and is not this a precious race of men out of which to select Magistrates! In fact, I scarcely ever see a farmer, who has not some tale to tell me, of the rapacity, immorality, or injustice, of some one of these Parson Justices; one and all exclaiming against the tythe system, which does more to uphold infidelity than ever did all the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabaud, Paine, and all the theological writers that ever existed, put together.

Let it be always remembered, that I know many very honourable exceptions, even in this county, which appears to be notorious for profligate and time-serving parsons; for instance, there is the Rev. Dr. Shaw, of Chelvey, near Bristol; a better christian, both in principle and practice, does not exist. A more honourable, upright, and public spirited man does not live; England cannot boast a more pious and exemplary divine; in *him* is combined the gentleman, the scholar, the liberal and enlightened patriot, and real christian. He is an honour to his country, and he does justice to that profession of which he forms one of the brightest ornaments. Although labouring under the pressure of ill health, and approaching the age of eighty, this venerable divine has made two pilgrimages, a distance of nearly forty miles, to visit the "Captive of Ilchester," during his incarceration, to console, to comfort, to cherish, and to cheer him in his dungeon. What a contrast does this worthy and pious clergyman furnish, to the Clerical Parson Justice, Dr. Colston! It would be dangerous for me to draw that contrast; a person who did not know the fact would scarcely believe that two dignified clergymen of the same diocese, that two doctors of divinity, could form two such opposite characters. For the honour of the county of Somerset, and of the cloth also, I can boast the kindness and attention of many other clergymen, and to no one do I stand more indebted for repeated acts of that nature than to the patriotic and public spirited clergyman, the Rev. Henry Cresswell, the Vicar of Creech St. Michael. I am proud to bear testimony to his zealous co-operation to assist me and the worthy Alderman Wood, to procure the liberation of poor old Mr. Charles Hill, who was falsely imprisoned and wrongfully detained in this Bastile for SIXTEEN YEARS. I had the happiness to see him liberated, in spite of his remorseless persecutors, who have repeatedly sworn, ever since I have been here, that he should never leave Ilchester Gaol alive. It will be recollected that it was this poor man's sufferings that I made the groundwork of my charges against the monster of a gaoler and the Magistrates. How much more delightful is the occupation to record the good, than the evil deeds of one's fellow creatures; how much more gratifying is it to me, to write of a Dr. Shaw, than of a Dr. Colston!

When the Parliament was dissolved I was at Rowfant, in Sussex, attending to my farm, where Sir Francis Burdett and his brother Jones Burdett had recently been to pay me a visit, for a few days. The Baronet wishing to purchase an estate in that county, I showed him over several that were to be sold, but he saw none that he liked, except the one which I occupied, *Rowfant House*, and the estate of a thousand acres of land attached to it. This was certainly a most gentleman-like property, and just such an estate as would have suited the Baronet. The party who had purchased it would also have been very happy to have disposed of it, if they could, to have got rid at once of the inconvenience of the lease which they had granted to me; and as the Baronet appeared to have set his mind upon it, and had got the ready cash, so that price did not appear to be an object to him, there seemed to be no obstacle; but, as I saw the danger of a disagreement between him and myself, in case he should purchase it, I made him fully acquainted with the nature of my lease, which empowered me to grub up and destroy six thousand thriving young oak trees; a measure of all others that would have been the most annoying to him, because, instead of grubbing up one tree, he would have planted thousands and encouraged the growth of timber, which was so congenial to the soil. I perceived very clearly that, were he to purchase

the estate, he would give me my own price for the lease, or any sum, to save the trees. Instead, however, of thinking of my own interest, I was anxious to avoid every thing that could produce a quarrel or a shyness between us, and therefore I took care to put him fully upon his guard, and to conceal nothing from him, expecting, at all events, that he would consult me about the terms that I would take to give up the lease, or at least to give up that part of it which empowered me to destroy the timber. It was obvious to me that I could make a handsome sum out of the Baronet, which would have been of no small importance to me, and yet would have been nothing to him who was so rich. But I repeat, that I acted from the most disinterested motives, and far from planning how I could make the most of him, I was excessively anxious to avoid whatever might lead to any thing like a money transaction between us. For this reason I unreservedly laid open the whole affair to him, informing him upon what terms I had offered to forbear to grub the timber, and almost urging him not to think of purchasing the estate, with such a lease upon it, till he had reflected whether he could approve of my conditions for giving up the lease. I believe that there were few men in the kingdom who would have so acted as I did, but I valued the friendship of Sir Francis Burdett far above any pecuniary consideration. The Baronet was a most delightful visitor, a gentleman-like, easy, unassuming, cheerful inmate; and as we had every comfort at Rowfant compatible with the residence of a country gentleman, both he and his brother, but particularly Sir Francis, expressed themselves as well pleased with their reception as we were with our visitors.

About a week after the Baronet left us, I received a letter from the persons who were concerned for the proprietors of Rowfant, to say that they had entered into a treaty with Sir Francis Burdett for the estate at Rowfant, which treaty they expected would be completed in a few days. I was rather surprised at this intelligence; and although I concluded that Sir Francis Burdett had made up his mind to purchase the estate and comply with my terms; and although I knew that it would answer the purpose of Sir Francis to give me what I asked, even had it been double the sum, yet I had a sort of inherent dread of any money transaction between us, a sort of presentiment that it might be the cause of some disagreement, which might end in shyness. I therefore wrote to him immediately, requesting him by all means not to purchase the estate till he and myself had settled definitively the terms upon which I was to give him up the lease, as I knew that he was also desirous at once to have the house as a residence. I did this from the purest motives, and from a most anxious wish not to have the Baronet in my power; for fear that he might suspect me of having made a market of him. I believe, nevertheless, that the very means that I took to prevent any chance of any thing of the sort, tended to create a suspicion on his part, and he suddenly broke off the bargain, and never mentioned the subject after except in a casual manner. Thus did it happen, I have no doubt, that, from an over delicacy in striving to avoid every thing like the shew of over-reaching, or taking advantage of the Baronet's liberality, I excited in him a suspicion which I by no means merited. As it turned out afterwards that political disagreements occurred between us, I am, however, most happy that we never had any the slightest money transaction. Some time after this, I disposed of the lease of this estate for five hundred pounds more than I should have demanded of him; a fact which proves at once that I acted towards him in the most honourable manner, and that I had no reason to regret his not having purchased the property.

On the 15th of August Mr. Cobbett published his Third Letter to the Independent Electors of Bristol, and, as these letters will give the reader a clear insight into the whole affair, I shall insert the whole of them in this work. This Bristol election was a very important transaction of my history, and one to which, I have no doubt, I may fairly attribute some part of my sentence of TWO YEARS AND SIX MONTHS, and a very considerable portion of the persecution and ill-treatment which I have experienced from the local authorities and Magistrates of this county; and for this reason I wish to have the whole placed fairly upon record.

#### **TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF BRISTOL.**

GENTLEMEN,—Before I resume the subject, upon which I addressed you in my last, give me leave to explain to you what I mean by an *independent elector*. I do not mean a man who has money or land enough to make him independent; for, I well know, that money and land have no such effect; as we see every day of our lives, very rich men, and men of what is called family too, amongst the meanest and most dirty dependents of the ministry or the court. Independence is in the mind; and I call independent that man, who is, at all times, ready to sacrifice a part, at least, of what he has, and to brave the anger and resentment of those from whom he derives his living, rather than act, in his public capacity, contrary to the dictates of his own mind. This is what I mean by an independent man. The journeyman who carries all his fortune in a silk handkerchief is as likely to be an independent man as is a Lord or a 'Squire; and, indeed, we find him much oftener worthy of the name.

It is to men of this description that I address myself upon the present occasion, and to their attention I now beg leave to recall some of the circumstances of the late election at Bristol, or, rather, the late *contest*; for, according to my notion of the law, there can be *no election* where soldiers are present

during any portion of the time, from the beginning to the end of the poll.

Of the two candidates, generally, I have spoken before; but, I now wish to draw your attention more particularly to the pledges tendered you, and given you, by Mr. Hunt. He promised and vowed three things: 1st. That he never would, as long as he lived, either directly or indirectly, pocket a single farthing of the *public money*. This, Gentlemen, is, with me, and so, I trust, it is with you, a capital point. Indeed, it always appears to me necessary to the safety of the electors, as far as the fidelity of their member goes. If the man elected can take the public money, is not the temptation too great for most men? In short, what can be more absurd, what can be more revolting to reason, what more shocking to common sense, than the idea of a man's being a *guardian of the public purse*, while, at the same time, he votes, in that capacity, part of the people's money into his own pocket? In all the other situations of life we see the payer and the receiver a check upon each other; but, in the case of a Member of Parliament who receives part of the public money, there is no such check.

We are often asked, whether we would wish gentlemen of great talents to serve the country as Secretaries of State, Chancellors of the Exchequer, &c. &c. without any pay? To which I, for myself, answer *no*. I would not only have them paid, but *well paid*; but I would not have them sit in parliament while they received the pay. If we are told that this is *impracticable*, we point to the experience in its support; for, in the United States of America, there are no paid officers in the Legislature. No man can be a member of either House who is in the receipt of a six-pence of the public money under the Executive; and, what is more, he cannot receive any of the public money, in the shape of salary, during the time for which he has been elected, if the office from which the salary is derived has been created or its income increased since his election. This is the case in America. There are no chancellors of the exchequer, no secretaries of state, or of war, or of the admiralty, in either House of Congress; there is no *Treasury Bench*; there are no ministers and none of those other things of the same kind, and which I will not here name. Yet is America now exceedingly well governed; the people are *happy* and *free*; there are about *eight millions* of them, and there are *no paupers*; in that country poor men do not, to be sure, crawl almost upon their bellies before the rich, but, there are very few murders. I lived eight years in the largest city in the country, and there was no human being *hanged*, or otherwise put to death for a crime, while I lived there. The country, therefore, must be pretty well governed, and yet there is no member of either House of the Legislature who is in any office whatever under the government. The members are *paid for their time*, and paid their expenses to and from the place of sitting. They are appointed by the people and paid by the people; they are the people's representatives, and are not suffered to be the servants of, or to receive pay from, any body else.

Here, then, we have a proof, an experimental proof, of the practicability of conducting a government without giving placemen seats in the Legislature. And, though the *positive pledge* may, in all cases, not be insisted on, the principle ought to be clearly understood; and, where the candidate is not very well known indeed, and has not had *long trial*, I am for insisting upon the positive pledge. This pledge Mr. Hunt has given you, and you must be well assured, that, if he were disposed to break it, he would not dare to do it. For this alone I should prefer him to either of the other candidates, both of whom, all three of whom, you may be assured, have in view either *public money* or *title*, both of which Mr. Hunt disclaims. The 2nd pledge that Mr. Hunt has given you is, that he will endeavour, if elected, to do away all the sinecure places, and all the pensions not granted for real services. This is a pledge which I deem of great importance. The sum of money expended *annually* in this way has been stated by Sir Francis Burdett at nearly a *million of pounds sterling*, that is to say, a sum sufficient to maintain 125,000 poor people all the year round, supposing them not to labour at all I, for my part, should deem the abolition of these places and pensions of far greater importance to us than the gaining of a hundred battles, by land or sea.

The 3rd pledge of Mr. Hunt is, that he will, if elected, do all that in him lies to procure for the nation a peace and a *Reform of Parliament*. Now, Gentlemen, look back for the last 20 years; reflect on what has passed during that time; and then say, whether you sincerely believe, that this nation can possibly continue in its present course much longer. The finger of wisdom, of common sense, points to peace as the only possible means of rescuing ourselves from our dangers; but, Gentlemen, *how are we to have peace*? The terms offered by the Emperor of France are fair; they are, indeed, such as I never expected to see obtained at the close of a negotiation; they would, if accepted of, leave us in possession of all our conquests, of all the Islands in the West Indies; of the exclusive fishery of Newfoundland; of the Cape of Good Hope and the French Settlements in Senegal; of the French and Dutch Settlements in the East Indies; of the Isles of France and Bourbon; in short, they would leave us in possession of about 40 millions of conquered people, while France herself would not possess above 17 or 18 millions of conquered people. And, which is never to be forgotten, they would leave in our hands, the island of Malta itself, which, as you well know, was *the avowed object of the war*.

Why, then, have we not peace? *Because we have not reform*, it being absolutely impossible, in my opinion, for our present internal system to be continued during a peace which should be accompanied

with the usual consequences of peace. When the present war began, it was stated by the then Minister, Addington, that *we were at war because we could not be at peace*; and, I suppose, that the same reason would now be given; for, otherwise, it is, I think, impossible to account for the rejection of the late overtures of the Emperor Napoleon, which, as I have, I am persuaded, clearly shown in a former Register, were both honourable and advantageous to England. Not only, therefore, will this country, in my opinion, never regain its former state of freedom and happiness without a reform of parliament; but, I am convinced, that, without such reform, it will never again have peace with France.

This being the case, it must be an inexcusable folly for you to elect any man who is not decidedly for a reform of the parliament; and, amongst all your candidates, Mr. Hunt is the only man who has declared for that reform. The partisans of Sir Samuel Romilly say, that they doubt not that *he will* declare for reform. I do not think that he ever will; at least, not till such men as Mr. Hunt shall have made it *inconvenient* to be against reform. If Sir Samuel Romilly were for reform, why should he be so loath to make the declaration? He has told you, that those who promise most perform least; but, if this were to be taken as a rule without an exception, there would, at once, be an end of all promises and engagements between man and man. In this case, however, the rule did not apply; for he might have expressed his wish to see reform take place without making any promise upon the subject. This he did not do; and, during the whole time that he has been a candidate for Bristol, he has not once *mentioned*, in any way, the subject of parliamentary reform.

There is, besides, with regard to Sir Samuel Romilly, a most suspicious circumstance; and that is, that his leading partisans all belong to that corrupt faction, which has been designated under the name of *Whigs*, and which faction is, if possible, more hostile to reform than the followers of Pitt and Perceval themselves. I have frequently asserted, that the two factions cordially unite upon all occasions, where an attack is made upon corruption in general, or where the interests of *party* are concerned. We saw them join hand-in-hand and heart to heart when the late Perceval and Castlereagh were accused by Mr. Madocks, on the 11th of May, 1809, on the anniversary of which day Perceval was shot, at the door of the very place where he had before triumphed. We saw them join in rallying round that same Perceval when Sir Francis Burdett was sent to the Tower under the escort of thousands of soldiers. We saw them join in reprobating the Address to the Prince Regent proposed by Sir Francis Burdett. In short, upon all occasions when something was to be effected hostile, decidedly hostile, to the people, the two factions have cordially joined; they have, for the time, become one. They hate one another; they would destroy one another; but, they love the public money more than they hate one another; and, therefore, when the *system* is in danger, they always unite. They cordially unite also against every man who is hostile to the system. They hate him even more than they hate each other; because he would destroy the very meat that they feed on.

Hence, Gentlemen, the united rancour of the factions against Mr. Hunt, and their united approbation of Mr. Bragge Bathurst. But, of this latter we must take more particular notice. There has appeared in the Bristol newspapers a publication respecting a Meeting for the purpose of uniting in a testimony of gratitude to Bragge Bathurst. At this meeting the following resolutions were passed; but, I beg you to observe, first, the language and sentiments of the resolutions, and next, who were the principal actors in the scene. The whole of the publication was as follows:—"At a General Meeting of the Merchants, Traders, and other Inhabitants of this City, convened by public advertisement, for the purpose of uniting in a testimony of *gratitude* to their late *Representative*, the Right Hon. Charles Bathurst,—THOMAS DANIEL, Esq. in the Chair,—the following Resolutions were moved by *Michael Castle*, Esq. and seconded by *John Cave*, Esq. and carried unanimously:—1st, That the conduct of the Right Hon. Charles Bathurst has been distinguished, during 18 years that he represented this City in Parliament, by a *meritorious attention to its local interest, and an invariable zeal for the individual concerns of its inhabitants*, entirely independent of every consideration of political party.—2d, That in the *retirement* of the Right Hon. Charles Bathurst from that elevated situation which he so deservedly held amongst us, we feel desirous of testifying, in this public manner, *the gratitude we entertain for services that have reflected so much honour upon his abilities and exertions*.—3d, That a Subscription be now entered into, for the purpose of presenting the Right Hon. Charles Bathurst with a permanent Token of our esteem and approbation of services that have been so frequently called upon, and attended to with so much advantage to the City at large.—4th, That a Committee be appointed of those Gentlemen who signed the requisition for the call of this meeting, together with any of those who may be subscribers, for the purpose of carrying into execution the wishes and intentions of this meeting.—5th, That the name of Mr. Robert Bruce be added to the twenty gentlemen who have signed the requisition, for the purpose of forming a Committee, with any other of the Subscribers.—6th, That Mr. Thomas Hellicar be requested to take upon himself the office of Treasurer.—THOMAS DANIEL, Chairman."

Now, Gentlemen, you will observe, that here is as decided praise as men can bestow. Mr. Bragge is praised for his *eighteen years' conduct*, though, during that time, he has been doing every thing which the supporters of Sir Samuel Romilly affect to disapprove of. To describe his conduct under three

heads, it has been this: he has uniformly supported Pitt and the war; he has uniformly *distinguished* himself as an opponent of Parliamentary Reform, and was one of the foremost in reprobating Mr. Madocks's motion; he has, during the 18 years of war and national misery, been a great part of the time a placeman, and he is now a placeman in possession of a rich sinecure, with immense patronage attached to it. And, it is for *conduct like this* that these townsmen of yours are about to give a testimony of their *gratitude*!

If, however, this were confined to the friends of Bragge Bathurst, to those who profess his principles, all would be in its place, all would be natural enough. But, you will bear in mind, Gentlemen, that the two factions have united here, and these resolutions, extolling to the skies a sinecure placeman, a Pittite, and a known and decided enemy of reform of parliament; you will bear in mind that these resolutions were *moved* by Mr. MICHAEL CASTLE, the very man who introduced Sir Samuel Romilly into your city; the very man in whose carriage Sir Samuel Romilly entered your city; the very man who filled the chair at Sir Samuel Romilly's dinner. This was the man selected to MOVE resolutions expressive of the gratitude of the people of Bristol for the conduct of Bragge Bathurst, the sinecure placeman, the supporter of Pitt and the war, and the decided and distinguished enemy of parliamentary reform. This was the man, this Mr. Michael Castle, to tell the world in the most solemn manner, that the friends of Sir Samuel Romilly approved of the conduct of the very man, whom they, when canvassing you for your votes, represented as unfit to be your member.

Gentlemen, can you want any further proof of the political hypocrisy of such men as Mr. Charles Elton, and Mr. Mills, and Mr. Castle? Can you be made to believe that they are sincere when they tell you that they wish for a reform of any sort? The truth is, they wish to put in a member of their own, that they may enjoy the benefit of his patronage; but, in doing this, they must take care not to do any thing hostile to *the system*, for without the existence of that all their prospects are blasted. You see, that they have in these resolutions, no scruple to declare the vile and abominable principle upon which they act. They here most explicitly avow, that they are grateful to Bragge Bathurst for the zeal he has shown in the *individual concerns* of his constituents. That is to say, in getting *them places under the government*; or, in other words, in enabling them to live upon the taxes; that is to say, upon the fruit of the people's labour. I told you, in my first letter, that they had no other object than this in view; that one part of them only wanted to put in Sir Samuel Romilly that he might give them more of the taxes than they had been able to get from Bragge Bathurst. Mr. Hunt had told you this before; and now you see the fact openly avowed. The jobbers on both sides plainly tell whoever is to be their candidate, that he must take care of their *individual concerns*.

This, Gentlemen, is the real cause of the hatred, the rancour, the poisonous malice, of both factions towards Mr. Hunt, who makes open war upon the tax-eaters. This is the reason why they hate him. There are other reasons, but this is the great reason of all; and you may be well assured, that you will see both the factions always unite against any man, be he who he may, who is opposed to the system of places and pensions. But, what, then, must be the extent of the hypocrisy of the friends of Sir Samuel Romilly! They pretend that they wish for a reform of parliament, when they must well know, that such a reform would totally destroy the very root whence spring those *individual* benefits for which they express their gratitude to Bragge Bathurst. Sir Samuel Romilly, as I had before the honour to observe to you, has never told you that he is for a reform of the parliament; and, after the publication of these Resolutions, moved by the man who introduced him into your city, there are very few amongst you, I trust, who will not be convinced, that his partisans are well convinced that he will not support such a reform as shall give us a chance of destroying that corruption which is now eating out the very vitals of the country.

Clear as it is, then, that both the factions are your enemies, I hope that you will stand firmly by each other in opposition to so detestable an union. Both factions are hateful; but of the two the Whigs are the worst; because they disguise their hostility to the cause of freedom. Take, however, only a little time to reflect, and you will not be deceived by the cant of Mr. Charles Elton and Mr. Mills, both of whom, I would venture my life, have bespoke places for themselves in case of success to their candidate. They well know that the success of Mr. Hunt would defeat their scheme, and *therefore* they hate him. They do not dislike him for his separation from his wife; they would not give his wife a bit of bread to save her life, if she was a beggar instead of being, as she is, well and liberally provided for; they would see her drop from their door dead in the street, rather than tender her a helping hand; but, to speak of the separation suits the turn of the hypocrites; by having recourse to it, they can cast calumny on their foe without letting their real motive appear. They would, if they dared, tell him that he is a cruel savage for endeavouring to prevent them from pocketing the public money; but this would not suit their purpose; and they therefore resort to his separation from his wife.

Trusting now, Gentlemen, that you see clearly the motives of the two factions, and that their main object is to get a share of the public money, I shall not fear, that, at another election, you will *resolutely* endeavour to defeat that vile object. The whole mystery lies here. It is the public money that the

factions want to get at. They are not attached to any particular set of men or of means. Whoever or whatever will give them the best chance of getting at the public money is the man or the thing for them; and Sir Samuel Romilly has been brought forward upon the recent occasion, only because there were a set of men, who found that they could not get so much of the public money as they wanted under any of the other candidates. They found the old ground too thickly settled for them; they therefore resolved to get new ground of their own; and they chose Sir Samuel Romilly, because he was at once likely to be a placeman, and was a man of a good deal of deserved popularity. They, if he were elected, would say as Falstaff did of the moon: "the *chaste* Diana, under whose influence *we steal*." They mean to make a passage of him through which to get at the people's earnings; and, all this, too, under the guise of virtue and patriotism. With me there wanted nothing to produce conviction of this fact before; and now, I trust, that there is no man who will affect to doubt it; now when we see them moving and signing resolutions, applauding the conduct of a member of parliament who has become a sinecure placeman, and who is notoriously a most decided enemy of reform of parliament.

With these facts before him, it is not to be believed, that any one amongst you will give his vote for this hypocritical faction. If Sir Samuel Romilly will declare openly for reform of parliament, you will do well to vote for him and for Mr. Hunt; but, if he will not, it is your duty not only not to vote for him, but to do all that lies in your power to prevent his being elected; for, be you well assured, that, without a reform of parliament, no man living can save this country or render it any essential service. There is no national evil that we feel, be it small or great, which may not be traced to the want of a parliamentary reform, and such a reform, too, as shall cut up corruption by the roots.

It is with great pleasure that I perceive Mr. Hunt has promised you to be a candidate at Bristol at every future election, as long as he has life and health, unless he should be a member when a vacancy takes place for your city. This promise ensures you *an election*; it secures you against being sold like *dumb creatures*; it secures you the *exercise* of your right of voting, and the right of now and then openly reproaching and loading with just maledictions any of the wretches who may betray you. To be a member for Bristol, in future, a man must stand an *election* of some days, at any rate; no one will be able to get in by a mere day's parade; an election at Bristol will not in future be a ceremony like that of choosing a churchwarden; your voices will be heard, and, I hope, they will always carry terror to the hearts of the corrupt. You have only to *persevere*. To keep steadily on. To suffer nothing to turn you aside. Your enemies cannot kill you, nor can they do you harm. If they collect and publish lists of *your names*; you will do well to collect and publish lists of *theirs*, and then stand your chance for the *final effect*. But, above all things, be upon your guard against the fraudulent dealings of the Whigs, who are the worst faction of the two, because they are the greatest hypocrites. They make use of the name of Sir Samuel Romilly as the means of deceiving you, and of getting a share of the public money into their own pockets; and of this fact I beg you never to lose sight.

I am, Gentlemen, your friend,

WM. COBBETT. Botley, Tuesday, 11th August, 1812.

These three letters will give a clear view of the state of politics at Bristol. I offered myself as a candidate for that city, not with the expectation of being returned as one of the Members, but from a firm conviction, and, indeed, a thorough knowledge, that it was one of the most *corrupt cities* in the universe; that the people had been kept in total ignorance and darkness by the intrigues and cabals of the two factions, the Whigs and Tories, in which glorious and praiseworthy work those factions had been ably assisted by the local press of the city. MATTHEW GUTCH, the Editor of *Felix Farley's Journal*, the Ministerial or Tory hack editor, and JOHN MILLS, the Whig hack editor, two beings equally unprincipled in politics, had contributed mainly to assist in perpetuating the ignorance of the people; the whole of the patriotism of the citizens consisting in being devoted tools either to the Whig or Tory factions, blind supporters of the *high* or the *low* party. It will be seen by these letters, that my great object was to rescue the people of Bristol from this deplorable state of ignorance and darkness, into which they had been plunged by the intrigues and unprincipled compromise of these two factions. How far I was successful in this attempt, may be best deduced from the unwarrantable and villainous abuse that was poured out upon me by all the rascally editors of the public press of that day. Gutch and Mills vied with each other which could be most scurrilous, and which could tell the greatest number of the most unprincipled and barefaced falsehoods. It will be seen also, from these letters, that I was assailed by Mr. Charles Elton and Mr. Walker, both supporters of Sir Samuel Romilly; the former the son of Sir Abraham Elton, and the latter an attorney, who published a pamphlet at the time on purpose to abuse one. When I say that these two gentlemen were the most liberal minded men in the City of Bristol, you may form some idea of the prejudice that was excited against me, and the pains that were taken to put me down. As, however, Mr. Elton and Mr. Walker have made some amends, by expressing themselves in a very different manner of me since I have been here, I am by no means disposed to bear them any ill-will; on the contrary, I think them two of the very best men amongst the gentry of Bristol, and an exception to the sweeping character which, in my last number, I gave of the Bristol gentlemen,



although at the period to which I allude they were two of the foremost to abuse and belie me. If either of them should read this, I have not the least doubt but they will lament the injustice they did me; the names of both of them appear amongst those who have subscribed to remunerate me for some of my expenses; and I am informed that they liberally promoted the Bristol petition, that was presented to the House of Commons last week by Mr. Bright, one of the Members for that city. This evidently shews that, if they still remain my political enemies, they are at any rate liberal and generous foes; but I would fain hope that they have by this time convinced themselves from observation, that I am more deserving of their support than their hatred and opposition. They will have seen that I have, ever since they first saw me at Bristol, been the steady persevering friend of Radical Reform; they will see that I have always advocated the same principles; and they will acknowledge that the very principles and sentiments that I promulgated, during the first election for Bristol, are become almost universal now; that the very same language which I made use of upon the pedestal, in the front of the Exchange, has lately been made use of, and repeated almost verbatim, by Noblemen and Members of Parliament, at county meetings; that the very remedies which at Bristol I declared, in 1812, to be necessary, to restore the country to freedom and happiness, are now almost universally allowed to be the only remedies in 1822. These letters, which were written by Mr. Cobbett, I do not publish for the sake of raking up any old grievances; far from it but I do it for the purpose of maintaining and proving my consistency, and also that, whatever I may have erred in, my errors have sprung from the head and not from the heart.

The reader has seen in these letters, that I promised the electors of Bristol that I would always be a candidate for Bristol, at all future elections; but this, of course, was *conditional*. When the proper time comes I shall, I think, give a very satisfactory reason why I did not keep this promise, or at least why I was prevented from doing so; although perhaps, it would, as it turned out, have been much better for me, personally, if I had gone there again, under all the disadvantages which I had to anticipate, rather than have destroyed my health and wasted my property in opposing Sir Francis Burdett for the City of Westminster. Still, however much I may have suffered upon that occasion, I must persist in thinking that a great public good was effected by it. These things, however, I shall at least honestly account for, whether my explanation prove satisfactory or not, at the proper epoch of my history.

The general election was to take place in October. The Bristol election was fixed to commence on the 6th of that month. On the 5th I arrived once more in Bristol, and I was received, if possible, with more enthusiasm and greater demonstrations of respect than ever by the people. A most dirty trick was played me by Mr. Protheroe, one of the Whig candidates. He and his friends, by bribes and threats, got possession of my inn, the Talbot, which I had occupied upon the former occasion; and, as I had arranged to go there again, it created some disappointment to my friends, for these cunning fellows had taken possession of this inn only the day before I arrived in Bristol. My friends, however, took me as usual to the Pedestal, at the Exchange, where, in addressing the multitude, I informed them of this trick that had been played me, which I had not been aware of till I came into the city. But I soon convinced these gentry that I was not to be driven out of the city by such means, although I had been informed that all the inn-keepers had been threatened with the loss of their licenses, if they admitted me into their houses. I declared my resolution to take up my residence upon the Pedestal, where I then stood, if I could procure no other accommodation. This sort of mean persecution to which I was exposed, generally, however, brings with it its own remedy; and I soon had a message from the mistress of the Swan-inn, in Maryport-street, that she would furnish me with apartments. It appeared that her husband was a partizan of the Whigs, and would fain have kept me out of his house, but the lady was resolute, and she discovered a degree of spirit and independence, in which the gentlemen of Bristol were lamentably deficient, and I was consequently received into very good quiet apartments, and received every accommodation and attention that I required.

There were four candidates—Mr. Davis, the White Lion or Tory candidate, Mr. Protheroe, and Sir Samuel Romilly, both of whom stood upon the Whig interest, and myself, who contended upon true constitutional principles, to maintain the right of the people to free election. The morning came, and I proceeded to the Exchange, where, while I was addressing my friends who had assembled in great numbers, intelligence was brought to me, that the Sheriffs, with the other three candidates and their friends, were gone to the Guildhall, which was filled almost to a state bordering upon suffocation. Thus, by another trick, had these worthies stolen a march upon me, by filling the hall with their friends before the usual hour. As no time was to be lost, I proceeded thither with as much speed as the density of the crowd would permit. I believe that no man except myself would have been allowed to penetrate Broad-street; but I was cheered by friends and even foes, all anxious to assist me to the hustings. When I came to the hall-door, the steps were so jammed with the people, that it was impossible to penetrate through the solid mass of human bodies, upon which one man, at the top of the stairs, hailed those at the bottom, as follows:—"Mount Mr. Hunt upon your shoulders, my friends, and let him pass over us, as he cannot get through the crowd." This plan was instantly adopted, and I marched along deliberately stepping upon the shoulders of those assembled, every individual endeavoring to assist me, as I passed amidst the cheers of the whole multitude; but when I sprung upon the hustings, the shout was such as

made the old walls of the Guildhall shake, and it was actually so deafening that it was some time before I could hear again. I found that the greatest confusion and uproar prevailed, in consequence of the Sheriffs having stopped up and barricaded the *Two Galleries* with three-inch deal planks, lashed together with strong iron plates and hoops. These galleries were the very best places for the people to see the election, as they completely overlooked the hustings and the whole court, which was calculated more than any other circumstance to secure fair play. At any rate, every trick, quibble, and foul proceeding, every fraud and underhanded transaction, that had been attempted at the former election, by the agents of the factions who had combined against me, was detected and exposed, and the detection was exceedingly facilitated by my friends, and the friends of fair play and the freedom of election, some of whom took care to place themselves in these galleries every day; and they were sure to be so completely on the alert, that when any thing escaped my observation, it was sure to be instantly detected by these watchful lookers-on, who, from their peculiar situation, had the most commanding power of seeing every transaction that passed. This was a most galling circumstance to those who wished to carry on their old pranks, as heretofore, unperceived and undetected.—Amongst this number was the worthy perpetual Under Sheriff, Mr. Arthur Palmer. He appeared to be dreadfully annoyed by being thus rigidly scrutinized; and therefore, as deputy commanding officer over all the *minutiæ* of benches, tables, seats, &c. &c. he had, in conjunction with his friend Jerry Osbourn, proposed and planned this notable scheme, to get rid of what they considered as so intolerable a nuisance, by curtailing one-fourth of the space of the hall, which before was infinitely too small for the purpose of holding an election.

In consequence of this obstruction, the greatest uproar ensued, and a scene of tumult followed, such as, in all my previous attendance at public meetings, I had never witnessed before. The people were highly exasperated at this wanton and daring encroachment upon their rights, as freemen, to the freedom of election; and every now and then we could discover a voice more powerful than the rest exclaiming, "open the galleries! down with the planks!" &c. &c. The pressure of the crowd towards the hustings now increased to such a degree, and the heat was so intolerable, that the Sheriffs (the two young Mr. Hillhouses) appeared greatly alarmed; all were grasping for breath, and I believe that some would have suffered from suffocation, if the Sheriffs had not resorted to the expedient of admitting a little fresh air, by dashing to pieces the large Gothic window, or at least the glass of it, at the back of the hustings, which they did with their swords. I sat quietly down, and with my arms folded I calmly looked on in silence upon this tremendous scene of uproar and confusion. Poor Sir Samuel Romilly! I shall never forget his looks; he stood aghast, and I saw his eyes were frequently turned to me, with a sort of imploring expression. The Sheriffs, after having *in vain* made repeated attempts to procure silence, appealed to me, and in the most supplicating manner requested me to address the multitude to obtain it. I, however, sat firm upon my seat, and resolutely refused to interfere; saying, that I could have no influence, as the Sheriffs had, by a trick, shut out all my friends, and packed the hall with the friends of the other candidates. I therefore begged them to apply to those candidates, to procure silence from their own partisans. The Sheriffs did so; but Davis and Protheroe knew they should not be attended to, and consequently they declined to make the attempt. At length Sir Samuel Romilly stood forward, but without the least possible chance of a single word that he uttered being heard: he retired, and then joined his intreaties to those of the Sheriffs, to request me to address the people to be silent while the Sheriffs read the writ for commencing the election. For some time I declined to interfere; and urged the knight of the gown and wig to try again, repeating what I had before said, that I could not be expected to have any influence, as the greatest part of my friends were, by a petty trick of the Sheriffs, shut out and left upon the Exchange, while the hall was packed and crammed full by the friends of the other three candidates. I observed that there were a great majority wearing the colours of Sir Samuel Romilly, and I entreated him to make another attempt to be heard; he did so, but it was all in vain. They all now repeated their supplications to me, that I would rise and endeavour to gain silence, but for, I suppose, nearly half an hour, I remained immovable. I thought this a proper opportunity to place the question of my popularity beyond all dispute. The corrupt hirelings of the press, particularly the corrupt John Mills, the proprietor of the *Bristol Gazette*, had denied that I was the popular candidate, and claimed this honour for Sir Samuel Romilly; I was therefore determined to put this question at rest at once. All the corrupt knaves of attorneys, petty-foggers and all, looked to me in the most humble and imploring manner, and they might have looked and implored till this hour, before I would have stirred an inch, or have uttered a word to have gratified them, had I not been loudly called for from all parts of the hall, and the call of the people I instantly obeyed.

The moment that I rose from my seat I was received with three cheers, upon which I gave a slight wave of my hand, and immediately, as if by magic, the most profound silence ensued. I began as follows: "In the name of the insulted freemen of Bristol, I demand of the Sheriffs to be publicly informed by whose authority it is that the galleries have been barricaded!" (*loud cheers*.) "I'll wait for an answer"!!! The Sheriff, the elder Hillhouse, "*an unlicked cub*," both of them being mere boys, totally incapable of performing the office of Sheriff with any degree of credit to themselves, or honour to the City, drawled out in a faltering voice, "that the galleries had been examined by the city *surveyor*, and

had been pronounced unsafe." I knew this was a shuffle, as it was evident that the galleries were most substantial; for, being supported by large upright solid pillars, they were capable of sustaining ten times the weight required to fill them with people. I therefore demanded if the surveyor was present to answer for himself? The answer was, no. The name of the surveyor was demanded, but an abusive answer was given by Mr. Perpetual. After a shower of hisses from the audience, I deliberately declared it to be an infamous shuffle, a premeditated insult to the citizens, and a step calculated to obstruct the freedom of election, and to promote and screen bribery and corruption. I, therefore, desired the people to remove the nuisance, by taking down the planks and forcing an entrance into the galleries as usual, and I would be answerable for the consequences. A sailor instantly scaled the height, and in about twenty minutes the immense barricado was removed, and the planks, iron and all, were handed over the people's heads into the streets; and thus what had taken Mr. Arthur Palmer several days to erect, was now removed in a few minutes. The galleries were soon filled with several hundred people, and complete silence was restored. To accomplish this might altogether have taken up two hours. Davis, Protheroe, Romilly, and Hunt, were duly and regularly proposed and seconded by their respective friends, and each having addressed the electors, the show of hands was taken by the Sheriffs, and declared by them "to have fallen upon *Mr. Hunt and Sir Samuel Romilly, by a very large majority;*" upon which Davis and Protheroe demanded a poll; and each candidate having polled a few electors, the election was adjourned till the next morning.

My friend Davenport had kindly consented to accompany me to Bristol, and I was surrounded and supported by all my former friends, who had given me their support during the recent contest, with the exception of a Mr. Webb, who did not appear amongst them. It was soon found that *he* had *openly* joined the ranks of the enemy, as his secret intrigues and infamous treachery, during the former election, had been detected by my friends, who found out that every night, after he left my committee, he had proceeded to a secret committee of Mr. Davis, and communicated to them the whole of the plans of my supporters; and, in fact, through this treacherous caitiff they every night knew what we had done, and what we intended to do on the following day. Although this was a most diabolical act on the part of Mr. Webb, and very unfair upon my committee, of whom he made one, and generally the chairman, yet as I had no secrets, it did not serve the purpose of my opponents much. To be sure, it in a small degree enabled them to anticipate and frustrate the effect of the plans of my committee; but, as I took a straight forward course, it did not put me off my guard at all, and, besides, as I soon found that all the projects of my committee were known to the enemy, and was, of course, quite sure that we had a spy in our camp, I took good care to keep my order of battle to myself till it was about to be put in force. I must, however, own that this viper did completely deceive me; as I had not the slightest suspicion of him till after the election, when he was detected, in fact, not till I had it from one of the White Lion Club, that Webb came every night to them, and frequently supped with them after he left my committee; and even then I was incredulous, till he related some particular facts, that put all doubt out of the question, by proving the truth of his information in the most unequivocal manner.

In my address to the electors, I put it fairly to Sir Samuel Romilly, to declare whether he would support a real Reform in Parliament or not; I meant such a Reform as Sir Francis Burdett at that time advocated; and I declared it to be my intention, in case he answered in the affirmative, to give him every aid in my power. Sir Samuel candidly and honestly declared that he would vote for a reform of abuses, and also that he would always vote for a moderate Reform; but that he could not with consistency favour the kind of Reform for which Sir Francis Burdett was contending. This reply was received with cheers by his immediate advocates, such as *Mister Mills*, and Mr. Winter Harris, who had declared to the citizens, upon their canvass, that the Knight was a staunch friend of Reform. As, however, the Knight had never declared it himself, I thought this the proper time to put the question; the answer to which the great body of the people received, some with surprise and some with disgust. I then stated my objections to a lawyer, and especially my particular objection to a King's Counsel, being a Member of Parliament for an independent and populous city; which objection was this, that the moment a counsellor received a *silk gown*, he accepted a retaining fee from the Crown, to plead at all times against the people. This assertion was received with cheers from the people, and a burst of indignation from the partizans of Sir Samuel Romilly. I repeated the assertion, and added, that in case any one of Sir Samuel Romilly's voters had an indictment preferred against him for a libel, for any offence under the excise laws, for high treason, or, indeed for any offence where the prosecution was in the name of the King, that the worthy counsellor could not plead for his constituent the subject, against his master the King, unless the subject would submit to the juggle of taking out a *licence*, for which he must pay ten or twelve pounds to the King, to enable the gentleman with the silk gown to plead against the Crown. This caused a great sensation throughout the hall, and the truth of it was most vociferously denied by the Romillites, many of whom declared that it was a base and false assertion. John Mills, always foremost at such times with his brazen face and stentorian lungs, roared out that it was a lie. As this gentleman was remarkably deficient in sense and talent, he endeavoured to make amends by bluster and violence; this will sufficiently account for the vulgarity of his language. An apology from him was, however, loudly insisted upon by his indignant hearers. As soon as silence was restored, I

turned round to Sir Samuel Romilly, and called upon him to say honestly and fairly whether I had not spoken the truth; and as I stated that I waited for an answer, the Knight came forward amidst the cheers of his partizans. Knowing what would be the result, I did not fail to cheer also. Sir Samuel Romilly said he had no hesitation in admitting that what Mr. Hunt had stated was perfectly true, that a King's Counsel could not plead for a subject in a criminal prosecution, without a licence from the Crown. If Sir Samuel Romilly had not been present to admit the fact, these amiable Bristolians would have lied and sworn out of it, but they were now chop fallen, and I was allowed to proceed without any further interruption.

During the whole election afterwards, no statement of mine was contradicted. I said nothing against Sir Samuel; on the contrary, I gave him full credit for being one of the very, best of the gown and wig gentry; not one offensive personal expression was used by me towards him throughout the whole election; neither did he throw out one insinuation against me; on the contrary, it was the fashion for us to compliment each other. In fact, he followed my example, and after the poll was closed for the day, he every evening addressed the people upon the Exchange from the window of his Committee-room. I always gave him the precedence to address them, so that had he been disposed to join his Committee, by endeavouring to practise delusion, I should have immediately detected and exposed any such sophistry upon the spot. But I will repeat now what I unequivocally stated at the time, that, had the Committee and the friends of the Knight possessed half the liberality and honesty that he did, and practised one-tenth of the fairness that was shewn upon all occasions by Sir Samuel, I have no doubt but he would have been elected with myself, instead of Mr. Davis and Mr. Protheroe. But the Romillites in Bristol were not a rush better or more liberal than the friends of Davis or Protheroe. There was as much corruption, bribery, treating, intimidation, and undue influence, exercised on the part of these hypocritical, professed friends of freedom, as there was by the partizans of Davis, who was the avowed enemy of freedom, and the determined, unprincipled champion of tyranny and despotism. By this conduct the real friends of Reform were disgusted, and the enthusiasm that was so visible during the former election was paralyzed: neither myself nor any one of my friends ever canvassed for a single vote; the electors had been all canvassed, over and over again, by the partizans of Davis, Protheroe, and Romilly. I saw that the latter was most heartily sick of being made the tool of the Whig faction, without any chance of being elected. Sir Samuel frequently told the people that they were indebted to Mr. Hunt for the little share of the freedom of election which they had left them, and although he got behind upon the poll every day, yet he solemnly declared that he would not resign as long as there was a man left to poll for him. This declaration, however, proved to be a bravado, for he resigned on the eighth day, when there were a considerable number of voters left unpolled in the city, and one half of the out-voters had not been polled. My friends, Williams, Pimm, Cranidge, Brownjohn, and others, stood firmly and staunchly by me, and Mr. Cossens, one of Sir Samuel Romilly's committee, I found also to be a staunch friend; and I believe this was the only friend I had amongst them: almost all the freemen that he brought up to the hustings polled for Romilly and Hunt, but all those of Sir Samuel Romilly's voters, who were under the influence of their masters, were ordered to give plumpers for Sir Samuel Romilly, and all of them were canvassed to do so. Such, however, as had the spirit to follow the dictates of his conscience, voted for Hunt and Romilly; almost all the London voters did this, although they were urged to vote for Romilly alone.

During this contest, if it may be called one, the notorious Captain Gee was a very active partizan of Mr. Davis's; he headed a gang of blackguards, a set of second-rate prize-fighters, amongst whom was the notorious Bob Watson. This gang used to annoy the voters of Sir Samuel Romilly most infamously. Watson used to come into the box, where ten or twelve of Sir Samuel Romilly's voters were assembled waiting to poll, and with the assistance of two or three more of his gang, backed on by Captain Gee, he would hustle and drive them all out of the box, and prevent them from giving their votes. At length, Sir Samuel was induced to snake a serious remonstrance to the Sheriff against such an unwarrantable violation of the freedom of election, and he called upon the Sheriff to have Watson taken into custody, who had actually been assaulting several of his voters in the presence of the Sheriff. Although Mr. Sheriff had been an eyewitness of these proceedings several times before, yet he felt that, now his attention was thus publicly called to the subject, he could not connive at them any longer; and as Watson had been laying about him in the most outrageous manner, in which he had the audacity to persevere, although called upon by the Sheriff to desist, Mr. Sheriff ordered his constables to take Watson into custody. Two or three of these guardians of the peace made a faint attempt to obey his orders, but Watson beat them all off, and set them at defiance. Sir Samuel remonstrated again; the constables were called up, and they informed the Sheriff that, notwithstanding there were fifty of them in the Hall, yet they dared not seize Watson. Mr. Sheriff, turning to Sir Samuel, said, "there you hear, Sir, what the constables say, what can I do more than I have done?" This pusillanimous speech made Watson ten times more violent than he was before. I confess that my blood boiled at hearing such language from the Sheriff; and although I was not personally concerned, as Watson had not touched one man that had my colours in his hat, yet I felt disgusted and angered to see such partial and indecisive conduct on the part of the Sheriff, who actually turned round and appealed to me to know

what he should do? I replied indignantly, "why, commit the constables, and seize the daring violater of the law yourself, to be sure; you cannot plead that you have not the means to put a stop to this brutal insolence, when you have the power of calling every man to aid and assist you." The Sheriff did not like this advice, or at best he did not attempt to follow it; but made some paltry excuse, saying that it would be very dangerous to interfere with such desperate ruffians, and he could not do more than he had done.

All this time Watson was committing the most daring outrages upon every one who came within reach of his fist. At length I said aloud to the Sheriff, "Sir, as your constables have refused to obey your orders, will you authorise *me* to bring Watson before you?" "By all means, Mr. Hunt, and I shall really be much obliged to you if you will aid and assist." I sprang from the hustings upon the table appropriated for the inspectors, and from thence into the box where Watson was, and seized the ruffian by the collar, and almost in the twinkling of an eye I threw him out of the box upon the table. In the effort I had stripped his coat, waistcoat and shirt, off his back, nearly down to his waist; there he stood riveted in my grasp, with his brawney shoulders naked and exposed to the whole assembly; and the Sheriff and Sir Samuel Romilly appeared to be thunderstruck for the moment. The Sheriff ordered him into the custody of half a score of constables, and directed that he should be taken before the mayor, either to be committed or bound over to keep the peace, and Sir Samuel Romilly undertook to go and prefer the charges against him. The fellow was led away thus guarded, and I received the warm thanks of Sir Samuel as well as the Sheriff; the former was very sincere, but the latter was most jesuitical. Within five minutes the news was brought, that Watson had no sooner got into the street than he upset the ten constables, and made his escape. However, my decisive conduct had the effect of keeping Mr. Watson out of the hall for the remainder of the election, and the very brave Captain Gee became much less troublesome afterwards. Those who saw this transaction will never forget it.

Sir Samuel Romilly having resigned on the eighth day, the poll was continued open on the ninth, and the electors continued to offer their votes and poll, although but slowly; yet as it was expected that a considerable number of out-voters from London and other places would arrive on the following day, to vote for Sir Samuel Romilly, some of his friends wished to keep open the poll; but the Sheriff ordered it to be closed at four o'clock on the tenth day, at which time Messrs. Davis and Protheroe, whose forces had been united by a coalition, were declared to be duly elected. The numbers who voted were stated to be, for Davis 2910—Protheroe 2435—Romilly 1685—Hunt 455. The only remarkable thing in these numbers is, that so many should have voted for *me*, who never spent a shilling, and who never canvassed a vote, and whose friends never spent a penny. The fact was, that the city had been canvassed by all parties but myself, and every species of bribery, intimidation and corrupt practice had been resorted to by the partizans of the three candidates, by whom an immense sum had been squandered away. The White Lion candidate and the Club, of course, according to their ancient and laudable custom, scattered their money profusely to purchase votes; they had an interest in doing so; but Mr. Protheroe's and Sir Samuel Romilly's appeared to be a bad speculation. Mr. Protheroe and his friends could not have expended less than twenty thousand pounds. It was, indeed, said to have cost the two successful candidates and their friends as much as thirty thousand each; and, when all things are taken into consideration, perhaps this is not over-rating it. The expenses of Sir Samuel Romilly's election could not have been less than twenty thousand pounds, it might have been more, for it will be recollected that eight thousand were subscribed in one day at the meeting held at the Crown and Anchor in London; so that for every vote given to Sir S. Romilly it cost at least *ten pounds a man*; and for every vote given to Davis and Protheroe, supposing the number to have been 3,000 and the expenses of each 30,000 l. every vote must have cost *twenty pounds a man*; while any whole expenses, thither and back, and while I retrained there, did not exceed twenty-five pounds, about a *shilling* for each vote. Only look at the contrast, and no one will be surprised at the apparent smallness of the number which voted for me. I believe almost every man who voted for me voted also for Sir Samuel Romilly; but his partizans evinced full as great an hostility to me as the myrmidons of the White Lion Club did. Every vote was urged to poll plumpers for Romilly; and, in fact, when they answered that they should poll for Hunt and Romilly, they were frequently told that the friends of Romilly would not accept their votes on any such terms, they would rather lose the votes altogether than suffer them to vote for Hunt. Between two and three thousand freedoms were taken up and paid for by the friends of the candidates, and all those taken up by the partizans of Romilly were paid for upon the express condition that they did not vote for Hunt, but give plumpers for Romilly. It was this shameful conduct that palsied all public feeling, and filled the real patriotic friends of Liberty with disgust. Many hundreds would not come forward at all, as they deemed it absolute folly to lay themselves open to the vindictive revenge of the agents of Government, merely to support such illiberal proceedings; and many hundreds, when they found what was the language of those who canvassed for Sir Samuel Romilly, actually went and voted for Davis and Protheroe, under the impression that, if they must support such a corrupt system, they had much better do it where they could do so with safety, and where they could benefit rather than injure themselves. If the friends of Sir Samuel, or rather those who wished to make a tool of him to serve their own grovelling interests, had come forward manfully, and declared their readiness to

support and vote for Hunt as well as for him, against the coalition of Tories and sham Whigs, the public enthusiasm would have been such that we should undoubtedly have been both elected, instead of Davis and Protheroe, in spite of all the money that the latter were spending to bribe the voters. But the mean, selfish, temporising conduct of the friends of Romilly, lost him the election. The fact was, that these hypocritical Whigs would rather have sacrificed Romilly a hundred times, and have elected the devil himself, than they would have voted for Hunt. "Take any shape but that!" They knew that I should spoil their sport; they knew that I would not connive at the corruption of the Whigs, any more than I would at that of the Tories; and therefore I was no man for them; and the result was, that Romilly lost his election solely through this dastardly and corrupt feeling.

Sir Samuel took his departure for London immediately, and I went to a friend's near Bath, whence I returned the next day, by appointment, to dine with my friends in Bristol. The multitude that came out to receive me, the unsuccessful candidate, surpassed all former precedent. I was taken as usual to the Exchange, where I pledged myself, if supported at all by the friends of Romilly, that I would present and prosecute a petition to Parliament against the return of Davis and Protheroe. Upon this, I received the assurance of many of Romilly's friends, that they would support the petition, by a pecuniary subscription; although they, snake-like, or rather *Bristol-men-like*, declined to be seen openly supporting it. I own I did not rely much upon these promises, and it was fortunate that I did not, for, if I had, I should have been most wretchedly deceived.

I returned into the country, and as soon as the Parliament met, I presented the following Petition to the Honourable House:—

*"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.*

"The Petition of Henry Hunt, of Rowfant House, in the County of Sussex, Esquire; William Pimm, of the City of Bristol, salesman; Thomas Pimm, of the City of Bristol, currier; William Weetch, of the City of Bristol, clothier; and Thomas Gamage, of the City of Bristol, cabinet-maker,

**"HUMBLY SHEWETH,**

"That your petitioners, William Pimm, Thomas Pimm, William Weetch, and Thomas Gamage, now are, and at the time of the last election of two Members to serve in the present Parliament for the City of Bristol, were electors of the said City, and claim to have a right to vote, and did vote, at the said election; and at the said election your petitioner Henry Hunt, together with Richard Hart Davis, Esquire, Edward Protheroe, Esquire, and Sir Samuel Romilly, Knight, were candidates to represent the said City, as citizens of the same, in this present Parliament.

"That the said Richard Hart Davis, Esquire, and Edward Protheroe, Esquire, by themselves, their agents, friends, managers, committees, partizans, and others on his and their behalf, previous to and at the said election, were guilty of gross and notorious bribery and corruption; and at and during the said election, and previous thereto, the said Richard Hart Davis and the said Edward Protheroe, by themselves, their agents, friends, managers, committees, partizans, and others on their behalf, by gifts and rewards, and promises and agreements, and securities for gifts and rewards, did corrupt and procure divers persons, as well those who were qualified to vote, as those who claimed or pretended to have a right to vote, at the said election, to give their votes for them the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe, Esquires; and did also, by gifts and rewards, and promises, agreements, and securities for gifts and rewards, corrupt and procure divers other persons, being qualified to vote at the said election, to refuse and forbear to give their votes at the same, for your petitioner the said Henry Hunt, or the other candidate, contrary to the laws and statutes enacted for the prevention of such corrupt practices.

"That the said Richard Hart Davis and the said Edward Protheroe, by themselves, their agents, friends, managers, committees, partizans, and others on their behalf, were guilty of the most flagrant and notorious acts of intimidation, thereby basely and unlawfully procuring by threats, divers other persons, being qualified to vote at the said election, through the fear of being persecuted, ruined, imprisoned, and otherwise ill-used and punished, to forbear to give their votes to your petitioner the said Henry Hunt, or the other candidate, in violation of the rights of the electors, the privileges of Parliament, and the freedom of election.

"That the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe, by themselves, their agents, friends, managers, committees, partizans, and others on their behalf, after the test of the writ for the said election, and before the election of the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe to serve in the Parliament for the said City of Bristol, did give, present and allow to divers persons, who had votes, or claimed or pretended to have a right to vote at such election, money, meat, drink, entertainment and

provision, and make presents, gifts, rewards and entertainments, and make promises, agreements, obligations, to give and allow money, meat, drink, provision, presents, rewards and entertainments, to and for such persons having or claiming or pretending to have a right to vote at the said election; and to and for the use, advantage, benefit, emolument, profit and preferment of such person and persons, in order to their the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe being elected, and to procure the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe to be returned to serve in the present Parliament for the said City of Bristol, in violation of the standing orders and regulations of your Honourable House, and in defiance of the laws and statutes of the realm enacted for preventing charge and expense in the election of Members to serve in Parliament.

"That a large body of military, consisting of the Middlesex militia, were quartered within two miles of the said City, and many of whom were actually stationed within the walls of the said City of Bristol; and that Colonel Gore, commandant of the Bristol Volunteers, gave orders, the day before the election commenced, to have two pieces of brass ordnance, six pounders, removed from the Grove, where they had been kept for the last two years, and had them placed upon the Exchange, where they remained during the whole of the said election, to the terror of the electors and peaceable inhabitants of the said City of Bristol, regardless of the privileges of your Hon. House, and contrary to the statute of the 8th of George the Second, chap. 30th, in that case made and provided.

"That a great number of freemen were employed by the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe, or their agents, under the denomination of bludgeon men, or pretended constables, and that various sums of money were paid by the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe, or by their agents, committees, friends, managers or others on their behalf, to influence such of them as were entitled to vote, or pretend to have a right to vote, at the said election, and to induce them to give their votes for the said Richard Hart Davis and Edward Protheroe, Esqrs.

"That the poll was closed by the Sheriffs, the returning officers, two days sooner than by law directed, notwithstanding your petitioner, the said Henry Hunt, openly protested against it; several freemen at the time having offered to poll for the said Henry Hunt, which votes were refused to be taken and entered on the poll, and notwithstanding the Sheriffs were publicly informed that many other votes were on the road, who were coming with the intent to poll at the said election.

"Your petitioners therefore humbly pray, that the Honourable House will take the premises into their most serious consideration, and that the election and return of the said Richard Hart Davis, Esquire, and Edward Protheroe, Esquire, maybe declared to be null and void; and that such further relief may be granted to your petitioners as the justice of the case may require." "HENRY HUNT. "WILLIAM WEETCH. "WILLIAM PIMM. "THOMAS GAMAGE. "THOMAS PIMM."

Having done this, I entered into the usual securities for the prosecution of the inquiry before a Committee of the Honourable House, which Committee was appointed to be ballotted for on the 24th of February following.

A very extraordinary and unexpected change had in the mean time taken place in Russia; namely, the defeat of the French army, the recovery of Moscow by the Russians, and the rapid retreat of the French amidst a Russian winter. When Napoleon entered Moscow, the Governor Rochtopchin had, as we have before seen, caused great part of the capital to be destroyed by fire; and as the Emperor saw that it was destruction to attempt to remain there with his army during the winter, he resolved upon a retreat; but he remained too long before he began it. He first proposed an armistice, which was rejected, and he began his retreat on the ninth of November. The frost sat in severely nearly a month earlier than usual that year, and the ground was covered with a deep snow. The Russian armies pursued the retiring invaders; and the sufferings of the French and their allies were indescribable. The men and horses perished from cold upon the road by hundreds, and their carriages and artillery were broken to pieces and abandoned. Having accompanied the remains of his army back to Poland, Napoleon set off to Paris, where the Senate shewed him every mark of respect and attachment; but great discontent was very evident amongst the people. The loss sustained by the French, in men, and what is called the *materiel* of the army, was immense and incalculable. Thus was the finest, the bravest, the best disciplined, and the best equipped army that in all probability ever took the field—an army that, under such a leader, would have been victorious against a world in arms, was overthrown, defeated, routed, and destroyed by the horrid climate, by the artillery of a Russian winter.

Lord Liverpool had been appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and Mr. Vansittart Chancellor of the Exchequer, before the dissolution of the old Parliament. A number of naval actions took place, which answered no other good purpose but to establish the bravery of our seamen, which was and had been for a long time established beyond the possibility of a doubt; so these expeditions only added to the waste of human blood, and of the treasures of the country. The new Parliament met on the 24th of November, but very little business was done before Christmas, except granting a sum of 200,000\_1\_. of

John Gull's money to the Russians, as a compensation for the losses which they had suffered by the invasion of the French!

Thus ended the year 1812; the supplies voted out of John Gull's pocket being sixty-two millions, three hundred and seventy-six thousand, three hundred and fifty-eight pounds. The average price of wheat, per quarter, was six pounds four shillings and eight-pence, and of the quarter loaf, one and sixpence. The return of the notes of the Bank of England in circulation was *twenty-three millions*. By a return made to Parliament it was ascertained that out of ten thousand two hundred and sixty-one incumbents in England and Wales, only 4421 were residents: the remaining 5840 were of course non-residents; yet this precious priesthood of the established Church is receiving yearly upwards of five millions of pounds out of the earnings of John Gull! So much for politics, and so much for religion!

All my time was now occupied in preparing my evidence, to prove the allegations in my petition, the hearing of which was to come on in February. I found it necessary to take lodgings in London, as I meant to conduct the whole of the proceedings in person, on the part of myself and the petitioners. I had to apply to the Speaker for his warrants, to summon witnesses, and, amongst others, Mr. Perpetual Under Sheriff, to produce the poll, and other witnesses to produce books, papers, &c. &c.

In all these applications I found no difficulty in procuring warrants to make the parties produce whatever I applied for. At last it occurred to me, that this would be an excellent opportunity to get hold of the books of the Corporation, which were kept in the Chamberlain's office; which office was held so sacred, and the books therein contained were considered as such rare and valuable matter, that even the Members of the Corporation themselves were excluded, and could not gain access to the books, without a particular order from the Court of Aldermen. I was, however, determined at least to make an attempt to get into this *sanctum sanctorum*, by means of a Speaker's warrant. I never communicated my intention to a living soul; but I at length decided upon a copy of a warrant, that I thought would answer the purpose, which was to be directed to the Mayor, the Town Clerk, and the Chamberlain of the City, summoning them to appear before the Committee of the House of Commons, ordering them to permit myself and the other petitioners to have access to all the deeds, books, papers, and accounts, belonging to the Corporation, whether in the Chamberlain's office or elsewhere, and to allow us to take copies or extracts from such deeds, books, papers, or accounts, and to produce before the Committee any part of the said books and papers, that the said petitioners might require, on their giving due notice of the same, &c. &c. &c.

Having settled all this in my mind, I went to the Speaker's clerk, and desired him to draw me up a warrant to the above effect, and to get it signed by the Speaker. When he read it over he stared, and observed that it was a most sweeping warrant, and such a one as he had never before known applied for or granted. I told him it was not possible for me to complete my case before the Committee, unless I could produce some of these books, and that it was much more rational to give me power to go down and examine them upon the spot, than it would be to direct the Chamberlain to bring up a waggon load of books, to lay before the Committee, when, perhaps, three or four of them would be all that I might require. He concurred in the propriety of this remark, and appeared extremely ready to assist me in procuring the Speaker's signature, and said he would lay it upon his table the moment he had eaten his dinner. But, as it was very important for me to get this document signed, I suggested to him the advantage that might arise from his laying the warrant, with several others, before the Speaker just as he was *going to sit down to dinner*, as in that case he might sign it with the others, as a matter of course. This hint was made a proper use of. At half-past seven, on the same evening, I received the much-longed-for warrant from the Clerk of the Speaker, at his house in Palace-yard; at half-past eight on the same evening, (Saturday) I was safely seated in the Bristol Mail at the Gloucester Coffee-house; and, on the Monday morning following, I contrived that the Mayor, the Town Clerk, and the Chamberlain should be all served with the warrants at one and the same time! I myself delivered that which was addressed to Mr. Winter Harris, the Chamberlain.

The warrant was peremptory, but the Chamberlain required a short time to consult his brother officers of the Corporation, which I readily granted, and appointed to return at the end of two hours, to commence my examinations. I attended with my friends, at the time appointed, and found that the Mayor and the Chamberlain had got a good fire prepared in the adjoining Council Chamber, with pens, ink, and stationary. This room, they said, should be appropriated to our use, and we could have as many of the books at a time from the Chamberlain's office, as I might require. Both parties were very well satisfied with this arrangement, and we immediately sat to work, and continued at it for seven or eight hours in the day, till I had looked over all the books, papers, and deeds, belonging to the said Corporation, and taken what copies and extracts I thought proper. In this labour I was incessantly occupied for several days; I think nearly a week. I took copies of some most curious and valuable documents, many of which were published, by my old and worthy friend Cranidge, in the year 1818, I having made him a present of the manuscript for that purpose. I will here insert as specimens, two or three items which I transcribed from the cash-book



1793.

Oct. 12.—Paid Lord Viscount Bateman, to reimburse him and the Officers and Men of the Herefordshire Militia, the extra expenses they have lately been put to, in providing accommodation for the said Militia at the time of the late Riots in this City, viz.—THE BRIDGE.... £105 0 0

This is an item worthy to be recorded in every publication relating to the city of Bristol, Lord Bateman was Col. Commandant of the Herefordshire Militia, at the time when they fired upon, and massacred the citizens of Bristol, at the memorable slaughter at the Bridge, in the year 1793. Was this hundred guineas the price of that slaughter? This curious fact would never have been known, had it not been for our famous all-powerful *Speaker's warrant*. I understand that many of the Corporation were astonished, when this fact was published; they never having heard of it, or dreamed that 105\_l\_ of the citizens own money was paid to this Lord, for ordering his troops to fire upon them!

1793. £. s. d.

Oct.—Paid George Daubeny, Esq. for raising Bristol volunteers..... 300 0 0

1801.—Paid expenses during the Market Riots, &c. on account of the dear-ness of Provisions, in the month of April, 1801..... 117 7 4

N. B. The Chamberlain's Salary was this year raised from 62\_l\_ 10s. per quarter, to 125\_l\_ per quarter, making the annual amount..... 500 0 0

1806.—Paid GEORGE WEBB HALL, at sundry times, towards passing the Bristol Paving Bill..... 1,000 0 0

1810.—Paid commemorating the National Jubilee on the 25th October, 1809 337 11 4

1811.—Paid John Noble, Esq. for Wine sent to the Lord High Steward, the Recorder, and the two Members of Parliament..... 315 0 0

N. B. This is an annual gift from the freemen.

1811.—Paid on account of the expenses of the invitation and the visit of

Lord Grenville, to an entertainment £. s. d. given him by the Citizens, as High Steward, in May, 1811... 1,393 11 0

1812.

July 14.—Paid John H. Wilcocks, Mayor, the monies expended by him in entertaining the MILITARY, viz. (the East Middlesex Militia and Scots Greys) at the Mayoralty House; and for Beer for GUARDS MOUNTED IN THE CITY DURING THE ELECTION, VIZ..... 437 0 4

1812.

Sept.—Paid J. M. Gutch, for printing Advertisements for calling a Public Meeting of the Citizens to address the Prince Regent on the Death of the Right Hon. Spencer Perceval, Chancellor of the Exchequer..... 52 18 0

Only let the reader cast his eye over the foregoing items, extracted from amongst some thousands of

a similar nature; few as they are, they will serve as a specimen of the manner in which the Corporation of the city of Bristol spend the monies of the citizens; for whom, be it remembered, they only act as trustees. Lord Bateman was the Colonel of the Herefordshire Militia, who fired upon the citizens, and slaughtered a number of them; and his Lordship received one hundred guineas for this valiant and humane feat!! The Chamberlain's salary is raised, *is doubled*, in the year 1801, in consequence of the high price of provisions. *Quere*, has it been lowered again, now that the price of provisions is fallen? The item of July the 14th, 1812, is such as I do not believe disgraces the books of any other Corporation in England; between four and five hundred pounds *paid to the military*, by the civil power, for services performed *during the election*, some of which services I have before noticed. Four hundred and thirty-seven pounds paid to the military, for preventing the election of HENRY HUNT for the city of Bristol, in the year 1812. The item of 52\_l. 18\_s. for advertising a public meeting of the citizens of Bristol, to address the Prince Regent on the death of Spencer Perceval, is another precious proof of shameful, or rather shameless, expenditure. Why, five pounds would have been ample, to have informed every inhabitant of the city of it. But here, however, is 52\_l. 18\_s. paid to one corrupt knave of an editor, merely for calling a meeting! No wonder these caitiff editors are such time-serving tools, when they can get so profusely paid for their mercenary loyalty. This is a pretty bill of goggle-eyed Gutch, and for a pretty purpose too. This shews the expense of getting up a loyal meeting! During the whole time that I was taking the above extracts, and all those which have been published by Mr. John Cranidge, not only the Chamberlain, but the whole Corporation, were in a state of fever and the greatest agitation. This, however, did not prevent my steadily persevering in my purpose. These impudent fellows of Bristol city, who were the greatest tyrants in Christendom over those whose fate it is to be placed in their power, were quite tame, were civil, and even polite for Bristol chaps! So it is always; a subdued tyrant is the most tame, time-serving, abject slave in the world.

Perhaps there never before was such a mass of fraud and chicanery discovered and exposed. There might be seen charities upon charities, vast estates left for charitable purposes, producing a large annual income, and which, if fairly let, would produce an enormous increase, at least three times the sum; but one and all of these, with their immense revenue and patronage, were misapplied and perverted to corrupt electioneering purposes! In fact, whenever I could come at the truth, there did not appear to be a single charity in the whole city, whether vested in the Corporation or not, and great numbers there are, but what was perverted to electioneering purposes. Hospitals, schools, almshouses, charities for apprenticeing freemen's sons—charities for setting up young freemen in business—charities for lying-in women—charities for widows—charities for orphans, in fact, all sorts of charities, all were rendered subservient to the accursed purpose of rivetting the fetters of the people, by being made instruments of bribery. In the first place, the original property is in most instances granted out upon long leases, or upon lives, for a mere nominal premium and nominal rent, to the tools and dependents of the Corporation. In truth, almost all the Corporation, all their dirty instruments, and the major part of the parsons and lawyers, are tenants. Large sums of money are lent by the Corporation, to the members of the Corporation, at mere nominal interest. Almost all the merchants and tradesmen of the city hold something under the Corporation, and at the time of the elections are their abject tools;—but to give a full and faithful account of these, would be to write the history of Bristol, and, as that is not my purpose, I shall proceed to other matters, not, however, till I have strongly recommended to every one, who is in any way connected with that city, to read the book published by John Cranidge, A.M. in the year 1818, entitled, "A *Mirror* for the Burgesses and Commonalty of the City of Bristol; in which is exhibited to their view, a part of the great and many interesting benefactions and endowments, of which the city has to boast, and for which the CORPORATION are responsible, as the stewards and trustees thereof: correctly transcribed from authentic documents, by John Cranidge, A.M."

It is very true, as Mr. Cranidge asserts, that the Corporation are the trustees for the freemen and burgesses, to whom they are, or rather ought to be, responsible. Having made myself complete master of this subject, I had resolved in my own mind, in case I had been elected the member for the city of Bristol, to make these worthies, the Corporation, *really* and not nominally responsible; and, with the blessing of God, I would have made them account for and refund those enormous sums and immense funds which they had so disgracefully, so infamously, misapplied. The charities are so numerous and so ample, that I firmly believe, if the property belonging to them were fairly let and made the most of, there would not be a citizen of Bristol that would not be handsomely provided for out of these funds. No city in the world ever produced more philanthropists, or more misanthropists, than the city of Bristol. No city of its size in the world can boast more charitable institutions—no city is more degraded by poverty and wretchedness amongst its inhabitants, mainly created by the corrupt misapplication of those very charities.

On the 24th or the 25th of February, 1813, the Committee was balloted for in the House of Commons; the petitioners and the sitting members each striking out a certain number till they were reduced to thirteen, which, together with the nominee for each party, made fifteen, as follows—

Michael Angelo Taylor, Esq. Member for Poole, Chairman.  
P. Grenfell, Esq. Great Marlow.  
Philip Gell, Esq. Penryn.  
Hon. R. Neville, Berkshire.  
H. Pierce, Esq. Northampton.  
Abel Smith. Esq. Wendover.  
Lord G. Russell, Bedford.  
C. Harvey, Esq. Norwich.  
T. Whitmore, Esq. Bridgenorth.  
G. Shiffner, Esq. Lewes.  
D.S. Dugdale, Esq. Warwick.  
J. Daley, Esq. Galway.  
B. Lester Lester, Esq. Poole.

**NOMINEES.**

Sir Francis Burdett, Bart. Westminster; for the Petitioners.  
Sir James Graham, Bart. Carlisle; for the Sitting Members.

**SITTING MEMBERS.**

Richard Hart Davis, Esq—Edward Protheroe, Esq.

**PETITIONERS.**

1st. Henry Hunt, Esq.—2nd. Wm. Pimm, T. Pimm,  
Wm. Weech, T. Gamage, Electors.

Counsel for Mr. Davis, Mr. Warren and Mr. Harrison.  
Counsel for Mr. Protheroe, Mr. Adam & Mr. Randle Jackson.

Mr. Hunt appeared in person for himself and other petitioners.

The parties were all called to the bar of the House, when the names of the Committee were called over, and the 26th was appointed for commencing the proceedings.

On the 26th of February, 1813, the Committee assembled at twelve o'clock, and I opened the proceedings by an address of about two hours in length, in which I laid before them my case; a case containing a detail of the evidence by which I meant to substantiate the charges and allegations contained in the petition. The hearing of this petition lasted fourteen days, and it concluded by the Committee deciding "that the Sitting Members were duly elected, but that the petition was not frivolous or vexatious." So each party had the pleasure of paying his own costs. My expenses I estimated at about *six hundred pounds*. The whole of the mighty subscriptions which I was to have received from the friends of Sir Samuel Romilly, amounted to the amazing sum of TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS, and no more; which sum exactly paid one of my witnesses, Mr. Alderman Vaughan. I have heard since that there was a much larger sum subscribed; but, if it was so, *somebody else* took care of *that*. I can only say that was the whole amount that ever came to my hands, or was ever appropriated to pay any part of the expenses that I incurred, Many of my friends paid their own expenses to London and back, as witnesses, and raised a subscription to pay the expenses of other friendly witnesses; and I believe some of the petitioners were sued for some expenses afterwards. It was calculated that the sum expended by the sitting members in resisting the petition, was not less than four thousand pounds. All that I can say is, I am quite confident that had the Committee been chosen from a House of Commons fairly elected by the people of England, or had they been the honest representatives of the people of England, instead of being, as they were, the representatives of corrupt and rotten boroughs, and corrupt and rotten influence, I repeat, I am quite sure that I proved abundantly sufficient to have rendered it a void election. But it must be borne in mind, that this Committee was chosen from as corrupt and profligate a Boroughmongering Parliament as ever disgraced the Parliamentary annals of once free and happy England.

I now retired once more to my farm, at Rowfant, in Sussex; and although pretty much minus in pocket, I had yet the gratification of being conscious that I had done my duty to the people of Bristol, and had effected a great national good, by the exposures which I had made of the corrupt state of the representation, even in what was called a popular representation of a populous and free city. So satisfied were the people of Bristol with my exertions, that they invited me down to a public dinner, as a testimony that, although I was unsuccessful, still the Citizens of Bristol were not insensible of the services which I had rendered them, by making an effort in their behalf, and fighting so gallantly their

battle and the battle of Reform. I was received with every demonstration of respect; and indeed with increased enthusiasm and attention by all classes of the citizens, except the corrupt factions and their corrupt and time-serving dependants and tools. These testimonials of respect and attachment to me, as the avowed champion of Radical Reform, were excessively galling to the Corporation, and to the corrupt knaves of attorneys, parsons, merchants, and pettyfoggers of all sorts, who lived on the taxes, and battened on the distresses of the people; those, in short, who were gorging upon the vitals of the poor, rioting in luxury, and wallowing in wealth, wrung from the sweat of the labourers' and mechanics' brows.

During these public exertions I had not been inattentive to the management of my farm. As I had made up my mind not to remain at Rowfant; first, because it was not a profitable farm to occupy; and, second, because the situation of the country being low, and damp in the winter, did not agree with me, and had caused me to suffer very considerable ill health from rheumatism, I was induced to improve the estate, more with an idea of disposing of the lease, than with the intention of making any immediate profit from the cultivation of the soil. In this object I completely succeeded. I so effectually on my own principles drained a great part of arable, as well as of the pasture land, that it paid me an hundred-fold; for, during the spring and summer of 1813, no farm in the kingdom had a more flourishing appearance, or bid fairer for better crops. Every thing was beautiful and luxuriant, and put on such a face as would have done credit to the cultivation of the very best land, much more to a poor, hungry, deceitful and barren soil, which a great portion of this farm at Rowfant really was. I advertised the lease to be sold, and very soon had some customers, with one of whom I quickly struck a bargain, and disposed of my lease and crops, the whole of which the purchaser undertook to take off my hands at a valuation, as soon as it could be made. Some of my speculations upon this estate completely failed. I had sunk a considerable sum in endeavouring to keep a flock of sheep, for which the farm was by no means congenial; added to this, my flock became infected with the foot rot, having been contaminated by the few half Southdown half Merinos which I had purchased of Mr. Dean, of Chard, of which unfortunate deal I have before spoken. In calculating the loss which I sustained by purchasing these sheep, which were unsound, and infected with that incurable disorder (at least incurable upon a wet soil), I then placed it as before, much below the mark; for I sincerely believe I was ultimately two hundred pounds out of pocket by the bargain, notwithstanding the infamous falsehoods of the infamous editor of the *Taunton Courier*.

Another speculation, in which I was very unfortunate, was the making of charcoal. I had a very fine lot of wood, which I could not dispose of, and I was therefore advised to make it into charcoal, as other farmers in that neighbourhood were accustomed to do. In fact, there did not appear any other rational method of disposing of my wood, which I had been obliged to take at a valuation when I took the estate. Well, I hired a man to make this charcoal; so far the business succeeded, for as it was very fine wood, so it produced a large quantity of very nice charcoal, as good as ever was seen. But then the next thing was to procure sacks to put it in, that it might be sent to the London market for sale. It required *two-hundred and forty sacks*, of about two bushels each, to make a load; these were ordered from a manufacturer at East Grinstead. The charcoal was loaded and sent off to London, altogether as good a set-out as ever passed over Blackfriars Bridge. A customer was soon found, but I never touched the cash, nor ever saw my 240 sacks again, so that the whole was a dead loss of about fifty pounds. Thus ended my speculations in charcoal, as I was determined that I would never cut any more wood as long as I kept the estate, but that I would let it grow for the next person who should follow me, to try, if he pleased, his hand at dealing in charcoal; it appeared to me to be wise to put up with the first loss, and quit the concern.

I had, in the whole, expended six thousand pounds in the purchase of what I took to when I entered upon this farm, and in the improvement which I had made in cultivation, stock, &c. I sold my lease for two thousand pounds, and the valuations were to the amount of six thousand more; the whole sum being eight thousand pounds, which was paid me on the nail, by Richard Crawshaw, Esq. the present proprietor; and I took my leave of Rowfant, bearing away with me two thousand pounds more than I carried thither. This was such an occurrence as had never been known, in the memory of man, to have happened to any stranger that had come to reside in the parish of Worth—that of leaving the parish richer than he entered it.

On the same morning that I received this money, which was paid me in one thousand pounds' Bank notes, I called at the Bank of England, to change one of the thousand pound notes. I was desired to present it to the inspector, which I did, and he made his mark upon it as good, and tore off at the lower corner the name of the person who had entered it. He then desired me to carry it back to the clerk, to whom I had first presented it for payment; I did so, and presented it again. The gentleman inquired in what notes I should like to have the change? I replied, one five hundred, and five of one hundred each. Drawing the pen from behind his ear, and dipping it in the ink, he handed it to me, together with the note, saying, "write your name and address on the back of the note, I will give you the change

immediately." I stared the jockey full in the face for a short time, which stare he returned; and then exclaimed, "come, Sir, write your name and address." "Not I, indeed," was the answer. "What," said he, in a loud voice, "what, refuse to sign your name?" "Yes," said I, "I do refuse to sign my name." This was said in about two keys higher than Mr. Clerk's interrogatory. "Well, then," said he, "I shall not give you the change, till you do sign your name and address upon the back of the note." "What," said I, raising my voice still higher, "back one of your notes for a thousand pounds? Indeed, I shall do no such thing! I have not confidence enough in your firm to back one of your one pound notes, and much less one of your notes for a thousand pounds."

By this time I had a mob collected round me, some professing to be astonished at my impudence, but others unequivocally expressing their approbation of my conduct; adding, that they were very happy to hear me take these impudent, all-sufficient gentlemen clerks to task a little. The former set, who expressed their astonishment, seemed, from the cut of their coats, and the turn of their phizzes, to be bankers' and merchants' clerks; but many of the latter seemed to be gentlemen. I continued boldly to demand any change, or my note. The latter was instantly handed to me; but, as it was mutilated, and the name of the person, by whom it had been entered, had been torn off by the inspector, I declined to take it. Mr. Clerk as resolutely refused to give me the change, saying, that they had positive orders not to take any notes of that description, above 50\_l. from a stranger, without his name and address were endorsed on the note. I demanded what law there was for such a proceeding, but I could get no answer. I then demanded to see the Governor; but I was told that he was engaged, and could not be spoken with. I asked if it was not a good note? They replied "yes, it was admitted to be so by the inspector." "Then," said I, "as you have mutilated the note, and refuse to give me change; and as you also refuse to admit me to the Governor, I will swear the debt of 1000\_l. against the Governor and Company of the Bank of England; and if there is an independent attorney in London, I will instantly strike a docket against them. On hearing this they all started; all the clerks stood with their pens behind their ears; all business was at an end; and, as I spoke loud, every man in the Rotunda heard what I said. Two or three gentlemen present gave me their cards of address, promising to come forward, to prove that the clerk refused payment, and denied the Governor of the Bank, which, as I said, was evidently an act of bankruptcy; and they offered me numerous thanks for calling these impudent gentry to account, and checking their usual insolence, which, many of them said, was unpardonable. I repeated my declaration, and walked out of the Bank, leaving my note in their hands, and all the clerks half petrified and gazing on each other in utter astonishment.

I tried three or four attorneys, to induce them to strike a docket against the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, and offered to make an affidavit of the debt, the refusal of payment, and the denial of the Governor. But I could not get *one of these worthies to move a peg* in the affair; so I left the note where it was, and went into the country for three or four days.

Upon my return to my inn in London, Cooper's Hotel, in Bouverie-street, I found a letter from Mr. Henry Hase, the cashier of the Bank of England. It seems that, on my quitting the Bank, they sent some one to dog me to the inn, and by these means they found out who I was. The letter was couched in very civil language, requesting me to call for the thousand pounds, or offering to send it to me to the inn, in any notes I pleased. The next day I called at the Bank, with my son, who was then about fourteen years of age, being determined, one way or another, to set at rest this question of giving names. I gave to my son a five hundred pound note, to put in his pocket, that he might, at a proper time demand it to be *exchanged*; for it was a mockery to call it *payment*, it being only exchanging one PROMISE TO PAY for another PROMISE TO PAY. On my arrival at the Bank, I demanded to see Mr. Hase. Business was at an end the moment that I entered the Rotunda, the clerks all having their eyes fixed upon me. I was immediately introduced to Mr. Hase, in his private room, and I expostulated with him against such illegal conduct as I had experienced. I was introduced by him to the Governor, who, together with Mr. Hase, admitted that there was no law to compel any person to sign his name or give his address; but they said it was, nevertheless, their invariable practice not to exchange a note above fifty pounds for any stranger, without first obtaining his name and address, and they pleaded the necessity of this, to enable them to trace forgeries or robberies; and they proceeded to say, that they did so for the benefit of the public. I contended, on the contrary, that it was not only illegal, but an insult upon the public, and a particular insult to the person presenting the note to be *exchanged* (I always calling it *exchanged*, they always calling it *payment*); for, after their inspector had admitted the note to be a good one, they had no legal or moral right to refuse to *exchange* it for other notes. I candidly told them that I had kept my promise, and that I had seriously endeavoured to get a DOCKET struck against them, for an act of bankruptcy. The Governor smiled, but Mr. Hase looked very grave. They, however, apologised for the trouble which I had experienced; Mr. Hase adding, "it will not happen again, Mr. Hunt. As you are now so well known to the clerks, they will not require your name in future. We certainly ought, (continued he) to have known you, as we recollect that you brought an action against Messrs. Hobhouse, Clutterbuck and Co. bankers, of Bath, because they would not pay you their notes in cash; you having refused to take Bank of England notes in exchange. We know that you are an enemy to

our paper system; but we recognise you as an honourable and open enemy."

A good deal of such conversation passed between us, and it ended by a polite offer, on the part of the Governor, to shew me and my son over the establishment. As I was rather in a hurry, and had other business to do, I declined on that account to accept the offer. Mr. Hase then said, with a smile, that he would feel pleasure in taking another opportunity to shew me over their whole establishment, when he had no doubt but he should convince me of their solvency.

I now took my leave of the Governor, and Mr. Hase accompanied me out to the clerk, and desired him to give Mr. Hunt change for his note, in any sums which he might choose. He then made his bow, and quitted me. When this was arranged, my son, whose name was unknown, produced his note for five hundred pounds. It was, as usual, handed to the inspector, amidst the inquiring eyes of all the clerks. It was marked as a *good one*, and my son returned to the clerk, and demanded five hundred pound notes. Mr. Clerk handed him the pen, and desired him to write his name and address; to which he replied, that he should certainly do neither, but that he insisted on the change. The clerk refused, saying it was as much as his situation was worth to comply. I was, meanwhile, taking down notes with a pencil in my pocket-book, without saying one word, except that I would be a witness for him. The whole place was again in a state of uproar, but my young friend was immovable, and acted his part like a hero. At length Mr. Hase was called out again, and the clerk informed him that the youth refused to give his name, and he wished to know if he must pay him the five one hundred pound notes without it. For a moment Mr. Hase lost his temper, and positively ordered the clerk not to pay it unless the usual custom was complied with; and he began in a pettish manner to question my son, and in a peremptory tone demanded his name. The younker, however, as peremptorily and as sturdily refused to comply. Mr. Hase was just going away in dudgeon, when he happened to cast his eye upon me, and perceived that I was deliberately taking down all that passed without saying a word; upon which, instantly recollecting himself, he turned back, and laughing, said to the clerk, "pay him the notes; as he is with Mr. Hunt we can call upon him to give us his name, if ever it should be found necessary." Then, patting my son upon the shoulder, he added, "recollect, young gentleman, that you are the first who ever left the Bank with such a sum without giving his name." He then turned to me, and said, "You have carried your point, Mr. Hunt; good morning." I answered sarcastically, "good morning, Mr. Cashier." The clerk having paid my son the notes, I bade him good morning, telling him, at the same time, that I was very sorry he should have given himself and his master so much unnecessary trouble. My son also significantly nodding his head, and patting his pocket, added his "good morning, Mr. Clerk;" and off we marched, amidst the cheers of a very considerable multitude, who had collected and listened to this curious dialogue. Amongst the number was one of the gentlemen who had given me his address on the previous day, when I left my thousand pounds; and he heartily thanked me for having brought these *Jacks-in-office* for once to their senses, and compelled them to act agreeably to the law, which they had so long been in the habit of setting at defiance.

I now went to reside at Middleton Cottage, in Hampshire, situated on the London-road, about three miles from Andover, which I rented of James Widmore, Esq. together with the manor of Longparish, extending over a very fine sporting country, of eight or ten thousand acres, well stocked with game, particularly partridges and pheasants. As I found that farming was become a very expensive amusement, and that in consequence of the great increase of poor's rates and king's taxes, the profits attending the best managed farm were very precarious, I had made up my mind to remain out of business rather than run the risk of sinking my capital without any corresponding chance of making it pay common interest; and, therefore, for a while I lived at Middleton Cottage, enjoying domestic happiness, combined with the sports of the field. I soon, however, found that I was not formed for an idle life. Although I took more exercise, in shooting and fishing, than most men in business are in the habit of taking, yet some more serious occupation was required to fill up the measure of my time. An opportunity having also offered for me to resume my agricultural pursuits, by the lease of Cold Hanly Farm, near the Borough of Whitchurch, being sold by auction, I was induced, from the representations of my attorney (who I afterwards discovered to have been interested in the sale of this lease), to purchase it, and I entered upon the farm early in the year 1814. This certainly was a bad speculation, as the lease had only three years to run. I bought in the stock upon this farm at a very high price. Many of my horses cost me upwards of fifty pounds each, and all the other farming stock a proportionably high price. My principal inducement to take this farm, which contained about four hundred acres of land, was my wish to try the experiment of raising large crops of corn in the manner recommended in Tull's Husbandry; which work I had been reading with great pleasure, on the recommendation of Mr. Cobbett, who had begun partially to adopt the system of drilling at wide intervals, as practised by the late Mr. Jetheroe Tull, of Shalbourn, near Hungerford, Berks. There is something very captivating in the language of Mr. Tull's writings upon cultivation. It is so clear and so reasonable, that, when combined with the facts which he lays before the reader, as to the nature and the amount of the crops raised by him, every line almost carries conviction with it. Unfortunately, both Mr. Cobbett and myself placed too great reliance on the opinions and assertions of Mr. Tull. We both suffered severely in

pocket, by persevering too long in, and acting too extensively upon, the plan of drilling wheat at wide intervals, as laid down by Tull. I do not mean to insinuate that Mr. Tull ever stated the amount of his crops to be better in quality, or more in quantity, than they really were; but I have no hesitation in saying, that the climate of England must have been very different in the time of Mr. Tull from what it was in the days of Mr. Cobbett and Mr. Hunt, to have produced either the quantity or the quality of wheat which Mr. Tull says was produced per acre upon his farm, according to his system. When I found the practice fail, and that wheat was blighted upon the high hills and cold soil of Hampshire, I took a farm into my own hands at Upavon, in Wiltshire, for the purpose of giving the system a fair trial. Nay, so convinced was I of the truth of the principles laid down by Tull, respecting the food of plants, and such reliance did I place upon the truth of his assertions, that I persevered one or two years after Mr. Cobbett had given the thing up as a hopeless and losing speculation. I mean to be understood only as far as relates to the drilling of wheat at four feet intervals, to plough between the rows; for the practice certainly succeeds with turnips, to the full description of any thing given by Tull. Mr. Cobbett, I see, has lately republished the work of Tull, and I therefore caution such of my friends as may read that work, not to be led away with the beautiful theory of Mr. Tull, so as to adopt the plan of drilling wheat to any extent. In certain soils it may succeed with barley; but in these times it is too expensive a system for any one to pursue with advantage to any extent. Those who have good light ploughing sandy, or sandy loam soils, will find it answer their most sanguine expectations, in turnips of any sort, and particularly in the cultivation of Swedish turnips. Of course, I only address myself to those farmers who superintend the whole progress of drilling, transplanting, hoeing and ploughing; for Tull's is not a system to answer if trusted to servants. I can only say for myself, that I adhered to the system so long, that I believe I was minus by it, first and last, above a thousand pounds, and I believe Mr. Cobbett was a loser to an equal degree.

We must now turn our attention again to politics. The immense losses sustained by the French in their retreat from Moscow to the Russian frontier, compelled them to continue their retreat, and from Wilna Napoleon set off for Paris. The treacherous Prussians now betrayed him; their General led the way by entering into a convention, and the King followed by joining the coalition. Many places fell, and the victorious Russians entered Warsaw, and advanced to the Elbe. Jaded and dispirited, the French troops were defeated in almost every battle; in fact they had never recovered the effect of the dreadful ravages committed upon their ranks by the horrors of a Russian winter. Russia, Prussia, and Sweden now all leagued together, and supported by the treasures of England, the wealth of the British nation, wrung from the sweat of John Gull's brow, was lavished to maintain the armies of the Northern hordes, which were advancing against France. John Gull was stark mad with joy at the news of the defeat of the French; and the general cry amongst the shopkeepers and farmers was, "down with Buonaparte, cost what it will!" They not only were willing to advance large sums in taxes, but the Parliament was encouraged and halloed on, by what are called the middle classes, to borrow and spend without controul. O how drunk the farmers used to get at every account that reached England of the ill success and the defeat of the French! John would at this time not only have spent his last shilling, but he was ready to pawn even his breeches off his rump, to support the Ministers in their extravagance.

Upon Napoleon's return to Paris he laid the state of his affairs candidly before the Senate, and they immediately voted him 350,000 men to repair his losses. Having accomplished this point, he was not disposed, like some of his Royal enemies, to waste his time in the lap of luxury and slothful, inglorious idleness; he therefore set off and joined his army again at Mentz, on the 20th of April. He opened the campaign by the battle of Leitzen, in which the French arms were once more victorious. This was followed up by two successful battles at Baultzen and Wiertzen, which compelled the Allies to repass the Oder. Napoleon then proposed an armistice, which was accepted; but, as the terms of peace could not be settled, the war re-commenced, and with great disadvantage to the French. The Crown Prince of Sweden, who had deserted his benefactor, and joined the Allies against him in the North of Germany, now took the field with a formidable army. But the fatal blow to Napoleon was the defection of Austria, which never joined the coalition on the 12th of August. The Allies having united all their forces, to the number of 180,000 men, the French army now took up a position on the river Elbe, and attacked Napoleon in his position near Dresden; but they were foiled, and compelled to retire into Bohemia by the superiority of his military skill. This advantage was, however, rendered of no avail by the loss of a division of 12,000 men under Vandamme, who had imprudently entangled himself in the defiles of Bohemia, where he was surrounded and compelled to surrender. Macdonald was also defeated, with heavy loss, in Silesia; and Marshal Ney at Dennewitz. Bavaria, which owed so much to Napoleon, now not only abandoned him, but also united its forces with those of Austria, its natural enemy. Napoleon had by this time taken up a position in the neighbourhood of Leipsic, and to that spot the combined forces, consisting of 330,000 men, advanced to give him battle. The French army was not more than 175,000 strong. The battle, or rather succession of battles, lasted from the 16th to the 19th of October, and was sanguinary beyond example. The scale was, at length, decisively turned against the French by the desertion of the Saxons, who went over to the Allies, and turned their cannon against their recent comrades at the critical period of the contest. The French were compelled to commence their retreat,

and by the destruction of a bridge their rear-guard was cut off, and made prisoners. They fell back towards the Rhine, and found the Bavarian army posted at Hanau to intercept them. The Bavarians were, however, defeated, and the French army reached the Rhine.

Napoleon now hastened to Paris, and having assembled the Senate, he laid before them the full particulars of his disastrous campaign, upon which they immediately ordered out 300,000 conscripts. At this time the news reached the French capital of the counter-revolution that had taken place in Holland—that Dresden had surrendered to the enemy with 23,000 men—that Westphalia was lost, and that the Dalmatian coast was occupied by the Austrians; in fact, that misfortune and defeat attended the French arms in every quarter. The arms of England meanwhile were victorious in Spain, and under Wellington gained a decisive victory at Vittoria. Wellington having stormed St. Sebastian, entered France without any interruption, and easily defeated the French at St. Jean de Leu and on the Nive. As, by the advance of Wellington into France, they had got rid of what were always considered by the Spanish people as equally troublesome intruders, namely, both the French and English armies, the Cortes began to act with some vigour; the Regency was dismissed, and a new one formed. The extraordinary Cortes were dissolved, and the ordinary Cortes summoned.

In America, Mr. Madison was elected President in the room of Mr. Jefferson. The Congress assembled, and a paper was laid before them that justified the war which they had entered into against England. One of their armies made an attempt upon Niagara, but it was repulsed. Dearborn was also obliged to retire from Lake Champlain. In the mean time the ports were declared to be in a state of blockade by the English. The Americans took York town, in Canada, and Mobile, in West Florida. The Emperor of Russia offered himself as mediator, and the President appointed three citizens to treat with England. On Lake Ontario the British fleet was successful; but on Lake Erie the Americans defeated the English fleet, and took the whole of her naval force in that quarter.

When the Parliament met, the British Ministers also laid papers upon the table to justify themselves from being in fault in making war upon America. The great cause of this war with America, be it remembered, was *this*: The English had always claimed a right to search all American vessels, and even ships of war, for English seamen, which, if found on board an American ship, were seized and forcibly removed on board English ships of war. This had been always complained of by the Americans as an unjust and arbitrary proceeding. But the English fleets being always masters of the ocean, the British claimed and enforced this right of search, which the Americans, not being able to resist, reluctantly submitted to, no doubt with a determination to throw off the galling yoke as soon as they thought themselves able to offer a successful resistance. They now believed that time to be arrived, and they resolved to make the attempt; and wherever they were strong enough they resisted all attempts to search. On the part of the Americans I may say that this was the only substantial cause of the war; all the other aggressions and insults that were offered by the English, (and they were many) might have been, and would, for some time at least, have been endured without an open rupture; the right of search by the English was therefore the grand matter in dispute.

Some debates took place in the House of Commons respecting the Princess of Wales, but nothing definite was agreed upon. At length, however, her conduct was inquired into, and as it was approved of, the public could no longer be restrained, by the intrigues of petty and interested politicians, from openly expressing their sentiments upon the subject of her ill-treatment. A Common Hall was called, on the suggestion of Alderman Wood, who got a requisition signed, and who moved the Resolutions and an Address to her Royal Highness, all which were strenuously opposed by Mr. Waithman, who was backed by the "*well weighed opinion*" of Mr. Sturch, of Westminster, so well known as having taken a very active part in the election of Sir F. Burdett. This was the *first* and the *last* time I ever knew Daddy Sturch, (as he is called in Westminster) appear upon the hustings at Guildhall, to address the Livery at a Common Hall. Nevertheless, in spite of the violent opposition of Mr. Waithman, and "the well weighed opinion" of Mr. Sturch, to which Mr. Waithman earnestly recommended the Livery to attend, the Address was carried by an overwhelming majority. Notwithstanding Mr. Waithman's objections to voting the Address, yet he fell in with the stream, and went up in his carriage with the procession, to present the Address to her Royal Highness, who then resided at Kensington Palace, and he received with great *sang froid* the *sarcastic thanks* and polite attention of the Princess.

I do not know that the circumstances attending the *management* of the various parties, who took a lead in this affair, have ever been placed in a clear light before the public, and possibly *some of them* may never be made known; but, as I am acquainted with many of the secret springs by which the parties were worked upon and moved, I will relate one of the intrigues of the City plotters, which delayed for a whole year the expression of the public opinion. While Mr. Cobbett was in Newgate, in the year 1812, Mr. Alderman Wood was very anxious to procure a Common Hall, to address her Royal Highness, and I was present when a requisition was drawn up, which he took away with him, for the purpose of getting it signed by a number of the Livery, that it might be presented to the Lord Mayor. On the next day, he came back, and said that he had found it almost impossible to succeed; that when



they became acquainted with his object, the friends of Mr. Waithman had so actively exerted themselves to prevent the calling a Common Hall, that he was induced to decline proceeding at that time, he being fully convinced that, even if he procured a meeting, there would be such an opposition to the Address that it would be imprudent for him at this moment to persevere. Thus it will be seen that the worthy Alderman was anxious to exert himself in favour of an Address to her Royal Highness, a full year before he could bring it to bear; and that the very same party in the city who, by dint of intrigue, contrived at that period to prevent the Common Hall, likewise strained every nerve to prevent the Address being carried, when the worthy Alderman did at length get a Hall of the Livery convened. Mr. Waithman, who found that there was a great public feeling in favour of the Princess of Wales, brought forward Mr. Sturch, (who had acquired a considerable degree of popularity in Westminster) to assist him at the Common Hall in putting down and neutralizing that honest feeling. He urged the Livery, if he had lost their confidence, and they did not choose to rely upon his advice, at least to listen with attention to the "well weighed opinion of his respectable and intelligent friend, Mr. STURCH." But all would not do! The City Cock was left in a contemptible minority, the honest efforts of the worthy Alderman Wood were crowned with complete success, the Address was carried by acclamation, and it was agreed that the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Livery, dressed in their gowns, should carry up their Address, and present it to her Royal Highness at Kensington Palace; and, to crown the whole, Mr. Waithman, who had so pertinaciously opposed the Address, was one of the most conspicuous in the procession to carry it up to her Royal Highness, to whom this fact of his opposition was well known! There are *some other* curious circumstances, connected with this support of her Royal Highness at that epoch, which it may be necessary at a future time to lay before the public; and although, after what we have seen, they will not create any great surprise as to the conduct of the party concerned, yet they will doubtless excite the indignation of every honest man and woman in the country.

In consequence of this sort of conduct in Mr. Waithman, in his frequent opposition to the honest, straight-forward proceedings of Mr. Alderman Wood, I was induced to accept the invitation that had been often given me by Mr. Samuel Millar, as well as by many others, to become a Liveryman of the city, the expenses attending which, I was always told, should be discharged for me as soon as I would give my assent. At length I agreed to the proposal, solely with a view to endeavour to counteract the tricks and intrigues of the Whig or Waithmanite faction in the city, when assembled in Common Hall. Well, the time came, I obtained my freedom, and I was sworn a Liveryman in the Lorimer's Company. This was managed by Mr. Millar, through the instrumentality of Mr. Ireland, of Holborn-bridge; but instead of having the expenses paid for me, I had to pay the whole myself, which I believe were about fifty pounds. I shall not easily forget, when I appeared for the first time upon the hustings in Guildhall, what long faces were exhibited, and what surprise it created. On my stepping forward to address that Livery, the Lord Mayor, Scholey, jumped up out of his chair, and exclaimed, "is he a liveryman?" Mr. Millar answered significantly, "YES;" and I proceeded. At this period I found Mr. Millar, Mr. Thompson, the spirit-merchant, of Holborn-hill, and Mr. Alexander Galloway, with a few others, decidedly hostile to the measures of Mr. Waithman, but wanting the resolution and the confidence to oppose him openly.

I have been frequently reminded of particular events of my life that I have omitted in my Memoirs, many of which had for years been banished from my memory, and if I were to record every little incident which might occur to me I should extend my volumes to an unwieldy size. I have therefore been compelled to pass over many occurrences which some might think of importance, but I have been careful not to omit any part of my political history which I could recollect. One circumstance I shall notice, which has been recalled to my memory by the publication of a virulent although impotent attack upon my public and private character, by one of those mushroom politicians, of which class I have seen hundreds, who spring up in a day and are gone in an hour, and we hear no more of them. I have been reminded of the imprisonment of Mr. White, the proprietor and editor of the *Independent Whig*, a London weekly newspaper, which was published by him for many years with great public spirit and patriotic talent. As a public writer, I consider Mr. White to be a man of the most inflexible integrity, and although from the very title of his paper it may easily be conceived that Mr. White and myself were of opposite sentiments as to the course that ought to be followed to recover our lost rights and violated liberties, yet we never were at variance on that account. I always believed Mr. White to be a real friend to Liberty, and I believe that he considered me to be the same; consequently we never quarrelled about shades of difference in opinion how that liberty was to be obtained and secured. The Editor of the *Independent Whig* was also a zealous guardian of the right conferred by real, undisguised, and honest trial by jury. He was the lynx-eyed scrutinizer of the conduct of the Judges; the honest censor of the Courts of Justice; therefore, of all men he was the most likely to fall under the displeasure of the dispensers of the laws. To criticise fairly the conduct of the Judges, though it is one of the most necessary and the most honourable of occupations, is likewise one of the most dangerous. There is always plenty of room for severe animadversion, and the harpies of the Courts are always upon the look-out, to pounce upon and make victims of those who venture to animadvert on them. Having been justly strong in his censures upon the arbitrary and corrupt conduct of Lord Ellenborough, the Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, who was as violent and intemperate a political Judge that ever

disgraced the Bench, Mr. White was prosecuted by the Attorney-General for a libel, and was sentenced to be imprisoned in Dorchester Gaol for three years. Mr. Hart, the printer of the *Independent Whig*, was imprisoned in Gloucester Gaol at the same time, for the same libel. I was not then personally acquainted with either of them; but in some newspaper, (most likely the *Independent Whig*) I read that Mr. Hart was subject to very great privations in Gloucester Gaol, and, amongst other things, that he was deprived of seeing his family and friends in private, he being obliged, even with his wife, to converse in the presence and hearing of a turnkey, through the iron bars of his dungeon door; and that he was very much restricted for room to walk in to procure fresh air. I was then living at Clifton, and had as yet entered but very little into politics; but from my earliest age I had been taught to hate oppression and practice humanity. I was told that the readers of the *Independent Whig* had met in Bristol, and in London also, I think, and passed some strong resolutions, and made some excellent speeches, condemning such inhuman and barbarous conduct; but still the restrictions remained the same, and these worthy men might have met and passed resolutions till the imprisonment of Mr. Hart had been at an end, without the slightest chance of rendering him any real service. As mere pity and speech-making could be of no use, I drove over in my curricle to Gloucester, a distance of nearly forty miles, to see what could be done for the aggrieved prisoner. I called at the prison, and asked to see Mr. Hart, but I was too late in the evening. I slept at the Bell, and called again the next morning, as soon as I could gain admittance, having employed the intermediate time in endeavouring to obtain information relating to the Gaol, the Visiting Magistrates, and other necessary particulars. As, however, I was a perfect stranger at Gloucester, I made but little progress; for every one I met appeared as shy of having any thing to say about the gaol, as if he were himself afraid of becoming an inmate in the horrid place. At length, I found a person of the name of Wittick, a hair-dresser, the genuine Dickey Gossip of the city, who was exactly what I wanted. Having told him my name and my business, he "*let loose his tongue,*" and gave me such a history of some of the revolting scenes that occurred within the walls of their city bastille, as harrowed up my soul with horror. The victims of oppression and tyranny, as Wittick had described them, flitted before my imagination during the whole night, and I rose in the morning but little refreshed with my night's rest.

On my repairing to the Gaol I was admitted to the door of Mr. Hart's dungeon, and there I ascertained from his own mouth, and indeed from my own observation, the truth of the statements which I had seen in the paper. All that passed was in the presence of a turn-key, Mr. Hart standing in the inside, and I on the outside, of a door composed of iron bars. He said his wife was come from London, in hopes of being permitted to administer to his comforts, and to alleviate the horrors of his imprisonment; but she was nearly heart-broken, and was going to return the next day, as she had been refused by the Visiting Magistrates any further admission to him than to see him through the iron door; he added also, that his health was impaired by the want of fresh air, as he was only permitted to walk certain hours in the day, in a small court, surrounded with high walls, which excluded a free circulation of air and the genial influence of the sun. I told him who and what I was; and, as I had come from Clifton on purpose to endeavour to render him some assistance, I desired him to delay for a few days the departure of his wife, while in the interval I would do my best to procure her admission to him. As I was quite a stranger to the Magistrates, I could not answer for my success, but I would at any rate make the attempt. He thanked me, but with a deep sigh said, he feared my kindness would be in vain, though his wife should certainly not leave the place till I had tried the experiment.

I took leave of Mr. Hart, and repaired to the Visiting Magistrates; one of them was from home; the second, a parson, I think, heard what I had to say, was exceedingly civil and polite, but preached a good deal about good order and the necessity of keeping up a strict prison discipline. He, nevertheless, promised that he would do all that was in his power at the next meeting of the Magistrates, which would take place in a *fortnight*; but he emphatically observed, "you know I am but *one*, Mr. Hunt." "*A fortnight!*" I exclaimed, "why, Sir, the poor woman will leave Gloucester broken-hearted long before half that time arrives." "Come, come, Sir," replied he, "these things cannot be accomplished so easily as you imagine; and after all I must say, that although I promise to do every thing that lies in my power to serve the unfortunate prisoner, you must allow that his crime is a most heinous one. I cannot give you any great encouragement to hope that I shall succeed with Sir George Paull and the other Magistrates." This chap was a thorough Dr. Colston in his heart, and I left him with a determination not to trust my case in his hands. I next ordered my curricle and drove to Sir George Paull's. I was introduced to him immediately, and I communicated the object of my visit. He had received me very politely, but the moment that I mentioned my business, he drew up, and began to hesitate and make excuses. Before I left him, however, he admitted that Mr. Hart's case was a very hard one, and he promised most faithfully that he would do whatever was in his power to comply with my request, which was, that his wife might have free access to him, and that he might have the liberty of walking in a larger yard. But I found this could not be done under a fortnight, and he politely assured me that he would write me the result of the meeting of Magistrates.

Though in the manner of this gentleman, who I believe was chairman of the quarter sessions, there

was something much more honest and open than in that of his brother justices, yet when I left him, to return to Gloucester, I was not satisfied that I had done all that I could do, and therefore I drove on to Bromsgrove, in Herefordshire, to call on Mr. Honeywood Yate, of whom I had heard as an independent Magistrate, as well as a friend of Reform. I soon enlisted him in the service; but he was very much engaged with other business, which, after awhile, as Mr. Yate was a very humane man, was made subservient to the cause of the oppressed and persecuted captive. Mr. Yate went to Gloucester the next day. Before I returned to Clifton I had the satisfaction of hearing that there was an order made for Mrs. Hart to visit her husband in his room, and for him to walk in the garden, I think, of the Governor. To the kindness and humanity of Mr. Yate was Mr. Hart greatly indebted for this indulgence. Without his assistance it might never have been granted; at any rate it would have been protracted to a cruel distance.

Since that period I have never seen Mr. Hart except once, and that was in London, after the term of his imprisonment had expired; and for the trouble which I had taken in his behalf, I was amply rewarded by the manner in which he expressed his sense of the accommodation that I had been so instrumental in procuring for him. If he read this, it will recall the whole to his recollection. Mr. White laboured under an asthmatic complaint, and suffered greatly from his confinement; but I understood that he was treated with proper respect and attention by the Magistrates. Pittman, who was then the head turnkey of Dorchester Gaol, called upon me the other day, and almost the first words he uttered were, that the apartments allotted to Mr. White and his family, in Dorchester Gaol, were quite a palace compared to the room in which he found me. He said that Mr. White had two airy rooms over the Chapel, which commanded a view of the circumjacent country, and that he had the liberty of walking round the large open area of the Gaol, which was composed of a beautiful gravel walk; that his was, in short, altogether a very comfortable situation compared to that which I occupy in Ilchester Bastile. He was here before the walls were lowered, and consequently, he saw the place in all its native wretchedness.

Before I proceed with my narrative, I must mention a few circumstances, which it will not be improper to record. At the latter end of this year, 1813, there was a most remarkable fog, which extended fifty or sixty miles round London, accompanied by a severe frost, which lasted six weeks without intermission. The average price of wheat this year was one hundred and seven shillings and ten-pence halfpenny, and the quartern loaf was one shilling and five-pence: these were glorious times for the farmers, whose antipathy to jacobins and levellers, or rather reformers, increased in proportion to the high price of corn and bread. To be sure John Gull was taxed pretty handsomely, but the farmers, at least such of them as looked only to self, always contrived to squeeze their taxes out of the earnings of the labourer. Those, on the contrary, who thought that the labourer had a right to something more than what would barely keep life and soul together, could not cultivate the soil to the same advantage. The supplies voted this year were SEVENTY-SEVEN MILLIONS, FIVE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE POUNDS.

While the British arms were crowned with complete success in Spain, the Government was carrying on, both by sea and land, a ruinous and disastrous war in America. The American frigate Chesapeake was taken by the Shannon; but, in return, the Americans captured the Java frigate. The British troops were compelled to evacuate Fort Erie and Fort George, which were taken possession of by the Americans, and ultimately the American fleet took, burnt, sunk, or destroyed the whole of the English fleet on Lake Erie. Every real lover of liberty in England deprecated this war with our brethren of America; but the enemies of liberty now began to boast that they would put down and destroy the principles of Republicanism throughout the world. I always considered the war with America to be a most unjust war; and, although I lamented to hear of the destruction of human lives, and the spilling of human blood, and particularly that of my own countrymen, yet I always wished success to the Americans, who were fighting for their rights and liberties against an invader, who would gladly have reduced them to that state of slavery from which they had emancipated themselves by a glorious and successful struggle. The late harvest was very fine, and the crops were good; corn, therefore, began to fall, and of course the landed interest caught the alarm, and set about sounding the tocsin for a corn bill, to keep up the price of the grain. In consequence of this, the subject was frequently discussed in Parliament. The Ministers professed to disclaim the proposition, but they set their friends, the Country Gentlemen, forward to propose the measure. It was at length settled, that corn should not be imported unless the price of wheat was above eighty shillings per quarter. Although a farmer myself, I always exclaimed against this measure, notwithstanding it did not appear likely that the country would be immediately affected by it, as there was no probability of the price of wheat being much below eighty shillings a quarter during that season.

At this period I was fully occupied in a most laborious and unprofitable speculation. I had taken a farm of nearly four hundred acres. This farm had been occupied by a Major Andrews, a retired militia officer, who had commenced farmer, a business of which he was totally ignorant, and in the pursuit of which he

sunk a good fortune; yet when he quitted this farm, or rather when his property and stock were seized and sold under an execution, perhaps the county of Hants could not have produced its equal for foulness and bad condition. I had occupied three thousand acres of land in Wiltshire, and I will venture to say, that there was not half the quantity of couch grass upon the whole of it that I now found upon the cleanest acre on Cold Henly Farm. Couch grass is the most injurious of all weeds, and, in some parts of Wiltshire, it is very appropriately called "the farmer's devil." This farm of Cold Henly was about seven miles from my residence at Middleton Cottage, and therefore I had ample exercise in riding to and fro, and attending all day to the cleaning of the land. The proprietor of the farm was a clergyman, and, as he professed to be very friendly with me, and gave me to understand that he should be happy to continue me as a tenant after my lease was out, I spared neither pains nor expense in cultivating the land, in hopes of hereafter reaping a reward for my labour. In fact, it was absolutely necessary to have the soil perfectly clean and free from all sorts of weeds and grass, to be enabled to cultivate it upon the drill system, as laid down by Tull. I believe that in the course of the first summer I burned forty thousand cart loads of couch, which made as many bushels of ashes for manure. Almost all the land required to be ploughed five or six times, by means of which, and of innumerable draggings and harrowings, and incessant and persevering labour, the farm became, in my hands, altogether as *clean* as it was *foul* and overrun with every description of weeds and grass, before I came to it. I was induced to expend a large sum of money in improving this farm, from the promises of the cunning, artful, and deceitful old clergyman, who was the proprietor of it. The buildings, which were very extensive, and miserably dilapidated, I put into complete repair; and, perhaps, altogether I expended on the land and offices three times as much as a common rack-renting farmer would have done. Being fully satisfied that I was greatly benefiting his estate, the parson not only gave his consent to any alteration that I thought proper in the course of husbandry, which the old tenant was bound in his lease to pursue, but he took all occasions to encourage me to do so; and, as my proceedings were so extremely beneficial to his farm, which he never failed to acknowledge, I did not once dream that he would hereafter, for the sake of litigation, pretend to object to it. As this farm was a manor of itself, and was well stocked with game, I had plenty of shooting of all sorts upon it, as well as over the manor of Longparish, over which I also held the deputation.

This year, 1814, was one of the most eventful periods in the history of the world. The first week in January, Dantzic was occupied by the allies, whose grand army passed the Rhine, and occupied Coblenz. The treacherous and dastardly Murat, King of Naples, basely betrayed and deserted his patron, his friend, his benefactor, and his relation, Napoleon, by concluding a treaty with England; and on the 17th he openly joined the allies against France. Of all the despicable, base, and treacherous conduct of the base and dastardly crowned heads, during the whole war, this desertion of Napoleon, by his brother-in-law, Murat, was the most base and dastardly. To be sure, during the whole of this long and bloody war, carried on by the despots and tyrants of the earth, their conduct was one continued exhibition of treachery, falsehood, selfishness, and deception. This abandoned race of Sovereigns, Kings and Emperors, who assume a *divine origin*, and set up a claim of *divine rights*, have, by their acts, unequivocally proclaimed to the whole world that no reliance can be placed in their words, their bonds, or their oaths. They have all of them broken the most solemn treaties, and violated the most sacred and binding obligations, without the least regard to truth, to honour, or to honesty. At the very time that the Governments of the different states of Europe have, in high-sounding language, been preaching about national faith, national honour, and national credit; the favoured Ministers of each of them, in conjunction with their masters, have, wherever it suited their interested and corrupt purposes, without the least regard to precept or principle, unblushingly violated and abandoned all national credit, honour, and faith; and have rendered *faith*, *honour*, and *credit*, mere bye-words among nations. If a man in common life were to act in the same unprincipled and dastardly manner as these Sovereign Princes have done, he would be shunned and spurned out of all society. If one of the "lower orders" were to conduct himself in a similar manner, he would be kicked out of the company of the most abandoned frequenters of the lowest brothels and tap-rooms; no man would employ him or have any transaction with him; he would be driven from amongst even the lowest of mankind, and deservedly left to starve, to perish, and to rot upon a dunghill.

The moment that the fortune of war turned against Napoleon, all the royal, mean, cringing, timid, time-serving, contemptible wretches, who had filled up the measure of his glory, and almost worshipped him when he was victorious; those who had partaken of his bounty, and whose whole existence had depended on his smiles; all those that he had elevated to power, and who had reigned by his sufferance, now joined the tide and swelled the torrent that was collected to overwhelm him. Sweden and Denmark having, like others, been bribed by English gold, drawn from the sweat of John Gull's brows, had now joined the allies against France, and the first action upon the territory of Old France took place on the 24th of January, when Mortier was defeated; and on the 27th the army commanded by Napoleon in person, at St. Dizier, in Champagne, was overpowered by numbers, and repulsed with considerable loss. The tyrants of Russia, Austria, and Prussia met at Basil, and soon after all their armies advanced. Blucher and Bernadotte, Crown Prince of Sweden, crossed the Rhine with

their numerous hordes, and the armies of France gave way. Nancy, Troyes, Vitry, and Chalons were taken by the allies. But Napoleon having rallied his divisions, defeated first the Russians, and then Blucher, who led his army on to attack Marmont, but he was defeated a second time. Prince Schwartzburg advanced with the troops under his command direct for Paris, but Napoleon attacked him with an inferior force, beat him, and obliged him to retreat. The battles were now so numerous, and the success was so equally balanced, that it would require a history of itself to recount them. With an army which was never one third as strong as that of the invaders, Napoleon contested every inch of the ground, and fought so bravely and so skilfully, that the issue was for some time doubtful. At length the numerous hordes of the confederated nations of Russia, Austria, Prussia, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Bavaria, flushed with their success, pushed on to Paris, to defend which Marshals Marmont and Mortier had but very inadequate means. The assailants, two hundred thousand in number, reached the northern side of Paris on the 29th of March, and on the following day a desperate battle took place. It was not till they had sacrificed fifteen thousand men that the allies could make themselves masters of the posts which the French held in the neighbourhood of Paris. Not disposed to run the risk of another engagement, and especially of the arrival of Napoleon, who was hastening back by forced marches, the coalesced despots were glad to obtain the surrender of the capital, by granting honourable terms to Marmont, who accordingly withdrew with his troops from Paris, which Maria Louisa had already quitted. On the 1st of April all the allied Sovereigns entered that city as conquerors. The Emperors of Russia and Austria, and the King of Prussia, all of whom had been so repeatedly conquered by Napoleon, who had generously, although foolishly, restored two of them, after having conquered them and taken their capitals, now, in return for his generous conduct to them, had the meanness and the cowardice to declare that Napoleon was the only obstacle to the establishment of a peace; upon which he magnanimously, to save the effusion of human blood, did not hesitate to offer his resignation. This was accepted; the French Senate met, and agreed to a provisional Government, till a Constitution could be formed, and they passed a decree on the 2d of April, declaring Napoleon Buonaparte and his family to have forfeited the Imperial Crown. It was agreed to by all the allied Sovereigns that Napoleon should retire to the Isle of Elba, which he was to possess in *full sovereignty*—that he and Maria Louisa should, *for life*, retain the titles of Emperor and Empress—that a large revenue should be granted to both of them, and to the Empress the Duchies of Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla, which were to descend to her son. The treaty being thus arranged, on the 4th day of April, 1814, the brave Napoleon signed his abdication of the Crowns of France and Italy. On the 13th the treaty between the allied Powers and Napoleon received the signatures of the contracting parties, and on the 28th of April he embarked at Frejus, in Provence, for the Isle of Elba, in the British frigate the *Undaunted*.

In the meantime the English army under Lord Wellington had advanced from Spain, invested Bayonne, and passed the Odour. A division under Marshal Beresford entered Bourdeaux. At Toulouse Wellington had a battle, and the dispirited skeleton of an army under Soult was defeated about the time that the news arrived of a cessation of arms.

Although Napoleon had retired, it yet required very considerable address to replace on the Throne of France the Bourbons—a race that was deservedly despised and execrated by the whole French nation, with the exception of the lazy, indolent, rapacious, and profligate priesthood, and a few of the old bigotted nobility. The provisional Government presented to the Conservative Senate a CONSTITUTION, and proposed that Louis, the brother of Louis the Sixteenth, should, on the acceptance of that constitution, be declared King of France. It is time now to turn our eyes towards England, from the affairs of which the reader will remember that I broke off at the period when the Parliament had settled that corn should not be imported, unless the price was above eighty shillings a quarter. Motions were now made to address the Prince Regent, to seize the favourable opportunity to procure from the allied Powers some salutary regulations respecting the slave trade. The country, both in and out of Parliament, was mad drunk with GLORY. The House manifested its intoxication by a profligate and extravagant grant of the public money to Wellington, who was also created a Duke. While this was going on within the walls of Parliament, the farmers were drunk and mad without, and were amusing themselves by burning and hanging Napoleon in effigy. Deputies had already arrived in England, to invite Louis the Eighteenth to return to France. He entered London on the 20th of April, with great pomp and state; he came from his retreat at Hartwell, attended by the Life Guards and many of the King's carriages, and accompanied by our magnanimous conqueror, the Prince Regent. He took up his residence at Grillon's hotel, in Albemarle-street, where he held his Court, and was congratulated by the Lord Mayor (Sir William Domville), and the citizens of London, and also by many of the nobility, all of whom would no doubt have as readily paid their devoirs to a mastiff dog, if he had been called a King. Louis left London in great state, to embark for France, on the 23d of April, and he set sail from Dover on the 24th, in the Royal yacht, and landed at Calais in four hours. His public entry into Paris took place on the 3d of May, and on the 14th of the same month a grand farce, or funeral service, was performed in France for the Kings Louis the Sixteenth and Seventeenth, the Queen and the Princess Elizabeth. Louis was no sooner in possession of power, than he discovered that the Constitution which

had been framed, and on his presumed acceptance of which he had been restored, was NOT PRACTICABLE, and that the people of France must submit to receive as a boon, one of his own manufacture. "Put not your trust in Princes." The Marshals had been brought over one by one, and peace was at length settled upon the terms which the Allies dictated. By this treaty France was to keep her ancient boundary, with some additions; the navigation of the Rhine was to be free; the territory of Holland and the Netherlands were to be incorporated and governed by the Stadtholder; Germany was to form a federal Government; and Switzerland to be independent.

While these things were going on in France, the Ministers were not inactive in England. They caused Lord Cochrane, and Colonel Cochrane Johnson, his uncle, to be expelled the House of Commons, for what was called a conspiracy to defraud the Stock Exchange. To punish men for defrauding, or rather playing off a hoax upon a set of swindlers and gamblers in the stocks, was curious enough! The Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia arrived in London on the 7th of June, and the town was illuminated. The Emperor of Russia took up his residence at the Imperial Hotel, in Piccadilly, and the King of Prussia in St. James's Palace. They were received in state at Court, which was held at Carlton House, and the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia were invested with the Order of the Garter. All the Tom and Molly fools in the country were flocking to London, to see these mighty Sovereigns; they spent their money, and most of them returned disappointed, the fools having expected to see something more than man in a King and an Emperor, and something more than a brute in the dirty old animal Blucher. Nothing else but our new visitors was talked of in town or country. Whatever company you went into, the first question was, "Well, what do you think of the Emperor Alexander? what do you think of Blucher? What! not seen the Emperor, and not seen Marshal Blucher's whiskers?" To hear the females of England, my fair countrywomen, talk of shaking hands with this filthy old beast, and some of them even boasted of his having kissed them, not only disgusted but quite sickened me; and I must own that the scenes I have heard described, which took place at Portsmouth, when they were all there at the great naval fete, made such an unfavourable impression upon my mind, that I have always thought with the utmost contempt of those who participated in these disgusting, revolting orgies. It was all very natural that the time-serving, corrupt, vain, purse-proud Aldermen of London should act as they did; it was very natural that they and their wives and daughters should disgrace themselves as they did; but that my good, handsome, wholesome country-women, should have suffered such a disgusting monster as old Blucher to have slobbered them over and mouselled them with his dirty, stinking whiskers and mustachios, is something so extraordinary and so abhorrent to the character of English women, or, in fact, of any modest woman, that I, as an Englishman, was horror-struck every time I heard the filthy accounts of it. Thank God, none of my family or connections ever disgraced themselves, even by going to see any of these German, Russian, Prussian, or Cossack animals. I had business in London, but I put it off, nay neglected it, because I would not make one of the throng of fools who flocked to grace the triumph of these tyrants, who had been so long waging war against the liberties of mankind, and who had caused the shedding of oceans of human blood, for the sole purpose of gratifying their own malignant desire, to destroy every vestige of liberty and rational freedom upon the face of the globe. During the whole time that these fiends in human form, these enemies and destroyers of the human race, remained in England, I stayed at home; I never spoke of them but with abhorrence and disgust; and as my family felt towards them as I did, they were seldom mentioned at all. I even, as much as possible, avoided having any company at my house, that their blood-stained names might never be introduced. I shall, perhaps, be told by some who read this, that I am inconsistent to express such a horror at blood-stained tyrants, and yet take every opportunity of extolling Napoleon, who was as great a tyrant as any of those whom I condemn. To the unthinking, an explanation is certainly necessary from me; for I fully concur in the opinion that CONSISTENCY is absolutely necessary to form the character of a useful and honourable public man; that amongst the dangerous failings in a public character, *inconsistency* is the most dangerous. A *vacillating, weathercock, changeable being*, in the common pursuits, in any pursuits of life, is, to say the least of him, a contemptible creature, one who is generally despised by all classes; but a weathercock in politics, which is the same as a weathercock in principle, is a being not only despicable but most mischievous. To blow hot and to blow cold, in the same breath, or to maintain one opinion to-day and another opinion tomorrow, and the next day to revert to the former opinion, is not so much a proof of a weak head, as a sure proof of a profligate, an abandoned, and a dishonest heart. I do not mean to say that a man cannot alter his opinion without being dishonest; far from it; to maintain this proposition would be to deny the possibility of improvement in the human understanding. But that man is to be dreaded and avoided, who can change his principles, or desert his public duty, from private pique, or selfish, interested motives; such a man would sacrifice not only his principles, but he would sacrifice his dearest friends, nay, a whole nation, to gratify his malignant and selfish passion for revenge; such a passion springs wholly from cowardice; and as a coward is always the most cruel of mortals, such a man, from mere cowardice, is always the most revengeful and remorseless; and he would wade up to his knees in human blood to accomplish his private and selfish ends. Therefore, of all the deadly sins with which public men are accused, oh! save me and protect me, from the misfortune, from the indelible disgrace, of being deservedly pronounced AN INCONSISTENT CHARACTER! I have never praised Napoleon, or at least I have never intended to eulogise him, as a

friend of freedom. I have characterised him as a brave and noble-minded man; and the reason why I have been led away sometimes, perhaps, to be too general in my praises and admiration of the man is, not because he was not a tyrant himself, but because I always found him more disposed to tyrannize over *mighty tyrants* than he was to crush the weak and the unprotected. Possibly all mankind are by nature tyrannical. Take, for instance, the most humane, the most generous, the most sincere lover of liberty, and one who has been the most steady practiser of it—to such a man even as this only give an unlimited, uncontroled, and unrestricted sway over his fellow-creatures, and ten to one but he becomes an arbitrary tyrant; when, on the other hand, if he had been restrained within due bounds, by means of the proper checks and guards prescribed by a free constitution, he would have been one of freedom's brightest ornaments, one of liberty's safest, staunchest, guardians and protectors. So it was with Napoleon. If the tyrants of Europe had suffered him to remain First Consul of France, surrounded by such men as Carnot, to guard the liberties and rights of Frenchmen, and to controul their ruler's actions, Napoleon possessed all the qualifications for making a mild, liberal, and patriotic, as well as a brave and brilliant ruler. But the despots and tyrants of Europe dreaded such an example; they dreaded the example of freedom which the then constitution conferred upon the people of France. It was not Napoleon's political influence, great as it was, that excited their hatred, but they dreaded the little remaining liberty that the French people possessed, and it was their combined efforts, supported, maintained, and cherished, by the wealth of the people of England, that drove the French nation to submit to the hard and cruel necessity of placing unlimited authority in his hands, and consequently preparing the way for a great tyranny, and compelling him to be a tyrant. My sincere and unchangeable opinion is, that few men ever lived, who, if they had been masters of the same boundless power that Napoleon was, would not have made much more cruel and more arbitrary tyrants than he ever did, and have exercised it more vindictively against the liberties of mankind than he did. My admiration of Napoleon has, therefore, been always by comparison, as contrasted with the sanguinary and remorseless tyrants who were opposed to him; men who had sworn eternal abhorrence of liberty, eternal war against it; men, who, at the time that they professed a hatred of the tyranny of Napoleon, were themselves the greatest tyrants in the universe, and whose sole aim in destroying Napoleon's power was to rivet the chains of slavery upon the inhabitants of the whole civilized world, and who have since sworn upon the altar of the Holy Alliance to maintain an indissoluble union, for the purpose of extinguishing every spark of freedom, wherever it may arise. Napoleon was the enemy, the successful enemy of these tyrants; and under his sway, despotic as it might apparently be, and governed by the excellent code of laws that bears the name of its author, the people of France enjoyed a tenfold greater portion of liberty than any of the people who lived under the protection, or rather who groaned under the pretended forms of law and justice exercised by the hypocritical tyrants who were opposed to him. All these tyrants had made war upon France, because the French had the spirit to overthrow the most execrable tyranny that ever cursed mankind; they made war against French liberty and French principles, before Napoleon was known; he was the child of fortune, who sprung up during the Revolution, and his talent and bravery pointed him out to the people of France as the most likely man successfully to oppose her enemies. He was elevated to unlimited power through the rancour and the malice of those who had sworn in their hearts to restore the hated Bourbons, the Pope, the Devil, and the Inquisition. While he exercised that power he subdued all those who resisted him, and his greatest fault, his greatest crime, was his generosity to the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian despots: having had those enemies to liberty and humanity in his power, it was a crime, an offence, in the eye of God and man, not to annihilate them, and thus secure the human race from the continuance of their arbitrary and brutal domination. Napoleon having conquered them all, restored them all to power, and when they got him into their clutches, the return which they made him was, to banish him, to linger out the remainder of his life upon a barren rock, in a noxious and pestilential climate, cut off from the society even of his wife and son. Peace to his manes, for he beat, he humbled, and he subdued, the greatest of tyrants, and he was the author of the Napoleon code, which restrained the power of infamous Judges, and established a real, instead of a mock trial by jury. These are the traits of Napoleon's character, which, as an Englishman, I admire; had I been a Frenchman, I should have adored him. He is dead and gone, and John Bull is beginning to reap the bitter fruits that were sown to procure Napoleon's destruction. John is now grumbling, because he is called upon by the despots to pay the bill, to discharge the expenses which they incurred in dethroning and destroying NAPOLEON, and restoring Louis to the throne of France. I hope and I believe these is not a man in the world who hates and detests tyrants and tyranny more than I do; yet I trust that I may, nevertheless, be permitted to admire certain traits in the character of the brave and murdered Napoleon, without being justly accused of inconsistency. If I am asked whether I should like to live under such a tyrant and such a tyranny as existed in France, during the latter days of Napoleon's reign, I answer NO. But if I *must* submit to a tyrant, let it be to one that I can look up to, and whose superior qualities I can admire, rather than to a despicable wretch, who has not one noble quality, but, on the contrary, is deserving of contempt, derision, and execration. I have been led into this digression by the recollection of hearing a very pretty little girl say, that she had been kissed by the filthy old beast Blucher, at Portsmouth, where the sceptered tyrants and their whole train had been to view the English fleet and the naval arsenal. This

young lady, who was really a very pretty delicate girl, I had always before considered as also a very amiable and a very modest girl; but, after hearing her boast of having been kissed by that dirty old animal, I could never look upon her but with pity, mingled with disgust.

On the 20th of June, peace was proclaimed in London. The country was still intoxicated, or rather insane, with the idea of the GLORY that had been obtained by the downfall of one man, against whom all the despots in Europe had been united, and all the wealth of nations had been squandered during fourteen years. On the 25th, there was a naval review at Portsmouth, to amuse the Royal tyrants; and on the 27th they all departed for Dover, where they embarked on the 28th. On the 7th of July, a mockery or thanksgiving for peace was offered up in these churches, where the tocsin of war had for so many years been sounded by the pious preachers of the Gospel, the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus. On this occasion the Prince Regent went in state to St. Paul's. On the 21st he gave a superb fete to two thousand five hundred persons, and on the 1st of August there was a pompous celebration, on account of the peace, held in Hyde and St. James's Parks, in the latter of which there was a grand display of fireworks; while, still further to amuse the *John* and *Jenny Gulls* of the cities of London and Westminster, there was a sham naval engagement got up on the Serpentine River, representing a battle between the British and American fleets. Of course the British fleet was victorious, and the Americans struck their colours, amidst the huzzas and shouts of the family of the Gulls, who, having for nearly a quarter of a century been gulled out of their money to pay the expenses of a sanguinary war, were now gulled out of an additional sum of their money to pay the expenses of a mock naval engagement with the Americans, who were in reality beating the British navy out of their lakes and seas. This was the way in which the peace was celebrated, and at the same time the jubilee to commemorate the accession of the House of Brunswick. It was a considerable drawback upon the pleasure to some of the Royal party, that, at the drawing-room which was held at Court, to receive the Royal visitors, the PRINCESS OF WALES WAS EXCLUDED; and as soon as the rejoicings were concluded, her Royal Highness quitted England, and embarked from Worthing for the Continent.

All this time the old King was confined at Windsor Castle, in some apartments which were padded six feet high; in these, blind and mad, he was suffered to wander about, a melancholy and disgusting object. It is confidently affirmed, however, that he had frequent intervals of reason, in which he was perfectly sensible of his forlorn and wretched fate. During one of these lucid intervals it is said that one of the domestics about his person informed him of the abdication of Napoleon; upon which he put himself in a great passion, and swore "*it was a lie.*" This wretched old man was reduced from the highest pinnacle of grandeur to the most pitiable condition; none of his subjects were admitted to see him for many years; even his children were excluded, except upon particular occasions, and then they were admitted only in the presence of certain individuals. The old Queen had the care of his person, and it is currently reported that she governed his gracious Majesty (it being of course necessary to do so) with considerable harshness.

When one reflects upon the bloody reign of George the Third, and calls to mind the rivers of human gore that were shed during that reign; when one looks back to the period of the American war, which was generally understood to be a war of the King's, more than of his Ministers; when one calls to recollection the commencement of the French war, which, it has been asserted, was waged at his Majesty's particular instance, in opposition to the private opinion of Mr. Pitt; when one looks back on the numerous sanguinary penal statutes that were passed during this King's reign, and the thousands of victims that fell a sacrifice to them; when one contemplates the myriads upon myriads of brave Britons whose lives were offered up as a sacrifice to these Moloch wars, it may well and truly be called the UNFORTUNATE REIGN of King George the Third—which reign was concluded by the King himself being locked up, for many years, in his own castle, a solitary captive, suffering under the complicated and melancholy visitation of *blindness* and *madness*: and when one thinks of all this, one may, without being very superstitious, consider the catastrophe as an awful instance of the Divine vengeance levelled at the ruler of a sinful nation.

The story goes that a mouse had contracted a sort of friendly sympathy for the hoary-headed, sightless Royal maniac, and paid him such frequent visits, during his long captivity, that it was at length become quite tame, and would submit to be handled by the unfortunate shadow of a great monarch. The King was very much delighted with this friendly little visitant, and its little antics and gambols assisted him to pass away many a wearisome, sorrowful hour. Unfortunately, the Queen came into the room one day, before the little trembling animal had time to escape to its hiding place. The Queen eyed it before it had yet left the King's hand, and when she quitted the apartment she ordered the attendant to take care and kill that "*nausty mose,*" before she came again. The attendant ventured to state that the poor old King was so exceedingly partial to the mouse, and appeared so much entertained with it, that he was fearful his Majesty would miss it very much, and that the loss of it might make him unhappy. The answer was "*kill the nausty mose* before I come again!" It was as much as the servant's situation was worth to disobey, and the poor little tame animal, too confident of its



former protection, was easily caught and killed! The King, of course, soon missed the little solitary companion of his adversity, and for along time inquired the cause of its absence with the greatest earnestness; and when he found that it never came again, he grieved incessantly, more so than he did for any thing that happened to him during his long and cruel captivity.

So goes the tale, and I, for one, believe it. What a subject this for reflection, what a picture of misery, what an awful monument of fallen greatness! If the King had those lucid intervals of reason which it is said he had, his situation must have been, if possible, infinitely more deplorable than that of the captive of St. Helena; it must have been a thousand times more hopeless than that of the latter; shut up and confined for life in his own palace, by his own family, he must have soon lost all hope: while Napoleon, till he found that his dissolution was approaching, must have always been cheered by the hope, arising from ten thousand chances which could not fail to present themselves to his mind, of his being at length relieved from his iron bondage.

George the Third was the only King I ever saw, and I never wish to see another King. The last time I saw him was when he was getting out of his carriage at the Star, at Andover, on his return from Weymouth; which place he never after visited. His eyesight was then nearly gone, and his attendants were obliged to guide his feet, and to lead him like a child into the Inn. I had known him in his prime, and had frequently hunted with him. At the time when I saw him at Andover, he had indeed sadly fallen off, and his signature to all documents was effected by a stamp, some one directing his hand. All Acts of Parliament, all Commissions, all Death-warrants, and all Pardons, were for a long time signed in this manner. He who had signed more death-warrants than any mortal that ever breathed, and who could spare or kill human beings by the mere dash of his pen; alas! alas! he, once so powerful, could not now even save the life of a poor mouse. He who, as a mere matter of course, and perhaps without giving the subject a thought, had put his fiat on the black scrolls which ordered hundreds upon hundreds of his fellow creatures to be sent to their long homes, and executed in cold blood; he now grieved and lamented, and cried like a child, at the death of a mouse. I would have had the Emperor Alexander, the King of Prussia, and all the Royal Visitors, go down to Windsor, to be eye-witnesses of the "ills that (*Royal*) flesh is heir to:" they should have been reminded, by a personal interview with this poor old maniac, to what a wretched state it was possible even for the greatest monarch to be reduced, by the hand of Providence. That all-wise and just Providence, the same Power that permitted the Emperor NAPOLEON to be sent a prisoner to St. Helena; the same Power that permitted HENRY HUNT to remain a captive in Ilchester Bastile, for TWO YEARS AND SIX MONTHS, commanded also that GEORGE THE THIRD should, after having LOST HIS SIGHT, and been DEPRIVED OF HIS REASON, be confined as a solitary prisoner in his own palace, for many of the latter years of his existence. The Lord's will be done!

During the whole time that these ridiculous freaks were going on in London, and that John Gull and his family were running stark mad with joy and glory, each bellowing out, whenever or wherever you met him, have you not seen the Emperor? have you not seen the King? have you not seen Blucher with his whiskers? surely you have seen the Don Cossack? &c. &c. &c.; during this time I remained quietly and snugly at Middleton Cottage, occupied in fishing or looking after my farm, and most sincerely lamenting the folly of my countrymen and countrywomen; and whenever I had an opportunity, I did not fail to remonstrate with them on their ridiculous and preposterous conduct, and to assure them that the hour would come when they would be heartily ashamed of it, and would have cause and leisure for bitter repentance. With many this time has arrived, with others it is fast approaching. So far was I from ever making one of the number of fools who ran after these sceptred despots, that, when some of them were travelling post by the house where I was staying, I retired into a *back room*, in order to avoid the possibility of seeing them; always saying, when the question was put to me, that "I thanked God I had seen *one King*, and was so well satisfied, that I never wished to see another." A single sample was quite enough for me. One of my great political friends had expressed the same sort of disgust at the idea of running after these foreign Sovereigns, and he swore most roundly and lustily, that none of his family should stir an inch to see them. It turned out, however, that he did not keep his word—but whether his breach of it arose from "the grey mare being the better horse," or from his being himself overcome by a childish curiosity, I cannot tell; perhaps a little of both prevailed; at any rate I heard that my *friend* and all his family went to Portsmouth, to see the Royal sight, and get a squint at Blucher's whiskers and mustachios. My friend and his family swelled the number of those who *suffered* at Portsmouth—"nanny nanny, one fool makes many!" It was now all glory, all joy, and all seeming prosperity with John Gull, every thing was military! As a proof that it could not well be otherwise, let us look to a return, which was presented to the House of Commons, of the number of officers in the British army in the pay of John, which return was as follows: Field Marshals, 5—Generals, 81—Lieutenant Generals, 157—Major Generals, 221—Colonels, 152—Lieutenant-Colonels, 618—Majors, 612—Captains, 2960—Lieutenants, 4725—Ensigns, 2522—amounting in the whole to the enormous number of TWELVE THOUSAND AND FIFTY-FOUR officers! What think you of this, John Gull? Here is a larger army of officers than the whole number of military that was thought sufficient by our ancestors to be kept up during the time of

peace. Yes, the officers alone, at the time to which I allude, actually out-numbered the whole of what our peace establishment used to be.

One of the precious effects of the downfall of Napoleon was the restoration of the bigotted, despicable tyrant, Ferdinand the Seventh, to the throne of Spain; and one of his first acts was to restore the hellish Inquisition, with all its horrors, which had been abolished during the sway of the French, and which had also been suppressed by the Cortes. The amiable Pope Pius the Seventh being restored to the see of Rome, he performed his part in the scene of mummery and tyranny, by issuing a Bull for the restoration of the order of the Jesuits. So it will be clearly seen that the canting Boroughmongering Protestant Parliament of England, while it pertinaciously refused to grant emancipation to the Catholics in Ireland, contrived to restore the Pope, Popery, the Inquisition, the Jesuits, and every species of superstition and intolerance upon the Continent!

About this time two fanatics, of the names of Johanna Southcote and Hannah More, were much followed in the West of England. Somersetshire could boast of possessing two female saints, *Mrs. Hannah More* and *Mrs. Johanna Southcote*, at the same time; which of the two was the greatest imposter it would be very difficult to decide, although the former appears to have borne off the palm of successful fraud and imposition. Miss Hannah, who, in her younger days, had been a very frolicsome lass, became all at once converted into a saint, and set up for a severe and rigid moralist; and she had the merit of establishing the gang generally known by the title of the SAINTS, amongst our politicians. In her train she had the Sidmouths, the Wilberforces, the Babingtons, the Dickensons, and others of that puritannical cast; although it has been whispered, but that, of course, must be a calumny, that, from the well-known character of some of these gentry, who were very frequent in their visits, the buxom dame (who had now assumed the title of Mrs.) contrived, like the friars of old, to indulge in the gratification of those passions to which it is said real saints are not prone. Some of her neighbours were in consequence so ill-natured as to say, that her conversion was not sincere, but that it was a mere cloak to cover certain practices. But my readers are aware that we must not believe *all* that the world says. Mrs. Johanna was an illiterate woman, whose fanaticism was carried to full as high a pitch as that of Mrs. More; but as her doctrine did not suit "the powers that be" quite so well as the doctrine of the other did, she could not boast of having Ministers of State and many of the Nobility as her disciples, although amongst her numerous followers she did not want for men of talent and education. Dr. Ash, under whose care the VERY VENERABLE JUDGE BEST received his education, was a staunch disciple of Johanna's, and it is said the *venerable Judge* himself at times discovered a little hankering after the prophetess; but whether his attachment was to her person or her principles, is not clearly decided.

During this period the British troops were carrying on a marauding, petty warfare in America, and on the 24th of August they burnt the newly-built, half-finished city of Washington, and magnanimously destroyed the city printing-press, and threw the types into the streets, that they might be trampled under the horses feet. England being at peace with all the rest of the world, the Government had nothing else to do but to direct its whole force against the Americans, both by sea and land, and I believe it was Mr. Charles Yorke, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who put forth a speech in his place in Parliament, to the following effect:—"That now Napoleon was deposed there was another example of democratic revolution, and it was necessary to depose James Madison, the President of the United States of America." This speech was hailed and cheered by a great number of the Members of the Honourable House, many of whom seemed to think that it was no very difficult matter to carry it into effect. But they reckoned without their host; for the news having arrived of the total defeat of the British fleet, on Lake Champlain, matters began to wear a different aspect, and the boasters were compelled to draw in their horns a little. Sir James Yeo had the command of the English fleet upon the Lakes, and Commodore Downie, in the *Confiance*, of 38 guns, had the command of the British squadron upon Lake Champlain, supported by Captain Pring, in the *Linnet*, of 16 guns; Lieutenant M'Ghee, in the *Chub*, of 11 guns; and Lieutenant Hix, in the *Finch*, of 11 guns. Lieutenant Raynham and Lieutenant Dual had the command of twelve gun-boats. The American squadron was commanded by Commodore M'Donough, in the *Saratoga*, of 26 guns; Captain Harley, in the *Eagle*, of 22 guns; and Captain—, in the *Ticonderoga*, of 18 guns, with 1 sloop, and 10 gun-boats. The English fleet had 90 guns and 12 gun-boats; the American fleet had 83 guns and 10 gun-boats—so that the British fleet had the superiority in number of guns and weight of metal. The American fleet was anchored opposite an American battery, commanded by General M'Coomb, at the head of 800 men. The British troops, under the command of Sir George Prevost, amounting to thirteen thousand men, were all drawn up on shore ready to take the battery, if the English fleet had succeeded in beating the Americans. It was communicated to Sir George Prevost that the English fleet would attack the Americans that day. Commodore Downie called all his officers on board, and communicated to each the order of battle, and his last words were, "Lieutenant M'Ghee will lead into action; let it be close quarters, MUZZLE to MUZZLE." He doubled a point of the American coast with a fair wind, and came in full view of the enemy lying at anchor; the signal was then given to bear up, and commence the action. Mr. M'Ghee carried in the *Chub*, of 11 guns, and placed her gallantly close alongside of the *Eagle*, of 22 guns, agreeable to orders, having

sustained the fire of the gun-boats as he passed; he blazed away at the enemy and received their fire in return, till he himself was wounded in three places, and every man out of his complement of sixty was either killed or wounded, with the exception of six. In fact, the Chub was made into a cullender, and completely disabled, before he struck her colours. The same fate attended the Confiance, the Linnet, and the Finch, the latter of which grounded on a reef of rocks about the middle of the engagement. The gun-boats appear absolutely to have run away. Thus was the British fleet captured by an inferior fleet of the Americans. Commodore Downie was killed by a ball from the American gun-boats very early in the contest, and the Confiance is said to have struck her colours without coming fairly into action; the result was, the British fleet was lost, and the officers were tried by a Court Martial. All the others were promoted, and the gallant Lieutenant M'Ghee was reprimanded for taking his ship prematurely into action. This is a pretty specimen of British justice in the naval department, and a melancholy example of the reward bestowed upon the gallant officers and men who fought our battles and maintained the British character.

On the 1st of November was opened the Congress at Vienna, where Lord Castlereagh, as the representative of the King of England, attended, and where it is generally believed he played second fiddle to Prince Metternich.

In consequence of the peace, and the Bank of England having drawn in a considerable quantity of its paper, preparatory to the payment in specie, which, as the law stood, they were compelled to at the end of six months after the peace had been proclaimed; in consequence of this, and there having been a good crop of wheat and a fair harvest, the average price of wheat during the year was seventy-four shillings per quarter, and the price of the quartern loaf was reduced to one shilling. Notwithstanding this, many riots took place in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, by the Luddites, who continued to set the laws at defiance, and to break the frames in the most lawless and unwarrantable manner. Their hostility was directed against all sorts of machinery, but particularly against the looms and frames used for weaving and knitting in the stocking trade.

The supplies voted this year amounted to seventy-five millions six hundred and twenty-four thousand five hundred and seventy-two pounds. By a return, it appeared that the amount of Bank of England notes in circulation was between twenty-eight and twenty-nine millions, and that the number of private banks was seven hundred and twenty-four.

The Parliament had met late in the fall of 1814, but little was done of importance, except passing the address, and a Bill called "the Preservation of Peace Bill," to put down by force the disturbances in Ireland. The state of Ireland had become very alarming, as the poor Irish were suffering the greatest privations from bad government and severe laws; which laws were exercised with the greatest severity, to support an infamous tithe system and a national church, the most profligate, the most expensive and rapacious that ever existed; a church in every respect hostile to the religion of four-fifths of the inhabitants, and a priesthood proud, overbearing, and intolerant.

In the higher circles it was now confidently given out that the Princess Charlotte, the heir apparent to the throne of England, was to be married to the hereditary Prince of Orange; but the disposition of her Royal Highness had been greatly soured by the infamous treatment of her poor mother, and, conceiving that this said young Dutch upstart had not paid her mother proper respect and attention, but that he was more disposed to fawn and cringe to the will of her father, it is said that she dismissed him from her presence, and peremptorily refused to marry him. This drove her Royal Papa into a great passion, and our magnanimous Prince Regent went suddenly to Warwick House, the residence of his daughter, and discharged all her servants. She, however, proved herself a legitimate Guelph, in obstinacy, at any rate; for she refused to see the young Orange afterwards. This young lady had secured the affections of every honourable and unprejudiced person in the kingdom, by her undeviating attachment to her mother, and she gained the hearts of thousands by her firm and undaunted opposition to the arbitrary mandates of her father, with respect to that mother.

The Parliament met very early after the adjournment, and the first Act they passed was to renew *the restriction of cash payments by the Bank of England*; another violation of a positive pledge of the Honourable House, another gross breach of faith committed upon the people by a corrupt Parliament, which had solemnly declared by an act that the Bank should be compelled to pay their notes in specie at the end of six months after peace was made.

Accounts were now brought to England that Napoleon was reigning in full sovereignty at Elba, and all the corrupt writers in the Ministerial and daily press were sneering at the idea of his fancied sovereignty. But by the solemn treaty of Paris, Napoleon was as much an Emperor as he ever had been as much a Sovereign as the Emperor of Russia; and, by the law of nations, quite as much entitled to make war or peace with other powers as was the King of England, the King of France, or any other

Sovereign. But these writers, as I have before said, were daily ridiculing his sovereignty, and holding his power in derision. But it will be seen hereafter, that it is a very dangerous thing to treat with contempt the hostility of an enemy, however weak that enemy may be. In the meantime Louis the Desired, the contemptible King of France, decreed that the property of the Buonaparte family should be sequestered; the old Bourbon tyranny was making the most rapid strides; the press was much more enslaved than under the reign of Napoleon; disturbances had broken out in many parts of France; yet such was the dreadful, enthralled state of the press, that no one dared to mention them, nor were they ever known but by the proclamations of the King, to restrain and repress them. The finances of France were, nevertheless, in a flourishing state; their trade was fast reviving, and every means that ingenuity could devise were resorted to, to induce the people to feel for royalty; and, amongst other things, a solemn funeral for the late King and Queen of France took place, which was conducted with great pomp and ceremony.

In America, the English were routed at New Orleans, by General Jackson, who, with an undisciplined militia, and very inferior numbers, caused great slaughter amongst the British troops; in fact, the number killed in the English ranks amounted to more than the whole number of the American troops, so expert were the riflemen, and so superior were the abilities of the American General Jackson. This was a death-blow to the hopes of the English, for the bravery of the Americans appeared to be invincible; they were in truth fighting for Liberty, for themselves and their country, and not for any despot or any despotism. This fine spirit gained them a peace, which it may fairly be said they fought for, bled for, and ultimately obtained by conquest; and James Madison remained, in spite of all the threats of deposing him, President of the only free people upon the habitable globe. Thus, as I hope and trust, have they secured and placed upon an imperishable basis, the liberties and just rights of their people. They had a right to be proud of their success. England, at peace with all the rest of the world, carried on a war with America; yet the latter, single-handed, not only met and contended with, but repelled the mighty power of her adversary, and by the equity of her cause, and the bravery of her citizens, she conquered a peace, in spite of the threats of England's haughty, bullying, ignorant, and intolerant Ministers, who had declared that *the right of search* was a *sine qua non* which must form the basis of any negotiation. Ultimately, however, these very Ministers were glad to make peace with the Americans, by saying nothing about the *sine qua non*, the *right of search*, for which they had gone to war. England went to war almost solely to maintain the *right of search*; the Americans went to war to resist that right; and England having made peace, and suffered the right of search to be passed over in silence, the Americans have gained their object, and the English have lost the point which was the cause of the war.

On the 17th of January in this year, 1815, a Catholic meeting was held in Dublin, at which it was determined to petition Parliament for an unqualified emancipation.

The price of wheat and all sorts of grain having been reduced, the great landholders had been for some time raising a cry, that the landed interest was in danger, and that the farmers would be ruined unless some law was made to keep up the price of grain to the war standard, which, on an average, was from twelve to fifteen shillings a bushel. The Ministers had been pressed hard by the great landholders, in both Houses of Parliament, to bring forward such a measure; but, knowing and feeling the unpopularity to which it would expose them, they had, from time to time, put them off, and they appeared to discountenance any such proposition, whenever it was mentioned in the House. At length, however, the Ministers gave way to the urgent demands of the landholders, although apparently with great reluctance and considerable doubts. In several districts the landholders urged the farmers and their tenants to petition the House for a Corn Bill. Amongst the number of these landholders, the most active and the most forward to promote such petitions in Wiltshire and the West of England, was Mr. John Benett, of Pyt-House, near Shaftesbury, the present Member for that county. Committees of both Houses of Parliament were appointed to inquire into the state of agriculture, for the purpose of ascertaining what measures it were necessary to take, or what Act to pass to keep up the price of corn, or rather to keep up the price of the quartern loaf to the war standard. Mr. John Benett was one of the witnesses who volunteered to be examined at great length before both of these Committees, that of the House of Lords as well as that of the House of Commons.

As soon as the evidence given before these Committees was published, I rode over to Botley, to my friend Cobbett, to urge him to take a *more decided part* against the measure; for I thought I discovered in his Register a leaning towards a Corn Bill, or rather the doctrine was maintained that it was necessary to protect the farmer as well as the merchants and other trades. When I arrived, I found him endeavouring, by arguments the most powerful, to shew the injustice of leaving the farmer open to the competition of foreign growers, who could raise the grain at half the expense which must be incurred by the native growers. Perhaps this was said to ascertain my sentiments upon the subject, which I immediately, and in the most unequivocal manner, stated to be in direct opposition to the measure. I argued against the injustice of making the mechanic and the labourer pay a war price for his bread in

time of peace, and I maintained that it was the duty of the farmer and the landholder to petition for a reduction of taxation, so as to enable him to compete with the foreign farmer, instead of petitioning for a monopoly by his exclusion. In five minutes my friend Cobbett was either convinced of the propriety and justice of my remarks, or at any rate he professed to be so; and he concurred with me in the necessity of calling upon the public to come forward to oppose so injurious and ruinous a measure as that which was contemplated. I pointed out to him the fallacy and the hypocrisy of those who pretended to be anxious for the good of the farmer, and we both very soon came to this conclusion, that a Corn Bill would be ultimately injurious to the farmer, and that the only result of it would be, to raise the price of the *staff of life*, and to grind the face of the poor, to enable the farmer to continue to pay high taxes, for the support of an unconstitutional large standing army in the time of peace, and to enable the lazy sinecurist and the unmerited pensioner to wallow in wealth and riot in luxury, drawn from the sweat of the poor man's labour. From this time forward Mr. Cobbett took the most decisive part in opposition to every movement of the Corn Bill gentry.

Sir Henry Parnell, an Irish Member, ONE OF THE OPPOSITION, brought forward the measure in the House of Commons, and I believe he was Chairman of the Committee. I will now put upon record a few questions and answers, extracted from the evidence of the aforesaid John Benett, Esq. of Pyt-House, voluntarily given before the Committee of the House of Lords, in favour of a Corn Bill, which evidence was printed by order of the Right Honourable House:

*The Evidence of JOHN BENETT, Esq. of Pyt-House, voluntarily given before the Committee of the House of Lords, in favour of the Corn Bill.*

You hold a considerable quantity of land in your own hands?—I do.

What number of acres?—I believe upwards of 2000 acres, in various parishes in the western part of Wiltshire, about twelve miles from Warminster.—My residence is Pyt-House, in Wiltshire.

Have you any general information about the state of that quarter of the country, or can you speak only to the particular district in which you reside?—I can speak to the county of Wilts; for I am in the habit of riding through it very often, and am in the habit of meeting with the farmers in the county, from having been for some years a farmer, and am now President of the Agricultural Society of that county. Can you give the Committee any account of the increase and alterations that have taken place in the value and prices of the different articles of produce from land, and the expenses of cultivation, and from what period?—I can speak to nearly twenty years. The price of wheat has varied so very materially, it is more easily ascertained from the returns of the markets than from recollection.

In the present state of the improved cultivation of those parts of the county of Wilts with which you are acquainted, can you state the various prices which it will be necessary for the farmer to receive for the different species of grain he rears, in order to remunerate him for his expenses?—Taking the taxes, the price of labour, and all outgoing expenses of the farmer as they now stand, and the rents at which land has lately been let, I do not conceive the farmer can possibly raise wheat, and remunerate himself with ten per cent. interest upon his capital, under 12\_s\_ . a bushel, or 96\_s\_ . per quarter.

If the farmer was to receive only 75\_s\_ . per quarter, would he be capable of paying any rent at all?—No, he certainly would not be able to pay his rent, and get his ten per cent. upon his capital.

Is land generally let in Wiltshire upon the supposition that wheat will stand at 96\_s\_ . and barley at half the price of wheat?—I believe that lands have been let even at a higher calculation than that; I am in the habit of valuing estates of my own as well as of others, and of giving opinions to my friends; and I have always calculated upon 12\_s\_ . a bushel, and I believe surveyors do the same; many of the estates let by survey let at a much greater calculation, or rather, I believe, without any.

Do you believe there is any surveyor who practises the surveying of estates for the purpose of fixing rents, who proceeds on the calculation of wheat being at a higher price than 12\_s\_ . per bushel, or 96\_s\_ . a quarter?—I believe no estates have been let in Wiltshire, by our first-rate surveyors, on a calculation of more than 12\_s\_ . per bushel, or 96\_s\_ . per quarter, for the last eight years, since the high price of corn and the competition for estates.

If wheat should be at 80\_s\_ . and other grains at a proportionate price, do you believe the farmers would continue in the cultivation of their land at the expense of the present mode of culture?—Certainly not; I think less wheat would be sown, and less money would be expended in the cultivation of land. From your knowledge of the general ideas of farmers, do you believe that the same opinion you have expressed to the Committee upon this subject is generally entertained?—With respect to renting farmers I believe the same opinion prevails with those who have leases they cannot get rid of; but

where they have not leases, or their landlords will permit them to surrender them, they are not under the same alarm, because they will quit their farms altogether, unless they can get a reduction in their rent in proportion to the price of corn; but no reduction of rent will answer as it stands now, it will exhaust the whole rent.

Do you know of any farmers who have actually withdrawn their capital from agriculture?—No, I do not; but a tenant of my own surrendered a beneficial agreement, of which there were seven years to come. I gave my tenants notice that I would not promise to sink their rents, but that they might surrender their leases altogether.

At what value of wheat did you compute the rent which the tenant paid you under the lease, of which only one year has run?—I made no particular computation for that; I have been in the habit of making valuations of my own farms; I have generally taken it at 12\_s\_.; I could have got more for this estate, it being a particularly valuable farm; I made no particular calculation as to this farm. I have another tenant, whose term of seven years only has expired; I expected to have raised his rent nearly 400\_l\_. per annum, upon a rent of 870\_l\_.; I have not raised him a farthing; I dare not propose to raise him; I think he would quit me if I should attempt it; and I doubt my power of letting it, if he should quit me. I directed my surveyor to look over his farm, and let me know the price he thought I might put upon it, and if he thought it would bear raising, to let me know; and I have not heard from him, though he looked over it about two months ago.

How long had he possessed it at the rent of 870\_l\_.?—Only seven years.

At what rate did you calculate the value of wheat at that time?—At 12\_s\_. a bushel.

At what would you have calculated the price of wheat if you had raised it?—It is proper I should explain that; I did not in fact fix the rent; I agreed he should take it at the Commissioners' valuation, it being then just laid in under the act of inclosure.

Do you know whether the Commissioners fixed the rent, calculating wheat at 12\_s\_. a bushel?—I do not; but I told him at the time I considered the Commissioners' valuation would be a certain price; that if the valuation was lower than the price, he should have it at the lower rate; the Commissioners' valuation exceeded my price, therefore he has it at the price named by me, though I thought it too little.

Is it a farm which requires the application of much capital to render it productive?—Yes, it does.

When you had in your own mind settled that you would get an advanced rent of 400\_l\_. a year, what did you take the price of wheat at in forming that calculation?—I conceived wheat was higher than 12\_s\_. a bushel, not more than 13\_s\_. a bushel. I have not valued this farm particularly at 400\_l\_. a year more, but I felt that the farm was worth 400\_l\_. a year more than I had let it at.

You have said that at the time the Commissioners valued it, you believe they proceeded on the idea that wheat was worth 12\_s\_. a bushel?—No, I do not know what calculation the Commissioners made; they were three eminent surveyors.

When it passed in your mind that you would get 400\_l\_. a year more, was not that in consequence of your having an opinion that the Commissioners had fixed the land at a lower rent than if wheat were calculated at 12\_s\_. a bushel?—Certainly it was.

And your idea of getting 1270\_l\_. was in consequence of what passed in your mind as to wheats being fairly to be valued at 12\_s\_. a bushel?—Certainly it was.

Having stated your knowledge to be general over the county of Wilts, and having stated your calculation of wheat to be at 12\_s\_. for the last seven years, do you apply that to the farms within your own immediate knowledge, or over the county of Wilts generally?—I believe that generally over the county of Wilts, 12\_s\_. is the lowest calculation which has been made by surveyors in letting land.

If a free importation should take place, how many rents do you think the farmer will be able to make then?—It depends entirely upon what effect the free importation may have upon the price of corn; taking wheat at 8\_s\_. a bushel, and taking all agricultural expenses to stand as they now do, I conceive the farmer with an average crop; cannot pay any rent at all. You conceive a proprietor farming his own estate, with a competent share of skill and capital, would be a loser if the price of wheat was 8\_s\_. a bushel?—Yes, I do.

Has any proportion of the value of daily labour been made up to the labourers out of the poor's rates?—Yes, it has; the weekly income of every family is made up to the gallon loaf and three-pence per head. Supposing the father to earn 9\_s\_. one of the children 3\_s\_. another 2\_s\_. and another 1\_s. od. the

magistrate conceiving they are able to earn that, or the overseer being willing to give them the money for their labour, whatever the deficiency is, is made up to the amount I have stated. I must explain, that I give this evidence as a magistrate more than as a farmer; for I act for a very large district, and am in the habit of making this order. The gallon loaf per head per week is what we suppose sufficient for the maintenance of every person in the family for the week; and the 3\_d\_ is for clothes; and if the parish think proper to find clothes, the 3\_d\_ is deducted. This practice goes through all the western parts of Wiltshire, and I believe throughout the county.

Have you, from your situation as a Magistrate, any connexion and knowledge of the condition of the lower class of manufacturers?—I have; I live within nine miles of a great number of them, and act for several manufacturing parishes as a Magistrate.

Can you state the average consumption of a family?—The manufacturers live better than the farming labourers, but they need not live better; when they come to the parishes they have only the same allowance from us as paupers of every class.

Do you expect the labouring manufacturers will consume a greater proportion of farm produce than they have hitherto done?—I conceive greater waste will be made of farm produce when it is at a low price than when it is at a high price, and, in fact, they must consume more: *they live upon wheat instead of barley; they lived upon barley formerly, and now they live upon wheat, and eat fewer potatoes probably.*

Do you think it would be possible for landlords to reduce their rents so as to enable the tenant to make a fair profit, according to the present price of corn?—No; I do not think it is in the power of landlords, it must depend upon the riches of the landlord; but if he reduces the whole rent upon some farms, it would not be sufficient according to the present price of corn; taking the present price of wheat at eight shillings a bushel, and all other grain following the same scale.

The price is high abroad at present?—It is.

The case of a peace with America, and of our receiving corn from thence, do not you conceive, in case of a great influx of corn from the continent, the price must fall considerably?—Certainly, as the price falls upon the continent, it will fall here, if free importation is permitted; but I would wish to be understood here as to the price of corn, it must very much depend upon the crop of the year, because I do not believe it possible to import sufficient to feed the people of Great Britain, and very much must depend upon the quantity of corn grown; and my own belief is, that the price of corn will be very high indeed in three years, higher than it has probably been known for the last ten years. I think the importation is an uncertain sort of supply; there may be a bad crop upon the continent, or a thousand interruptions may stop the importation.

On what is your opinion founded, that it will be at a high price?—*Because a great deal less wheat will be sown in consequence of the low prices; I believe the defalcation in the number of acres sown will be very great indeed.*

Do you think that the present rents are the cause of the tenants not being able to obtain a fair profit, corn being at eight shillings a bushel; or does it arise from the price of labour, the amount of poors' rates, taxes, and other expenses?—*I do not myself think the rents are too high, taking them at a general average; in fact, I do not think the gentlemen of landed property can now live at the present rents with the same comforts their forefathers have done on the same estates; that if the rents are to be lowered, the gentlemen of landed property must be sunk in their scale in society.*

Do you conceive that the existing rents bear a greater proportion to the produce than formerly?—No; not so great by a great deal; I conceive that rents have not risen in the same proportion that all the articles of life, which we are compelled to have as country gentlemen, have risen.

The following requisition was published in the Salisbury and Winchester Journal, on the 2d of January, 1815, calling a public meeting of the landholders and farmers of the county of Wilts, to be held at Warminster, on the 6th day of January following:—

WE, the undersigned Land-Owners and Occupiers of Land, in the county of Wilts, conceiving it to be impossible that the British farmers should ever contend on fair or equal terms with foreign growers of corn, even in British markets, as long as the former shall have to bear such heavy charges of rates, taxes, assessments, and other expenses attendant on their cultivation, of which the latter know nothing: Being also convinced that the farmers of this kingdom have already suffered severely, even to the ruin of many of those who have had small capitals; and also that the evil is fast approaching to the land-

owners; and must (if no relief be given to the agriculturists) evidently fall on the country at large: Feeling it also to be a duty incumbent on as many of us as are landlords, to exert ourselves for the protection of our tenants, and on us all jointly to exert ourselves, for our mutual protection:—Do hereby give Notice, That we intend to meet at the Lord's Arms Inn, at Warminster, in the county of Wilts, on Friday the 6th day of January next, at 12 o'clock at noon, for the purpose of considering of the propriety of preparing Petitions to the two Houses of Parliament, on behalf of ourselves and others; and we invite all Land-Owners, and Occupiers of Land, in the county of Wilts, who may wish to unite with us in forwarding this our object, to meet us on that day, and to co-operate with us, in adopting such measures as may then and there be thought necessary, for our mutual relief and preservation.

*Dated this 30th of December, 1814. (Signed.)*

Thomas Grove. John Benett. James Everard Arundel.  
George South. J.H. Penruddocke. Alexander Powell.  
H. Linton. T. Davis, Jun. S. Card.  
John Davis. J.E. Strickland. G.J. Kneller.  
John Gordon. H. Biggs. J. Slade.  
William Smith. Robert Smith. Richard Rickword.  
Henry Hubbard. Robert Candy. John Neat.  
John Pearce. George Young. James Burges.  
Richard Pocock. James Pearce. William Glass.  
Robert Payne. J. Howel. John Foliott.  
William Marsh. Thomas Chandler. Thomas Burfitt.  
John Barter. John Phillips. Henry Phillips.  
Thomas Burge. John Mitchell. J.C. Burbidge.  
John Willis. Robert Rumsey. James Chaiman.  
E.F. Seagram. James Goddard. John Goddard.

This was short notice, as many people of the county of Wilts did not get the Salisbury paper till the 3d or 4th of January. In fact, I myself, who was living in Hampshire, did not get it till the 4th in the evening, nor should I have seen it at all, if a friend had not sent it to me. As I had a small freehold in the county of Wilts, and also occupied a considerable farm at Upavon, in that county, I made up my mind, within five minutes after I saw the above advertisement, that, although I was living at a distance of nearly forty miles from the scene of action, I would make one at this intended snug meeting. I mounted my gig the next day (the 5th), and drove as far as Deptford Inn. I had heard of a Mr. Gourley, who lived at Deptford, upon an estate of the Duke of Somerset's; and, as he had acquired the character of being at least an eccentric, if not an independent man, I called at his house with the intent to have some conversation with him upon the proposed meeting. Fortunately, however, he was from home, or I might have been hampered with a very troublesome and a very disagreeable companion; for I afterwards found that Mr. Gourley, though perhaps a very well-meaning person, was so flighty, so confused, and so opinionated in his wild and visionary notions, that he was a very dangerous man to have any thing to do with; at any rate, he was a person that it was impossible to go hand in hand with. I slept at Deptford Inn, and proceeded through Heytesbury to Warminster in the morning, calling upon my old friend Cousens in my way thither; I knew that he was staunch to the back-bone, and that, in case he was at home, I should be sure of his support to second any amendment that I might find it necessary to propose. When I drove up to his door at Heytesbury, I was surprised to find all the window-shutters closed, although it was nearly ten o'clock. Upon hailing him, he popped his head out of the chamber window with a night-cap on, in one of the severest hoar frosty mornings I ever beheld. I told him where I was going, and he promised to follow me instantly, without fail; and he kept his word, for he overtook me upon his grey poney before I reached the town.

When I drove into Warminster, the town was as still and as quiet as possible, without any of those bustling indications which I had been accustomed to witness at a public meeting. While I was taking my breakfast at the Lord's Arms Inn, some of the requisitionists made their appearance, and they were soon followed by the remainder, and a considerable number of the landholders of the county, amongst whom, as I sat at an up-stair window, I recognised Mr. Wyndham, of Dinton, the High Sheriff; Paul Methuen, Esq. one of the Members for the county; and the said John Benett, surrounded by a few of the requisitionists. I sat very quiet while my friend Cousens reconnoitred their forces, and communicated their arrival. At length we saw them all proceed to the Town-hall, perhaps twenty-five or thirty of them at the outside—as pretty a little snug cabal as ever was mustered upon any occasion. They passed my window and went smirking along, little dreaming that they should meet with the slightest interruption or opposition to their measures, which were all ready cut and dry, and safely deposited in the pocket of the celebrated attorney, Mr. Charles Bowles, of Shaftesbury. As the train passed up the street, the town's-people took little other notice of them than by now and then *eyeing them askance* with a jealous look. I had remained the whole time snug in my room, without one soul of them knowing or suspecting



that I was in Warminster; but, as soon as I saw them all safely housed, out I bolted into the street, and made my way after them. As we walked up the street, my friend Cousens intimated to two or three of the shopkeepers who I was, and the news flew like wildfire round the town, that Mr. Hunt was arrived, and gone up to the Hall. As, therefore, something like fair discussion was likely to take place, the said meeting, which, ten minutes before, excited no interest whatever amongst the town's-people, was, in a very short space of time, crowded by the shopkeepers, and attended by almost every respectable man in the town. When I entered the Hall it was very evident that I was not a very welcome guest, and that I had not been expected by any one. As, however, I was a landholder of the county, and one of those who were invited, it was impossible to make any objection, as I was as much entitled to be present as any man in the room. Mr. Grove, whose name stood at the head of the requisition, was called to the chair. This gentleman, who is descended from one of the most ancient families in the county, having shortly stated the object of the meeting, Mr. Benett arose, and, after some wriggling and twisting, addressed them. As the following report, which was published in Keene's Bath Journal, on the Sunday following, contains a brief outline and an impartial account of the proceedings, I will insert it verbatim, as it was afterwards copied into almost every newspaper in the kingdom:

On the 6th of January a Meeting of "Landholders and Occupiers of Land," was held at the Town-Hall, Warminster, convened by public advertisement, signed by John Benett, Esq. of Pyt-House, (the gentleman who gave such long and strong evidence before the Committees of both Houses of Parliament in favour of the Corn Bill), and several other respectable land-owners and farmers of the county of Wilts, to take into consideration the propriety of presenting Petitions to both Houses of Parliament, on behalf of the proprietors and occupiers of land. Thomas Grove, Esq. of Fern, one of the gentlemen who called the meeting, having taken the chair, Mr. Benett addressed them at a very considerable length in favour of a petition that he submitted for their adoption, expressive of the serious injury already sustained by the farmer, and the probable result likely to fall on the landholder, arising from the reduced and low price of corn, owing particularly to the importations from France, &c. The Petition further stated, that as the agricultural interest was blended with that of the tradesman and mechanic, the latter were invited to join in its support, and add their signatures thereto. Mr. Benett insisted that, as the evidence given before the Corn Committees had never been contradicted, the legislature were bound to afford the agricultural interest their protection; and, enforcing the necessity of Parliamentary interposition in favour of the landed interest, he said, that unless some measure were devised to enable the farmer to pay his present rent and taxes, the landholders would be completely ruined; and he solemnly declared, that, unless this desirable object was carried into immediate execution, he for one would be under the absolute necessity, before that day twelvemonth, of *leaving the country* with his family, to reside where provisions and all the necessaries of life were to be obtained at a rate within the reach of his fortune.

[Footnote: Quere.—If this solemn asseveration of Mr. Benett's be correct, (who, by the bye, is a Land-owner to the amount of 10,000\_l. a year,) what will be the fate of those who are left behind, without the means of flying from the evil?]

The motion was briefly seconded by Mr. BOWLES.—Mr. HUNT began by stating his objection to the meeting altogether, asserting, that if the meeting was not illegal, it was highly improper for a few individuals of a particular class to call a meeting to petition Parliament in favour of *tradesmen and mechanics*, without giving them an opportunity of attending to decide upon its propriety. This was a close meeting of landholders and farmers; many respectable tradesmen, inhabitants of the town, would have attended, but they were told they had no business there, not being landholders or farmers. This meeting, therefore, bore a resemblance to a "Conclave of Cardinals with closed doors."—Instead of calling a meeting like this, why not call a public county meeting, and meet the question manfully and openly? One reason against this was, that at an open county meeting, even Mr. John Benett would not be so hardy as to bring forward a petition, the sole object of which was the keeping up the price of corn, under the cloak of its being a petition in favour of the tradesman and the mechanic.—

In fact, this was a petition especially to benefit the landholder; even the farmer was of secondary consideration, and it was decidedly hostile to the interest of every other class of society; and if acted upon would prove ruinous to the little tradesman, the mechanic, and the labourer. The landlord had met with no reverse since the commencement of the war; his rents had progressively increased, in proportion as the rest of the community had suffered privations; the nearer the mechanic and the labourer had approached to starvation and beggary, the higher were the profits and the more efficient the means of the landholder. This was no theoretical proposition, hastily introduced, it was a practical truism, the result of careful and recent inquiry. He would read to the meeting an account of the population of the parish of Enford, a large parish in the centre of the county of Wilts, with the comparative statement of the rise in the price of labour, the price of

bread, and the price of land, within the last 30 years. The number of houses were 143, population 656, farmers, &c. 250, labourers 406, labourers (not paupers) 201, labourers (paupers) 205. About 30 years back, the labourers in this parish received 6\_s\_ per week; at this time they received 8\_s\_ per week—30 years back, the quartern loaf averaged about 5\_d\_ at this time it is 10-1/2\_d\_—30 years back, the labourer could purchase with his week's pay, 6\_s\_ fourteen quartern loaves; now he can only purchase with his week's pay, 8\_s\_ nine quartern loaves—about 30 years back, the principal farm in this parish, then belonging to the late Mr. Benett, of Pyt-house, in this county, was let for 400\_l\_ a-year; at the present time this farm, the property of Mr. John Benett, of Pyt-house, is let for 1,260\_l\_ a-year. Thus it clearly appears in this parish, within the last 30 years, labour has risen from 6\_s\_ to 8\_s\_ per week, 33 per cent., the quartern loaf from 5\_d\_ to 10-1/2\_d\_, 105 per cent., the rent of land from 400\_l\_ to 1,260\_l\_, 212 per cent. This proves that bread has risen within this period more than three times as much as labour, and land more than twice as much as bread, and more than six times as much as labour. At the present price of land, corn, bread, and labour, the landlord is benefited three times as much as the farmer, and six times as much as the labourer. Mr. Benett said, that he had, since the period mentioned by Mr. Hunt, purchased the tithes, and added them to the farm, which was included in the present rent. Mr. Hunt replied, that he was perfectly aware of this circumstance, as well as of another circumstance equally important, which was this, that Mr. Benett had taken a considerable portion of the best land from his farm, and added it to another, which produced a greater rent than the value of the tithes, therefore the balance was more in favour of the landlord than he had stated. He had mentioned this particular farm, as it belonged to Mr. Benett, the proposer of the present measure; but from his own knowledge (having an estate himself in the same parish) he could state, that the land had risen in the same, and, in some instances, in a higher proportion. He, therefore, particularly enjoined the farmers to pause before they gave their sanction to a measure, which had only for its object the benefit and aggrandizement of a few rapacious landholders, whilst it was calculated to shift the odium of a dear loaf off their own shoulders, and fix it upon the back of the farmer. Let the odium rest where it was due, upon those who were the supporters of the war, upon those who have fattened upon the miseries of the people.—Mr. Bleeck followed on the same side with Mr. Hunt, exposing the fallacy of attempting to palm upon the meeting a petition, professing to have for its object the welfare of the tradesman and the mechanic, whilst the operation of it would tend to perpetuate the misery they had so long endured; he called to the recollection of many of the meeting, the scenes which they had been in the habit of witnessing in that hall, the walls of which had so often resounded with the professions of those gentlemen who were now complaining of the present times, the effect of that war, to support which, they had so often solemnly pledged, not only their last guinea, but their last drop of blood. He called upon the Chairman not to blink the question, because the majority of the meeting appeared against the petition, but let it fairly meet its fate.—Paul Methuen, Esq., one of the representatives for the county, said, that seeing a meeting called, signed by a number of respectable individuals, he felt it his duty to attend it; but if he had known that it was to have been a close meeting with closed doors, he certainly would not have come near the place. If the meeting decided upon petitioning the House of Commons, whatever that petition may be, he should feel it his duty to present it; although he would not pledge himself to support the landed interest, to the injury of the tradesman and the mechanic. The Chairman having hinted that it was going a little too far, to say that this petition was in favour of the tradesman and mechanic, and as they would not have an opportunity of voting upon the subject, he thought they had better be left out of the petition. The whole meeting appeared to concur in this, and Mr. Benett proposed to draw the pen through the words "tradesman and mechanic;" which being done the Chairman desired all those who were for the petition to hold up their hats. The Chairman declared a decided majority kept their hats on; which was followed by a symptom of approbation, whereupon the Chairman asserted, that the meeting was so *tumultuous*, he would not take the sense of it against the petition. Upon this, the Chairman, with Mr. Benett and a few of his friends, retired to a private room at the inn, but whether to sign this petition in secret, which they could not carry in public, or to abandon it altogether, we do not know.— A statement of the fate of the petition was announced to the inhabitants of the town by the bellman, amidst the becoming cheers of the populace.

I have no hesitation to say, that the publication of this report in *all* the London newspapers, and in almost every country newspaper in the three kingdoms, first roused a general feeling against the proposed Corn Bill. Meetings were afterwards called in London and in Westminster, and petitions were presented against the measure from almost every town and district throughout the country. Sir Francis Burdett attended the meeting of his constituents in Palace-yard, where they passed strong resolutions, and sent a petition to the House against the measure; but Sir Francis took a different view of the question, and appeared to think it was necessary that the English farmer should be protected, and I believe he said that he cared not whether the Bill was passed or not, and that it would make no difference to him personally whichever way it was decided. This certainly was not viewing the question with that liberality and sound judgment with which the Baronet was accustomed to act. For the

moment, his speech threw a considerable damp upon the ardour of a great many persons, who had before been very sanguine against the adoption of the said Corn Bill, and so completely were the affections of the people riveted to the opinions of Sir Francis Burdett, that his constituents cheered him, and drew him home in his carriage afterwards, amidst the acclamations of the populace.

This was the first instance that I recollect, for many years, in which I acted in opposition to the opinions of Sir F. Burdett; but, as I was thoroughly convinced of the mischievous intention of the supporters of the measure, as well as of the fatal result that must follow its adoption, I persevered in my opposition to it with all my power. I was not contented with having attended the Common Hall, as a Liveryman of the city of London, to protest against the Bill; I was not satisfied with having blown up the cabal at Warminster, and compelled the parties to sneak off with their resolutions and petitions, to pass them and get them signed in holes and corners; but I personally procured a requisition to be signed by the freeholders of the county of Wilts, and presented it to the High Sheriff for the county, my old school-fellow, William Wyndham, Esq. of Dinton, who was then residing at Marshwood, near that place, while his house was building at Dinton. The Sheriff was just upon the point of going out of office, and said the day was fixed for him to meet the new Sheriff, at Salisbury, for the purpose of the latter being sworn in. He, however, undertook to transmit my requisition to him, and recommended that he should give notice of the meeting in the first Salisbury paper after he had entered into his Sheriffalty. I ascertained that a Mr. GEORGE EYRE, the *King's printer*, of the house of *Strahan and Eyre*, printers in London, was to be the new Sheriff, and, not choosing to trust to this mushroom gentleman, I appointed to meet Mr. Wyndham at Salisbury, with the requisition, that I might see the old and new Sheriff together; telling him, at the same time, that I was determined not to be shuffled out of the county meeting, for, in case the new Sheriff did not choose to call it, I should go to the expense of calling it myself; and in the propriety of doing so Mr. Wyndham concurred with me. (My elder readers will recollect, and it is necessary to inform my young friends, that there was no law at that period to prevent my calling the county together, to consult upon the propriety of petitioning the Parliament; at least as many of them as chose to assemble for that purpose.)

I had drawn up a requisition, and procured a number of respectable signatures, and if the Sheriff, by refusing to call the meeting, had dared to neglect his duty and abuse the high trust reposed in him by his office, it was only necessary to advertise the requisition, and call the meeting in the name of the requisitionists. When the day arrived I was punctual to my appointment, and met the two Sheriffs at the office of their Deputy, Mr. Attorney Tinney, who would as soon have seen the devil as me; but, as he knew that I was not to be put off with any of his usual quibbling tricks, upon demanding an interview with his principals, I was admitted forthwith. I found this Mr. George Eyre just such a Jack-in-office as I should have expected a King's printer, or a King's lacquey, or a King's hairdresser to be; as unlike Mr. Wyndham, both in appearance and manner, as a sneaking upstart could be unlike a respectable country gentleman. The latter was unassuming, free, easy, and gentleman-like, willing and anxious to do his duty in such a way as was at once consistent with the character of his high office, and accommodating to the requisitionists; whilst the former was jealous of his authority, and appeared only to consider how he could get over the *task* which he had neither the courage to decline, nor the address to manage with common urbanity. The day, however, was at length fixed, but at the greatest possible distance of time, evidently for the purpose of frustrating the object of those who signed the requisition, as in all probability the Bill would be passed the House of Commons before the day of meeting, or at least before the petition could be presented. In fact, both the Sheriff and his hopeful Deputy declared with a sneer, that the necessity of holding the meeting might possibly be set aside, by the House of Commons passing the Bill. Old birds, however, are not to be caught with chaff, and therefore the requisition was drawn too general to allow of practising a trick of this sort; it said not a word about the House of Commons; it merely requested that a county meeting might be called, to consider the propriety of petitioning PARLIAMENT against the proposed Corn Bill; and I sarcastically observed to these wiseacres, that it depended upon the feeling of the meeting, when we were assembled, which branch of the Parliament we should petition, whether King, Lords, or Commons, and it would be quite time enough to consider that point when we *were* assembled. It always required considerable address and presence of mind to keep the upper hand of these legal quirk-dealers, these impudent under-strappers, whose whole trade consists in trick and chicanery; but I do not recollect ever having been outwitted by any one of them as to the proceedings of a public meeting.

In the interval between the presenting of the requisition and the coming together of the meeting, there were great riots in London, each night that the measure was discussed in the House of Commons; great multitudes had assembled about the House in a menacing manner; the military were called in, and the Bill was passed while the House was guarded with an armed military force with bayonets fixed. Many of the Members of the Honourable House were hooted and hustled as they passed into the doors; and Mr. Garrow, the then Attorney-General, had rather a narrow escape. It is said that he was surrounded, and the mob were just upon the point of clapping a halter round his neck, supposing him to be one of the obnoxious individuals who had been pressing the Bill through the House with the most

indecent haste, when some one in the crowd sung out with a loud voice that it was Garrow, the Attorney-General, who had not prosecuted any one for a political libel since he had been in office; upon which they gave him three cheers and let him pass.

The day for the meeting at length came. When we arrived at Salisbury, where the meeting was called, the news was brought down that the Bill had passed the House of Commons the night before; but we were not thrown off our guard by this event, as we had in some measure anticipated it. It was, however, necessary to draw up fresh resolutions, and a petition to the Lords instead of the Commons, which Mr. Cobbett and myself had scarcely time to half accomplish before a messenger entered out of breath, to say that the Sheriff and his party were gone to the Hall, whither they had proceeded the moment the clock struck twelve, instead of waiting, as usual, till it was *one*; the county meetings having always been called at twelve, under an understanding that *one* was the hour at which business was to be commenced. In another minute or two a second messenger hurried to us, to say that the Sheriff had opened the proceedings, and the meeting would be instantly closed if we did not proceed to the spot with all possible expedition. In consequence of this, Mr. Cobbett and myself packed up our half-finished resolutions and hastened to the scene of action, yet still conceiving it impossible that any thing assuming the character of a gentleman could be guilty of such a mean, pitiful, and underhanded trick as that which we were told would be played. Scarcely, however, had we reached the door of the Hall, when we met Mr. Sheriff, Mr. Deputy, and a pretty little knot of sycophants and dependants, coming out; and Tinney informed us, that, as no one had come forward when the requisition was read, the Sheriff had dissolved the meeting. We expostulated against such an ungentlemanly like trick, but our expostulations would have been in vain if the tricksters had happened to have got without the door of the Hall; but, fortunately, we got into the entrance passage, and met them face to face, where our arguments were supported by such an overwhelming power in the rear, that they were quite irresistible. The fact was, there happened to be *no back door*, and with a *little gentle force* we conveyed, or rather wriggled, these worthy men in office back again, step by step, and inch by inch, till the worthy Sheriff once more took the chair, amidst the deafening shouts of the largest county meeting that I ever witnessed. To tell the truth, they found it impossible to get out of the Hall, and at length, after having made as many shifts and feints and shuffles as an old fox would to avoid the well-trained, true-bred pack, and finding that we neither yielded to coaxing, bullying, nor wheedling, they ultimately made a virtue of necessity, and the high-bred High Sheriff turned to very kindly, and once more opened the proceedings of the meeting, by reading the requisition. I then moved an adjournment into the open air, and two carpenters' benches (the very best temporary hustings) being at hand, the business went on and passed off in a most regular and satisfactory manner. After I had moved and Mr. Cobbett had seconded the resolutions, and a petition to the House of Lords, praying that they would protect us from the rapacity of the Commons, and not pass the Corn Bill, and after an amendment had been proposed by the Reverend Mr. Hill, supported by Mr. Gourley, our resolutions and petition, which also prayed for a Reform of the House of Commons, a reduction of all useless places, and an abolition of all unmerited pensions and sinecure places, were carried unanimously, or at least with only a few, very few dissenting voices. Sheets of parchment and pens and ink were provided, and the people began to sign their names instantly. Mr. Cobbett returned to his home, while I sent messengers or went myself into every town in the county, and collected signatures, which amounted, at the end of four days, to TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND, and were forwarded with the petition to Lord Stanhope, who presented it on the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords. I reckoned that it cost me upwards of fifty pounds, out of my own pocket, to accomplish this county meeting and petition; no one soul but myself having contributed a single sixpence towards the expense.

About the time that the populace in London were committing great excesses, by breaking the windows of those Members of Parliament who took a prominent part in favour of the Corn Bill, Lord Cochrane, who was confined in the King's Bench prison, in consequence of a verdict given, or at least *procured*, against him, for the part it was pretended he had in the Stock Exchange hoax, made his escape from that prison, a circumstance which caused a very considerable sensation throughout the metropolis and the country; for it was rumoured that his Lordship had made his escape with the intention of placing him self at the head of the London rioters, who had by this time increased in numbers and daring resistance to the authorities. In descending by a rope from the top of the wall, his Lordship fell from a very considerable height, and injured himself severely, so much so, that he was for a great length of time unable to raise himself from the earth. His Lordship remained undiscovered for some weeks, and then appeared in his place in Parliament, where he was discovered sitting upon one of the benches of the House of Commons, and from thence he was taken by the civil power, and delivered once more into the custody of the Marshal of the King's Bench prison. Let the reader bear in mind what I have already mentioned, that the Parliament of England was obliged to be aided by the military; that Westminster Hall and both Houses of Parliament were encircled by troops, and all the avenues leading thereto were guarded by soldiers with their bayonets fixed, and that thus this law, this infamous Corn Bill, to enhance and keep up the price of bread, the staff of life, was passed under the protection of a military force, in defiance of the prayers, the petitions, and the remonstrances of a great majority of the

people of England; a fact which clearly demonstrated that the House of Commons, where the Bill originated, were so far from being the representatives of the people, that they acted in direct hostility to them, and had no feeling in common with them, but were more like a band of venal, corrupt, profligate, dishonest, and merciless oppressors.

The landed gentry in other parts had now began to shew a disposition to shake off the income tax, called the property tax, which was an arbitrary and inquisitorial war tax, and ought to have been abolished as soon as peace was proclaimed. As, however, the Ministers were evidently not in the least disposed to give up fourteen millions a-year, which this horrid imposition produced, many meetings were held and petitions agreed to, praying for its being abolished. Amongst the number a requisition was signed and presented to the Sheriff of Somerset, George Edward Allen, Esq. of Bathampton, requesting him to call a public meeting to take the subject into consideration, and he immediately advertised a meeting of the freeholders and inhabitants of the county, to be held at Wells. At the head of this requisition was Mr. Hanning, of Dillington. I saw the advertisement in the public papers, and as it appeared that the parties calling the meeting only intended to petition for a partial repeal of the tax, as far as it affected themselves, while they left the most odious and obnoxious half of it untouched, I mean that part which affected the small annuitant and fundholder, the widow and the orphan, whose income was under one hundred pounds a-year, I directly made up my mind to attend the meeting. As a preliminary step, therefore, I wrote a letter to the freeholders and inhabitants of the county, calling upon them to come to the meeting, and to support me in the endeavour to frustrate such a partial proceeding. In case of their being disposed to petition the Parliament, I urged them to support me in petitioning for an absolute repeal of the *whole tax*. This letter was published in one or two of the county newspapers, and I also printed and caused to be circulated five hundred copies of it in hand-bills.

When the day came, I had to drive from Middleton Cottage in the morning, a distance of fifty miles, and I reached Wells a little after one o'clock, the meeting having been advertised to commence at that hour. The news flew through the city like wildfire, and as I drove through the streets in my tandem I was hailed by the acclamations of the people. I had not been five minutes in the inn, before I received a polite message from the High Sheriff, Mr. Allen, to say that he had delayed opening the meeting till my arrival, and he would not go to the hustings till I was ready to attend. Here was a contrast to the conduct of the paltry upstart of the county of Wilts! As soon as the clock struck one Mr. Allen was urged, by Mr. Perpetual Under-Sheriff and his associates, some of the attending Magistrates, to proceed to the hustings, and to open the proceedings forthwith. With this suggestion he, however, peremptorily refused to comply, saying, "as Mr. Hunt has published a letter in the public newspapers, to say that he should attend the meeting, and propose some amendment to the petition which is meant to be submitted to the meeting by those who signed the requisition, I have not the slightest doubt but he will keep his word; and as he lives at a great distance, I should not be doing my duty conscientiously if I did not wait half an hour, to make allowance for the difference of clocks, or any accidental delay that may have arisen in so long a journey."

As he had anticipated, I arrived within ten minutes of the time; and in answer to his polite message I returned another, thanking him for his attention, and promising not to detain him five minutes. In the meanwhile I had a message from Mr. Hanning and the other gentlemen who signed the requisition, to say that, previous to our going to the hustings, they wished to consult with me upon the propriety of the resolutions, &c. that they meant to submit to the meeting. My answer was, "give my compliments to the gentlemen, and say that I am at the Swan, where I shall be happy to confer with them if they wish it." In three minutes, before I could scarcely wash my hands and face after my journey, they entered my room. They began by saying that they had seen my letter in the public papers, and as they by no means wished to act hostilely to me, or to create any division at the meeting, they had no objection to adopt my resolutions and petition, which prayed for the total repeal of the Property Tax, instead of those which they had drawn up, which only went to the partial repeal of it. I saw by this that they had fully ascertained what was the real public feeling, and that they were not willing to brave it at the meeting. I begged to see their resolutions and petition, adding, that I by no means wished to take it out of their hands; and to skew them that I wished to meet them upon liberal terms, I proposed the embodying one of my resolutions among theirs, and a corresponding clause in their petition. As these additions fully recognised the principle for which I contended, I was desirous to skew the requisitionists that I did not wish to take any advantage of the popularity that I possessed, and I therefore agreed that Mr. Hanning should propose his resolutions and petition, thus altered and amended, and that I would then give him my hearty concurrence and support.

My proposition being readily accepted, and hailed as an emblem of union, we proceeded to the hustings together, and every thing went off with the greatest unanimity and cordiality amongst all the parties, with the exception of a discussion that took place upon a bye resolution, which I proposed, of a vote of thanks to the Ministers, for having concluded a "peace with the Americans, the only remaining free Government in the universe." I meant this resolution to answer a double purpose; first, by thanking

the Ministers, I gave the Whigs a kick; and second, it was a compliment due to the Americans, for having bravely repelled a tyrannical invader. It was a Whig meeting, at least it was called by the Whigs, and therefore every exertion was made to prevent the passing of this resolution. Old Sir John Cox Hippisley palavered, and whined, and begged and prayed, for an hour, and endeavoured to wheedle and coax me to withdraw my motion for the sake of unanimity. Upon all public matters, however, I was ever inflexible, and I was therefore prepared at all times to do my duty without looking to the right or to the left, and I consequently insisted upon having the motion put to the meeting. On a division it was lost by only a very small majority.

In the month of January, 1815, a treaty was concluded between the Allied Powers at Vienna, to maintain the treaty of Paris. In the Congress, by which this treaty was settled, the Ministers of some of the Allied Powers seriously proposed to seize Napoleon at Elba, to carry him off by force from that island, and to convey him to St. Helena; and this base scheme was to be executed in violation of the solemn compact entered into with him; a compact granting to him the island of Elba in full sovereignty! But it is quite clear that there are no treaties, however solemn; no engagements, however binding; no obligations, however sacred, that tyrants will not violate, and laugh to scorn, when it suits their purpose so to do.

The treaty of Vienna was entered into upon the 25th of January, and it is supposed, and I believe pretty well understood, that this diabolical plot against the life and liberty of Napoleon was privately communicated to him, by some friend that he had amongst the diplomatists of the Allied Sovereigns. Napoleon, therefore, took the resolution of leaving Elba as soon as possible, and returning to France, to endeavour to reconquer that crown which had been forced from him by the very same despots whom he had more than once restored to liberty and power after he had subdued them.

Having deliberately made up his mind to risk the attempt, Napoleon promptly carried it into execution. He set sail from Elba on the 26th of February, with about one thousand brave followers, in four vessels. An English frigate pretended to chase them, but he landed his little force at Frejus, in France, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1815, and he was soon joined by various bodies of the army, who flew to the ranks of their old commander, who had bravely led them into a thousand battles, and with whom they had participated in a thousand victories over the enemies of their country. Though at the outset his force was not more than a thousand strong, he marched boldly forward in a direct line for Paris, and his numbers continued to swell as he advanced. France was in a state of the greatest agitation, and of hopes and fears for his safety and his success. He arrived at Gasson the 5th, the next day he crossed the Upper Alps, passed on through Grenoble, reached Burgoin on the 10th, and on the 11th he entered the City of Lyons, the second city of the French empire, where he was received with every demonstration of respect and attachment. The army and the people vied with each other which should evince the greatest enthusiasm; from Lyons he issued a Proclamation, annulling all that had been done in his absence. On the following day he marched on, and reached Autun; on the 16th he entered Auxerre; on the 17th he halted at Fontainebleau; and made his entrance into Paris in triumph on the TWENTIETH OF MARCH. There he was hailed with enthusiastic delight; and, amidst the deafening acclamations of the Parisians, he entered the Palace of the Thuilleries, from whence Louis the Desired had fled but a few hours before, with the utmost precipitation and dismay. Napoleon could have arrested his flight, and brought him back as a prisoner without the least difficulty, but he was too brave even to tread upon so fallen a creature. At a subsequent period the Duke d'Angouleme also fell into the hands of one of his Generals, but the moment Napoleon heard of it, he ordered him to be set at liberty to go where he pleased. But, as it turned out afterwards, this proved a fatal lenity. On the day that Napoleon entered Paris, the following notices were placarded by the people on the walls of the Thuilleries and the neighbourhood. "A Palace to be let well furnished, except kitchen utensils, which have been carried away by the late proprietor." "A large fat hog to be sold for one Napoleon," &c. &c. These things evidently shewed with what feelings of utter contempt the Bourbons were regarded by the Parisians. Napoleon, as I have already stated, was informed that Louis had only quitted Paris a few hours previously, and that it would be very easy to overtake him and his cavalcade, and bring them back prisoners to Paris; but this he positively forbade, adding, that he had no wish to touch a hair of his head. Thus was Napoleon placed upon the throne of France, restored to all his former power of sovereignty in that country without one life being lost, one single shot being fired. If ever there was a legitimate monarch, Napoleon was now that man; for he was voluntarily elected and placed upon the throne by the united voice of the whole people. The cause of the Bourbons became so desperate, that not the slightest hope remained for them, except what could arise from resorting to the aid of foreign arms to restore the King to the throne from which he had fled with the greatest precipitancy, without having made the slightest resistance. In fact the whole people were by this time completely sick of the Bourbons. The Despots of Europe, meanwhile, were in the greatest alarm, but they soon entered into a league to make war upon France to restore the old tyranny of the Bourbons, and they instantly began to prepare to carry their project into effect. Buonaparte offered peace to the combination of Sovereigns, but he did not neglect to prepare his troops for any emergency that might happen.

When the news arrived in England that Napoleon had quitted Elba, and landed at Provence, in France, it was with the greatest difficulty that John Gull could be made to believe that it was true, till the daily accounts arrived of his steady march towards Paris. As he approached that capital the most intense interest was excited, not only in France and England, but all over the civilised world. In England nothing else was talked of or thought of. I own I never before felt so much anxiety; and the desire to see the newspapers, which furnished an account of the daily progress which he made, became every hour more and more acute. At length, the official intelligence arrived, that Napoleon had entered Paris, and that he was peaceably restored to the throne amidst the shouts and applause of the whole French nation. I had been from home upon business the whole day, and I had heard of this happy event, and when I returned in the evening I was much gratified to find that my family had anticipated my wishes, had procured candles, and were preparing to ILLUMINATE MY HOUSE. I had said, in the beginning of March, when the information reached England, that Napoleon had landed in France, that I would illuminate my house if ever he reached Paris alive. Although some doubts were expressed at the time by my family, as to the prudence of such a course, yet, as I declared my determination to do so when the time arrived, there was no hesitating, no desire to baulk my intentions, or to disappoint my wishes, which, having been once seriously expressed, were quite sure to be accomplished in my family; so that, if I had not returned home that night, my house would nevertheless have been illuminated. The candles were all fixed, and every pane of glass could boast a light. The moment it was dark, MIDDLETON COTTAGE WAS ILLUMINATED from top to bottom. This was the only occasion, this was the first time in my life, that ever any house of mine had been illuminated.

Middleton Cottage is situated on the south side of the great Western Road, leading from London to Exeter, sixty-one miles from London, and three miles from Andover. The Exeter and the Auxiliary Mail, and three or four other coaches, pass towards London between seven o'clock in the evening and twelve o'clock at night. Every one of the coachmen pulled up their horses, and stopped to inquire the occasion of this blaze of light. The passengers in the first coach also inquired of the coachman whose house it was, and what was the cause of this splendid display? Some one said, he supposed it was in consequence of peace with America, which had just been announced.—"No, no;" said the coachman, "it is on account of the restoration of Buonaparte." "O, a vile Jacobin!" exclaimed a nondescript with a whistling, piping voice, "I wish somebody would break all his windows." The coachman cracked his whip, and can they passed; but as there was the mail, and four other coaches to pass, I sent my servant out to stand at the gate, to inform those that might inquire, that my house was illuminated in consequence of the safe restoration of Napoleon to the throne of France. The next coach that came was the mail; it was going very fast, being rather down the hill; and, as the glare came suddenly upon them, the coachman had some difficulty in pulling up his horses till they got rather beyond the front of the cottage. I was just coming out of the garden, and as it was dark, I heard, unseen, but very distinctly, the following dialogue: "Aye, aye, coachman, stop, by G-d! tell me whose house this is?"—"It is Middleton Cottage, Sir, the residence of Mr. Hunt." "I suppose it is illuminated for the return of Napoleon?"—"Yes, Sir," said my servant, apparently to save farther trouble of inquiry, "my master illuminates his house for the first time in his life, because Buonaparte has ascended the throne, and reconquered the crown of France, without bloodshed." With some tremendous oath, two of them (who it turned out were gemmen of the army) swore that they would get out and smash every one of the windows, and they immediately began to open the door of the coach, to put their threat into execution. Upon hearing this, I lost not a moment's time, but darted in doors, and having seized a faithful cudgel, I sallied out, with the determination of taking prisoner the first man that threw a stone, and, at all hazards, conducting him into my parlour, where he should have drank long life and success to Napoleon upon his knees, before he should have been liberated. This was the resolution I formed while I was hastening after my cudgel, and having once formed that resolution, I would have carried it into effect at the risk of my life. When I got out the coast was clear, and the mail was got nearly out of hearing. My servant informed me, that as soon as the guard saw what was going on, he jumped down from his seat, and warmly expostulated with the military heroes upon their folly and rashness; but when he saw that they persevered, he swore that the coachman should drive on and leave them behind if they got out; and he added, that he had no doubt but Mr. Hunt would blow both their brains out with his double-barrelled gun, if they offered to touch one pane of his windows. To this the coachman assented, exclaiming, at the same time, "By G—d it would serve them right for their pains." This being the case, the doughty heroes thought proper to sit still, but muttered out, "d—d jacobin," as the coachman drove off. These worthies, I have no doubt, communicated this circumstance at headquarters, and some of my worthy neighbours, of the rotten-borough of Andover, kindly conveyed the fact to several editors of the London newspapers. The editors, however, took good care not to mention a word of it in their papers, but it was very currently talked of in the coffee-houses of Paris. I know thousands of Englishmen that rejoiced at the escape of Napoleon from Elba, and at his return to the French capital, but I know of no one except myself who had the courage to testify his joy by any open demonstration.

As soon as the news of Buonaparte's landing in France arrived in England, the Prince Regent sent a

message to both Houses of Parliament, declaring his intention to join the Allies, and corresponding addresses were voted accordingly. A public meeting was called by the electors of Westminster, to take into consideration a petition to be presented to Parliament, against renewing the war for the purpose of forcing a ruler upon the people of France. I was in London when this meeting was held in Palace-yard; I attended it, and I spoke there, for the first time, in support of this petition. What I said was so favourably received by the people, that they passed an unanimous vote of thanks to me, and drew me in my carriage to my inn, the British Coffee-house, they having spontaneously taken off the horses. When I got there I mounted the roof of the carriage, briefly thanked the multitude, and requested them to retire peaceably, which they did without delay. The petition was presented by Sir Francis Burdett, and, I think, on the same evening. It was a strong remonstrance against plunging once more into a war with the French, merely to restore the Bourbons to that throne which they had not the talent or the virtue to fill, either with honour to themselves or with advantage to the people.

The Parliament now, almost by acclamation, voted that the property tax should be continued for one year. The treaties made with Holland, Russia, and Sweden, were laid before both the Houses of Parliament, and approved of. The Minister likewise proposed new taxes, to the amount of 3,728,000\_l\_ per annum.

While the British legislators were thus honourably employed, the allied despots collected their forces in two great bodies, under Marshal Blucher and Wellington, the latter of whom had been created a Duke. Napoleon on his side was busily engaged, both in civil and military affairs. He laid before the Senate of France a new constitution, which was accepted, and a meeting, called the "*Champ de Mai*," was held at Paris, on the 1st of May, to swear to that constitution. On the 1st of June there was a revolution at Martinico, in favour of Napoleon, but it was soon suppressed by the British troops. On the 8th, a confederation, or rather a conspiracy of tyrants and their agents, was signed at Vienna, called the "*Holy Alliance*." On the 12th, Napoleon left Paris, to join his army on the Belgian frontier. The Prussian army, under Blucher, was attacked at Ligny, and totally defeated by Napoleon on the 15th, and on the following day he attacked the Dutch and the English under Wellington, and compelled them to fall back from Quatre Bas, at which place they were posted. The combined English, Dutch, Belgian, and Hanoverian forces were concentrated, on the 17th, under Wellington, at Waterloo. On the *eighteenth*, Napoleon, with sixty-eight thousand men, attacked the combined army commanded by Wellington, consisting of ninety thousand troops. A dreadful slaughter ensued, and Wellington was hardly pressed by his illustrious opponent. This success on the side of Napoleon continued till four o'clock, at which time he considered the battle as won, when two Prussian corps, one of thirty thousand and the other of forty thousand, under Bulow and Blucher, unexpectedly arrived and turned the right wing of the French. The whole army was thrown into confusion from this unexpected reinforcement to their enemies, and at half-past nine they fled in all directions. The arrival of these two corps was occasioned by some strange misconduct, or something worse, on the part of Marshal Grouchy, who was dispatched by Napoleon to attack these corps with a division of the French army, but by some strange fatality he suffered them to approach the right wing of Napoleon's army unmolested. This and this alone caused the defeat of Napoleon, as these corps of themselves were more numerous than the whole of the troops under his command, harassed and fatigued too as they were at the latter end of a dreadful battle. "Never did the French army fight better than it did upon this occasion; it performed prodigies of valour; and the superiority of the troops, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, over the enemy opposed to them, was such, that had not Blucher arrived with his second corps of Prussians, the victory over the Anglo-Belgian army under Wellington would have been complete, though aided by Bulow's thirty thousand troops; that is to say, it would have been gained by sixty-nine thousand men opposed to nearly double their number; for the troops in the field commanded by Wellington, before Blucher's arrival, amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand men." The Allies, by their own account, lost sixty thousand men, viz. eleven thousand three hundred English, three thousand five hundred Hanoverians, eight thousand Belgians, and thirty-eight thousand Prussians. This makes a general total of *sixty thousand eight hundred men*. The losses of the French, including those sustained during the rout, and till their arrival at the gates of Paris, was *forty-one thousand men*. Out of twenty-four English Generals, twelve were killed or badly wounded. The mind quite sickens at the recital of such a horrid slaughter of human beings, for the sole purpose of gratifying the malignant passions of a few tyrants, who had sworn to annihilate the very spirit as well as the substance of liberty. To destroy NAPOLEON, and to raise up Louis, ONE HUNDRED AND TEN THOUSAND lives were sacrificed upon this occasion!

Napoleon repaired to Paris, where he found that traitors of the vilest cast had been at work. The Chambers were in a state of insurrection, and on the 22d of June, 1815, Napoleon resigned the government to a provisional Council. On the 3d of July a suspension of hostilities was signed at St. Cloud, and on the same day Buonaparte arrived at Rochfort, while Paris was evacuated by the French troops and occupied by the allied army. By the articles of capitulation, on which Paris was surrendered, a complete *indemnity* was secured to *all* persons. We shall soon see how they were fulfilled. On the 5th, the troops under General Oudinot declared for Louis; and on the 8th, Louis the Desired returned once



more to Paris, and resumed the government under the protection of a foreign army. On the 15th, Napoleon took the fatal resolution of throwing himself upon the protection of the British Government. Relying upon the honour of the English character, he surrendered himself to Captain Maitland, of the *Bellerophon*; on the 24th he arrived in that ship at Torbay, and on the twenty-sixth he sailed to Plymouth, to which port tens of thousands of persons crowded from all parts of England to obtain a sight of him. He was not allowed to land, but on the seventh of August he was removed on board the *Northumberland*, Captain Cockburn, which sailed on the following day for St. Helena. Napoleon is now dead and gone, but his name will live for ever. It makes my heart ache to think that such a man should have been so deceived and deluded as to the character of the English Government, so much so, as to flatter himself for a moment that he would ever receive justice or mercy at their hands! Noble, generous, forgiving, and possessing all the attributes of a truly brave man himself, he little dreamt of the fate that awaited him; he had heard of the generosity of the English character, he knew the English to be brave, he had always found them so, but he was deceived as to their power and influence over the Government; he was grossly ignorant of the state and character of the British Parliament; he had read De Lolme and other popular writers upon the British Constitution, and he fell into the fatal, the irretrievable error, of believing that the practice of that constitution was the same thing as the theory described by these writers; and thus he was betrayed into a gulf from whence he was never to be extricated. I have before observed, that at the Congress of Vienna it was proposed and seriously urged to seize Napoleon at Elba, and to convey him to St. Helena; and those who proposed this measure had taken care to have all things in readiness to carry their project into execution, in case it had been agreed to. No time was, therefore, now lost in acting upon this plan. The English Ministers knew the sentiments of the Allied Despots upon the subject, and the brave Napoleon, the fallen Emperor, was shipped off to linger, pine, and rot upon a barren rock, in a distant and pestilential climate, in the same way that we would send out a wretch convicted of the highest crimes, as a transport for life. He who had spared Emperors, Kings, and Princes—he who had restored them to their thrones after having bravely conquered them, was now treated like a common convict transport! Disgraceful, damnable, imperishable blot in the escutcheon of England's character!!!

The Assembly of France now met, and passed such laws as might naturally be expected in a country filled with foreign troops. Treaties were entered into by the restored Monarch, to settle the terms of peace, and were signed on the twentieth of July. By these treaties France lost all the conquered territory which she had been allowed to retain in 1814, and was placed nearly in the same geographical situation as before the revolution. One hundred and fifty thousand troops of the five Allied Powers were to remain in France for five years; France was to maintain them, and pay a large pecuniary indemnity, in which a provision was made for the claims of British subjects; and all other matters, good, bad, and indifferent, were to be settled by a convention, to be held at Vienna. The expenditure of this year, drawn out of the pockets of John Bull, amounted to no less a sum than EIGHTY ONE MILLIONS, of which TWENTY-SEVEN MILLIONS were borrowed by loan. The Honourable House of Commons voted TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS as an additional remuneration to the Duke of Wellington. In the meantime, the wretchedness of the people of Ireland had driven them to a state of desperation; the resistance to the collection of the TITHES became general in many counties, and a large army of regulars and militia was employed to put down the poor, starved, distressed, and plundered people. Many lives were lost, and a special commission was appointed, by which great numbers were found guilty, and transported to Botany Bay, and all this arose from the most horrid system of rapine and plunder that ever disgraced any nation on the face of the earth.

At the latter end of July, 1815, I was one night taken suddenly ill; I had gone to bed in high robust health, but about three o'clock in the morning I was awoken by a most violent attack in my head, which caused a sensation like the ringing of a church bell in my ear. The fact was, that a sudden pressure of blood upon the brain had taken place. The effect was such that I was almost blind and speechless. My surgeon, Mr. Davis, of Andover, was instantly sent for; but, before he could arrive, I had fainted away four or five times, and he found me in such a state, without any pulse, that he at first hesitated to bleed me; however, upon my urging him to do so, he complied, and the horrid noise which was caused in my head by the blood rushing through my brain with accelerated velocity, somewhat abated, and in the course of the day it wore off, and became like the singing of a tea-kettle. This attack was so violent, and left such a weakness, that I was incapable of rising from my bed, and it was several days before I could walk across the room without assistance. As soon as I was able, which was in four or five days, I drove to Bath, for the advice of Dr. Parry, one of the most eminent physicians of the day, and under whose care one of my family had recovered from the very point of death. Dr. Parry and myself had been upon very friendly and intimate terms, during the time I had lived in Bath, and he had always attended my family while I was there.

When I had described to him the way in which I was taken, and the extraordinary sensation and noise which I had in my head, which still continued like the singing of a teakettle, he said, "You have had a narrow escape, Sir; and had you not been a very temperate man, you would have never spoken again;

you have had a violent pressure of blood upon the brain, and you are wholly indebted for your safety to your temperate manner of living; if, however, you will put yourself under my care, and strictly follow my advice, I am confident that I can effect a radical cure, so that you will be no longer liable to a return of your complaint. The means I propose will be slow and tedious, but they will be certain. If you return into the country, and follow the course usually pursued in similar cases, you will, in all probability, be apparently recovered, and as well as ever in a month; but they take my word for it, you will be very liable to a repetition of the same sort of attack, which will very likely prove fatal." I told him that I would most certainly place myself in his hands, and scrupulously follow his directions. "Well, then," said he, "I shall have you bled twice before you leave Bath, and my directions are, that you abstain from all fermented liquors; eat very sparingly of animal food, take regular strong exercise, and lose a pound of blood at least once a month, for a twelvemonth." I certainly looked at him with some degree of astonishment, but when I saw that he was serious and in earnest, I replied, "If you say that all this is absolutely necessary for the recovery of my health, it shall be done; but so excessively weak and languid am I at present, that I do not think I shall be able to take what you call strong exercise. I drove my tandem down here yesterday to see you, and I was so excessively exhausted, that I was obliged to be carried out of the carriage into the inn where I arrived." "O," said he, "driving fifty miles in a tandem may be very good exercise for your horses; but it is not sufficient exercise for you; you must take regular walking and riding exercise. To keep a man in good health, it is always necessary that he should take sufficient exercise to make it a labour; it is indispensable for the health of man that he should labour—and it will be absolutely necessary to your recovery, that you labour daily. I assure you, my good friend," added he, "there is not one in a thousand that ever recover from such an attack as you have had. I never knew a patient who had the resolution to follow the advice which I have given you; I rely, however, upon your good sense, to concur with me in the absolute necessity of reducing your system very low, by abstaining from fermented liquors and animal food—by laborious exercise—and by a constant and regular succession of copious bleeding; and I have confidence in your courage and perseverance in carrying my plan into execution, by which I mean to effect a permanent and radical cure; that is to say, I mean that you shall be rendered as perfectly free from any future attack of the sort, as you were when you were born. I know the precise nature of your complaint well, and I am confident of the remedy, although I have no particular precedent, because I never knew any one act up to the rules I have laid down for you. I know that you have had a violent pressure of blood upon the brain; I know, also, that this attack was not produced by excess or intemperance, but that it arose from your having naturally too great a disposition of blood to the head. I know that your system has received a violent shock, that the blood-vessels upon your brain have been distended, and thereby rendered liable to another and a more fatal attack, unless it can be guarded against by a total alteration of your whole system, which can alone be accomplished by the means that I have suggested." Here he made a short pause, and then earnestly demanded if I was prepared to give him my word that I would act up to his directions; "because," added he, significantly, "I know if you once make up your mind to it, and give me your word that you will do it, that our object will be attained."

Thus it is, that a clever and intelligent physician, by flattering his patient, prevails upon him to encounter what would otherwise appear to be insurmountable difficulties; and thus it is, that human nature is able to bear so much. I promised strictly to abide by his prescription, both as to regimen, exercise, and bleeding. He then sent for Mr. George Norman, the surgeon, and I was bled immediately. This being done, the doctor said that he would call again in the morning, and see the bleeding repeated, and then I should have nothing to do but to return to my home in the country, and follow the plan that he laid down for me. He did so; and, although I was in a state of great weakness, I reached Middleton Cottage the same evening, having driven my tandem fifty miles in the afternoon.

A circumstance that occurred at this time made such a lasting impression upon my memory, that I shall record it for the benefit of future generations. Although it is of a private and pecuniary nature, yet I suspect that it will not be altogether devoid of interest, as it makes part of my history. When I left Rowfant, in Sussex, my stock, crops, underwood, and furniture, produced a very considerable sum, amounting to eight thousand pounds; and, after paying off all pecuniary demands upon me, I purchased five thousand pounds in Exchequer Bills, which I took with me to Middleton Cottage, and opened an account with Messrs. Heaths, the bankers, of Andover. In their hands I deposited several hundred pounds, and the Exchequer Bills, taking all their notes, and drawing upon them for what sums I required to furnish my house, stock my farm, &c. &c., they turning the Exchequer Bills into cash as often as I wanted money. I took care never, for any length of time, to have less than five hundred pounds in cash in their hands, generally several hundreds more, and sometimes as much as fifteen hundred pounds balance of cash in my favour, which they had the use of, as well as the advantage of my taking their notes, and circulating them round the country, besides what I kept in my house. I stocked my farms, both in Hampshire and Wiltshire, at a most expensive time, giving as high as fifty guineas each for my cart-horses; and as I had made great alterations and improvements, at a heavy expense, the money flew pretty fast. When I was taken so dangerously ill, the news spread over the country with considerable rapidity, and, amongst others, it seems it reached the ears of my bankers,

who, for the *first time*, the next morning sent in my account by the post, saying, that as I had *overdrawn* it a few pounds, they would thank me to remit the balance. This was the latter end of July, and immediately at the point of harvest. Thus situated, I wrote an answer, or rather dictated an answer, stating my situation; and, as I expected I should be prevented from getting out to collect any money to meet the expenses of the harvest, I requested that they would allow me to draw for one hundred pounds for a few weeks, when the balance should be repaid, and my account should be replenished with a fresh advance. To my great surprise, however, I received a reply, saying, that they were much in want of cash, and not only declining to comply with my request, but re-urging the payment of the small balance due to them. I certainly felt extremely mortified at such illiberal, ungenerous, ungrateful, and, I might add, brutal conduct; because it was generally believed at the time that I was in a most perilous situation, and my surgeon had pronounced it as his opinion, that it was absolutely necessary to keep me quiet, and my mind perfectly easy, or the most fatal result might be expected from a relapse; and I have good reason to know that my worthy friend, Mr. WILLIAM HEATH, the Quaker Banker, had been informed of this fact, previous to his sending in my accounts. This treatment, however, operated very differently upon me from what might have been expected, and probably exactly the reverse of what might have been anticipated by *Friend William*. I had experienced a sudden and violent attack of illness, which had deprived me of the use of my limbs, and almost deprived me of my sight and my speech; I was unable to leave my bed, and it was not expected that I should be able to leave my room for several weeks; and in the weak and very languid state in which I felt myself, I have often thought, and I believe now, that if I had not been roused by the base and unfeeling conduct of *Friend William*, I should have given way to extreme lassitude; I should have had a relapse, and probably should never have left my room alive, although I was attended by Mr. Davis, who is at the same time one of the most skilful, experienced, and attentive surgeons in the kingdom, and in whose ability and judgment I placed the greatest reliance; but the moment I received this second letter from the Quaker (which was in the evening of the third day of my illness), I got out of bed, and with the assistance of my family I put my clothes on, and with great difficulty I was taken down stairs. I ordered my servant to get my horses ready, as I was determined to go to Bath the next day, to have the advice of Dr. Parry; but the real fact was, that I was much more anxious to see my tenants there, to receive some rent that was due to me, that I might be prepared to pay my harvest people, and get out of the hands of *neighbour Heath*, the Quaker Banker. On the next day I accordingly drove to Bath, as I have before described, and succeeded in both the objects of my journey, by obtaining the advice of Dr. Parry, and receiving my rent.

On my return home I wrote an answer to *Friend William*, to say, that I was sorry to hear that he was so pressed for money, the truth of which, I told him, I did not doubt, and, as that was the case, I would pay him the small balance which was due; but that, at the same time, I should certainly decline placing any more money in his hands, and I should also take good care not to keep any of his *notes* by me any longer than I could help; and from that time to this I have kept my word, as the day may not be far distant when a sovereign may be worth a hundred pounds' worth of them.

I am bound in justice to say, that I do not believe that Messrs. Charles and Thomas Heath were in any way privy to this transaction. On the contrary, I am convinced, that they are totally incapable of such dirty conduct; there is no improbability in their being ignorant of the matter; *Squire Quaker Williams* having the sole management of the Banking concern, while the two elder brothers, Charles and Thomas, managed the Brewing and Wine Trade. The secret of this dirty conduct of *Mister William Heath* soon afterwards came out. It seems that he was at the time bargaining to *quit the Beaver*, and to give up *THEE* and *THOU* for a seat in the Corporation of the rotten-borough of Andover; and I have no doubt but that he acted in this unworthy manner in hopes of currying favour with the rotten managers of that rotten, corrupt, and contemptible Corporation; as he very soon afterwards doffed the straight-cut coat without a collar, sunk the broad-brimmed hat, mounted a dandy-cut coat and puppy hat, went to church, married the Parson's sister, and became a right worthy member of that truly worthy body, the Corporators of Andover. Of course he had gone through the ceremony of being *read out of the meeting*, which is similar to that of being *drummed out of a regiment*. Alas! alas! what would his poor old father say, if he could peep out of his grave and take a squint at his lisping, darling, baby boy Billy! The old man was a very worthy, respectable, staunch Quaker, and I believe the two elder brothers are very worthy honest men; but *Master Billy* has just that sort of cast with his eye, that my father always used to caution me against. He always used to say, beware how you trust any fellow that has such a twist in his eye; and I have generally found this observation correct.

Master Billy Heath is also the nominal possessor of a toft of land, or a pig-sty, at Ludgershal, and being a toft man of that wretched Borough, of course he is one of the electors, and he has been instrumental in sending to Parliament some of the most corrupt members that ever entered that Honourable House. This amiable worthy has had a finger in the national pie; he has been one of those who has voted for those that created the national debt; he is, therefore, one of those whom I hold responsible for the payment of it, as long as he has a shilling left to pay with. We hear of a great deal of horror expressed about the breach of national faith, when persons have talked about a reduction of the

national debt; and it would indeed be a breach of national faith to reduce the interest of the widow and the orphan, who have their money in the funds, while one of the boroughmongers has got any thing left to pay it with; let all those who supported the system of extravagance, which created the debt, by all means pay the interest of it, as far as they are able; but the great breach of national faith has been, to compel others who have had no finger in the pie, to pay towards making it. Only think of those impudent imposters who supported the infamous breach of national faith in the year 1797, by passing a law to protect the Bank of England from paying their notes; only think of those barefaced swindlers now whining and canting about national faith; only think of the impudence of those who, at the very moment that they are blustering about national faith, and pretending to be shocked at the bare mention of reducing what they call the national debt; only think of their passing an Act of Parliament to reduce the interest of a particular portion of that debt, by lowering the 5 per cent. stocks to 4 per cent.; thus, in the most partial manner, reducing the income of those persons who had their money in the 5 per cents. from one hundred pounds a-year to eighty, while all the holders of other stock continue to receive their full interest!! And yet these are the men that pretend they are so much shocked at the idea of being guilty of any breach of national faith!

But to return to my narrative.—On the sixteenth of *August*, 1815, a most sanguinary murder was committed by the French Government, in direct violation of the treaty of Paris, which guaranteed the safety of all who had taken part against the Bourbons. *Marshal Ney was executed*; and this was done under the sanction of the high Allied Powers. Amiable alliance! what a disgrace to the character of Wellington! Ney was a brave soldier, and to execute such a man, under such circumstances, was the height of treachery and baseness. Talk of keeping faith, indeed! This is another proof that tyrants never keep their faith with God or man, any longer than they think it their interest to do so. My opinion is, that Ney deserted and betrayed Napoleon, after the battle of Waterloo, by not doing his duty when he returned to the French capital; but that was no excuse for the gross and cowardly violation of the terms of the capitulation of Paris. There could, in fact, be no justification for such an unfeeling breach of faith, and there certainly was no other excuse for such an act, but that of a base desire to be revenged in cold blood, upon a brave general, whom they could never subdue in honourable warfare.

On the third of October following, the brave patriot Spanish General, Porlier, met a similar fate, and was executed at Corunna, by the order of the execrable and treacherous tyrant Ferdinand. To shew their detestation of such a murder, a considerable number of the British inhabitants of Corunna appeared in mourning for the death of the brave, though unfortunate patriot; upon which, Ferdinand immediately laid an extraordinary contribution upon them. Let the present patriots of Spain never forget this fact, and let them remember that the cause of rational Liberty in that country will never be safe while such a treacherous tyrant has any power left. It is cruelty of the very worst description to suffer such a monster to endanger the freedom and happiness of a whole people. In Italy the despots also enjoyed a triumph. Murat, having been defeated by the Austrian troops, fled, and was assassinated in the kingdom of Naples on the thirteenth of October.

About this time there were serious riots in the North, and particularly amongst the seamen at Sunderland, Newcastle, and Shields, which were ultimately settled by giving them the increase of wages which they demanded. On the fifth of November a treaty was entered into between Russia and Great Britain; by which treaty the Greek Islands, called the Ionian Islands, were placed under the protection of the latter power; and on the twentieth, treaties of general peace were signed at Paris. On the twenty-first of December, Lavalette, condemned at Paris for high treason, escaped from prison in the clothes of Madame Lavalette. Sir Robert Wilson, and Messrs. Bruce and Hutchinson, were mainly instrumental in procuring the escape of this destined martyr to the Bourbon tyrants, by assisting Madame Lavalette in this holy enterprise, for which they were afterwards tried, found guilty, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment in Paris. Sir Robert, as well as Messrs. Bruce and Hutchinson, one of whom was an Irishman, the other a Scotchman, secured to themselves immortal honour, in addition to the sweet satisfaction of having rescued a victim from the remorseless hands of a cruel tyrant.

On the same day, Lord Cochrane was sentenced to a hundred pounds fine for escaping from the King's Bench Prison; but such was the enthusiasm in favour of his Lordship, that the money was raised in a few days by a penny subscription. The House of Commons having honoured his Lordship by expelling him, when he was found guilty of being privy to the Stock Exchange Hoax, a dead set was made by the Westminster Rump to get Mr. Brougham elected in his place; and many private meetings were held at the Crown and Anchor for that purpose. These intrigues having been communicated to me by Mr. Samuel Miller, I wrote to him a letter, which I begged him to shew to the Members of the Rump, and say, that it was my opinion the Electors of Westminster would disgrace themselves if they did not unanimously give the Honourable House a kick, by returning Lord Cochrane again, and that if they did not choose to elect Lord Cochrane again, if they proposed to bring in any other person, except Major Cartwright, I would come to town and oppose him for at least the space of fifteen days. This letter was

shewn by Mr. Miller to some of the leaders of the junto, and Mr. Miller informed me that it had the effect of making them at once come to the resolution of returning Lord Cochrane again, or at least of not making any opposition to him, by bringing forward any other person. I believe that on this occasion Sir Francis Burdett stood neuter, but it nevertheless was thought that he was favourable to the return of Mr. Brougham. Whether this was so or not, I cannot say, but it was very natural to conclude so, because those very persons who were his most devoted supporters, appeared to wish it. There had, in fact, been an attempt made, a short time before, to prepare the way for Mr. Brougham and the Whigs to have a share in the rotten Borough of Westminster. It was made at a public meeting, held on some occasion, I forget what, in Palace-yard. At that meeting I attended, having heard that a resolution was to be moved, which had been agreed to at a previous private meeting, held the night before at the Crown and Anchor, and at which meeting some of the said Whig members attended. This said resolution was drawn up by Lawyer Brougham himself, and it was in effect a vote of thanks to the Whigs, for their patriotic exertions in Parliament. Well, after a considerable portion of the business of the day had passed off, as a matter of course, it was announced to the gaping, astonished crowd, by old Wishart, that some patriotic Members of Parliament were in attendance, and that they wished to address the people, they having just arrived upon the hustings for that purpose. The old Tobacconist, Wishart, acting as a sort of master of the ceremonies, introduced them in form as they came to the front of the hustings: as, "This is Mr. Brougham, Gentlemen: this is Mr. Lambton this is Mr. Madocks, (upon which a few voices in the crowd cheered): this is Mr. Grey Bennet: this is Mr. —, Member for Hertfordshire," I forget his name, which is not of much consequence, as he has since *changed* it, by taking a *Peerage*. There might have been several others, but I forget; they were, however, all exhibited to the wondering multitude by Mr. Wishart, and very much in the tone, voice, and manner that a showman exhibits the wild beasts at a country fair—" This is the royal tiger from Bengal," &c.

While all this was going on, I stood snug at one corner in the front of the hustings, and I must own, that I was considering in my mind which would be the best way to expose this intended hoax upon the people of Westminster. I saw there was no feeling of enthusiasm amongst the people; they looked first at the exhibited M. P. and then cast an inquiring suspicious look at the dealer in pigtail and rappee, who introduced them. I contrived to keep my muscles so unconcerned that no one could imagine what was passing in my mind, yet I saw and felt that I had a difficult card to play, and that it would seem very invidious to oppose a mere vote of thanks to any one of the individuals, or, in fact, to oppose a general vote of thanks to those Members of Parliament, for their opposition to the measures of a corrupt administration. On the other hand, it forcibly struck me that it would look very much like an act of cowardice, to stand silent and hear a vote of thanks passed to the Whigs, whose measures and whose conduct I had so often beheld behind their backs, and, in conjunction with Sir Francis Burdett, reprobated and exposed in the strongest language. I therefore determined at all risks to stand forward, and give my reasons for my opposition. At any rate I was determined to support my *consistency*; although I felt some doubt about the success of my apparently difficult undertaking. Thanks, however, to Mr. Wishart, who, at the best of times, was but a blundering politician, and who had no other influence over the minds of the people than that which he had acquired from being a wealthy shopkeeper, and by putting himself forward at the Westminster elections and dinners, as the advocate of Sir Francis Burdett, I was soon relieved from the unpleasant situation in which I was placed. By the speech which he made, preparatory to the moving this resolution, he likewise completely removed all doubts which I had previously entertained upon the question; for he began with a pompous eulogium upon the political conduct of the Whigs generally, and on that of Mr. Fox in particular. I took care to observe the manner in which the multitude received this eulogium; and I plainly saw, that it only required the boldness to refute his arguments, to be able to carry the proposition in the negative. I saw, too, that there was every now and then a hint given, by one of the Rump understrappers upon the hustings, to get the people to cheer the sentiments which were delivered by Mr. Wishart, but it would not do; a few of the powdered-headed gentry in the crowd certainly responded these hints, by a solitary cheer or two, while the great mass of the people listened more with astonishment than with indifference, and continually cast their eyes towards me with an inquiring look, as much as to say, "Hunt, will you tolerate all this humbug? Surely you will come forward and blow it into the air; we will support you." Mr. Wishart concluded his speech by reading the resolution, and saying, that he confidently expected that it would be carried unanimously. "Stop a bit," said a man in the crowd, "Softly, Sir! let us first hear what Mr. Hunt has to say to it."

Mr. Brougham had been standing, smirking, and bowing, and smiling, all the time that Mr. Wishart had been larding them over with praises, and he was only waiting to have the resolution put and carried, as a matter of course, and was absolutely making ready, and seemed even to be clearing his throat, to thank the enlightened and patriotic Electors of Westminster, for the great honour which they had conferred upon him, and his honourable friends. Some person, I forget who, but it was one of the junto, seconded the motion. I shall never forget the old Major's supplicating look at me; as plain as looks could speak, he seemed to say, "Pray do, Mr. Hunt, let the vote pass; if you do not oppose it no one else will, and I shall have these gentry at any rate entangled in the meshes of my political net." But

when the paper was put into the hands of Mr. Arthur Morris, the High Bailiff, I coolly pulled off my hat, and before I could say a word, I was greeted with a shout that might have been heard at the Palace, and at Brooks's. This reception was a deathblow to the Whigs, who began to stare at each other in the most pitiable manner. They knew me well, and they knew that I would not fail to denounce and expose to their faces, the hypocrisy of the Whigs, as I had so often done behind their backs. I began, and the first sentence was received with a loud cheer, and "Bravo, Hunt! give it them; they richly deserve it," resounded from the crowd. "I shall," said I, "without being personal, endeavour to shew you the fallacy, the absurdity, and the inconsistency, of all that Mr. Wishart has said."—(*Cheers.*) I then went through the history of the Whig measures during the administration of Mr. Fox, and this I did in the way of questions to Mr. Wishart, asking him if he meant *that* Mr. Fox who brought a Bill into the House of Commons, and got it passed by Ministerial majorities, to enable Lord Grenville to hold, at the same time, the two incompatible offices of First Lord of the Treasury, and Auditor of the Exchequer?—"Bravo! answer that, Wishart." Whether, when he was speaking of the purity of mind, and disinterestedness of soul of Mr. Fox, whether he meant *that* Mr. Fox who brought in the said Bill, to enable Lord Grenville to receive *six thousand* a-year, as First Lord of the Treasury, and at the same time *four thousand* a-year more, to audit his own accounts?—(*tremendous cheers.*)—I then went on in the same strain, to ask him, if he meant *that* Mr. Fox, and those Whigs, who, in defiance of all former precedents, when they were in power, in the year 1807, introduced into the Cabinet, Lord Ellenborough, a corrupt, political Judge, so that he might sit one day as a member of the Cabinet, and advise the prosecution of a man for sedition, or high treason, and the next day might sit in judgment upon him? Whether he meant *that* Mr. Fox, and those Whigs, who raised the allowances of all the younger branches of the Royal Family, from twelve thousand to eighteen thousand a-year? Whether he meant *that* Mr. Fox, and those Whigs, who had so violently opposed the passing of the income tax by Mr. Pitt, declaring, in the House of Commons, that it was so unjust, so unconstitutional, and so inquisitorial a measure, that the people of England would be justified in taking up arms to resist the collection of it; yet, when they came into place and authority themselves, immediately raised the same income-tax, from six and a quarter to ten per cent.; while, to curry favour with the Crown, they exempted the King's private property in the funds, amounting to several millions, from the operation of the act, though, with an infamous want of humanity, they left the widow and the orphan of fifty pounds a-year, subject to all its demands? Whether he meant *that* Mr. Fox, and those Whigs, who brought a Bill into the House to subject to the operation of the Excise Laws, all private families who brewed their own beer; a Bill, which, if passed, would have increased the number of Excise officers from ten to twenty thousand, giving them power at all hours to enter the house of every private family in the kingdom who brewed their own beer? I went on in this way, through the whole history of the Whigs, during the time that they were in power, one year, one month, one week, and one day, in 1806 and 1807; and, before I could get to the end of any one of the questions, the people, who anticipated what was coming, for the subject had been rendered familiar to the mind of every one, gave several almost unanimous and tremendous cheers.

It will be seen that I never spoke one disrespectful word of Mr. Fox, or ever mentioned the names of one of the Whig Members of Parliament who were upon the hustings, or even alluded to them; but just as I was about to wind up my string of questions, by noticing their dismissal from office, I observed a great bustle amongst the populace, who soon burst forth into exclamations of "Look there! they are running away! Why do you not stay and answer the questions?" I did not at first understand what this meant, till a gentleman exclaimed with a loud voice, "Look round, Mr. Hunt; all the Whig gentry are run away!" I turned round, and sure enough they were all flown, having escaped from the back part of the hustings through the King's Arms Inn. As soon as they were gone, the people gave three cheers, and roared out lustily, "Hunt for ever!" I proceeded with my harangue, and lamented that the gentlemen had not remained to assist Mr. Wishart in answering my questions; and I put it to the good sense of Mr. Wishart, whether, unless he could answer them satisfactorily, it would not be more prudent to withdraw the resolution of a vote of thanks to the Whigs, especially as none of them remained to return thanks, even supposing it possible that the resolution should be carried. (This was received with a loud laugh, and a cry to put the question.) Mr. Wishart, however, as if for the purpose of exposing his friends, and totally defeating his own object, persisted in having the resolution submitted to the meeting. The result was, that perhaps forty or fifty hands were held up for it, and a forest of ten thousand hands were raised against it. The High Bailiff, of course, declared that the resolution was lost by a very large majority. This was received with loud peals of applause, and the usual votes of thanks having been passed to the members and the High Bailiff, the meeting was dissolved, reiterating the warm expressions of their approbation of my blowing up such a bubble as was intended to have been palmed upon them by the gentlemen of the Rump Committee.

The *Courier*, *Morning Post*, and other Ministerial papers, were unpardonably witty, both in prose and verse, at the expense of the poor Whigs, while the *Morning Chronicle*, and other Whig papers, were equally severe upon me, and the editors did not fail to be very lavish in their vulgar abuse. That the Whigs were irritated at me is not very wonderful; it was quite clear that they set their hearts upon this

meeting; in fact, it was got up by the Rump on purpose to gratify them, the other measures which were brought forward being a mere secondary consideration; and, after all, their labour was worse than thrown away; such a complete defeat never having been before sustained by any party at a public meeting. Yet I will take upon myself to say that, had I not been there, the vote of thanks would have been passed without the slightest opposition, and Messrs. Lawyer Brougham and Co. would have figured away in great style, and would have sworn that the meeting was not only the most respectable and the most numerous that they ever witnessed, but was composed of much the most intelligent, enlightened, and patriotic citizens in the world; now, forsooth, they were a despicable rabble, deluded and led away by that abominable demagogue, Hunt! The fact is, that the multitude are often taken by surprise, and an English political assemblage is not only the most peaceable, but the best natured body in the world. They often are misled for want of thought, and, in the warmth of their hearts, and for want of explanation, hold up their hands for measures which, upon reflection, they regret. But if the matter is fairly discussed, and they are clearly made to understand the question, they always decide right; and they are not only the most disinterested, but the most honest and upright judges in the world.

Lord Cochrane, as I have before mentioned, having been sentenced to be imprisoned and fined 100\_l. for escaping from the King's Bench prison, it was proposed to pay this fine by subscriptions of one penny from each person; and the very same Rump Committee, who had been intriguing to bring in Mr. Brougham for Westminster instead of his Lordship, never choosing to let a good thing slip through their fingers, and always looking out to catch the public opinion, and to turn it to their own advantage, now stood forward to promote this subscription. Boxes were placed up at Brooks's, in the Strand, the standing treasurer of the Rump Committee, as well as at many other places in London and Westminster, and subscriptions, more or less, were sent in from every part of the kingdom; and, what is very extraordinary, the whole sum was subscribed to a penny; not one penny was there more or less than one hundred pounds; at all events, I never heard of any *overplus*, and I am sure if there had been any *deficiency* we should have heard enough of it. When the time came for his Lordship's liberation, it was proposed to tender the whole in copper-pence, as it had been subscribed; and I believe it was proposed or suggested by me, that there should be a public meeting called in Palace-yard, on the same day, and that I would announce to the people assembled, that we were going down to the King's-Bench, to pay in pence, Lord Cochrane's fine of one hundred pounds, which would be taken down in a cart; and I added, that I would give the hint, that those who wished to accompany us might see his Lordship walk out of the front door of the prison, instead of escaping over the walls. By this plan I proposed to bring Lord Cochrane out of prison, and to have him drawn in triumph through the streets of the metropolis, to his house in Bryanstone-street, Bryanstone-square, attended by twenty or thirty thousand people. Mr. Cobbett, who had taken a very active part in his Lordship's favour, was in London at the time, and he fully concurred in the propriety of carrying my plan into effect. The original plan of paying the fine in pence, I believe, was his own: my plan of procuring the meeting in Palace-yard, and proceeding from thence in a body, being an after-thought.

As the period approached, there appeared to be a great deal of shuffling by the Rump, about calling the meeting, and I was on the point of making some stir in the affair, but Mr. Cobbett said *they* had considered of it, and they thought it would be better for me not to have any thing to do with the meeting, but to let the Westminster people do it themselves. A hint of this sort was never lost upon me, and I immediately said that I concurred in the opinion, that it would be much better for the whole to be done by his Lordship's constituents; but I added, "I am fearful that some cursed *hitch* may prevent the thing altogether, and that his Lordship will at last be left to walk out of the prison by him self." "Oh!" said Mr. Cobbett, "Peter Walker and the Major will take care of that." I saw that my services were not wanted, and therefore I retired the next day into the country, where my business demanded my presence, and where my inclination at all times called me. Before I left Town, however, I said in a very emphatic manner, "take my word for it, Cobbett, there will be no meeting." Mr. Cobbett replied, "By G —, Hunt, you are a little too bad! You would make one believe that nothing can be done, unless it is done by you." To this sally I merely answered, "We shall see."

I went into the country, and, as I had anticipated, there was no meeting called. The worthy members of the Rump knew very well how to manage to a nicety a thing of that sort, and they parried the importunities of Mr. Walker from time to time, till at length they boldly declared that it was too late to call a meeting. Ultimately the fine was paid, and Lord Cochrane left the prison quietly, without his constituents knowing any thing of the matter; whereas, if it had been made public, tens of thousands would have paid him the compliment to have attended his liberation, and would have conducted him home, as he ought to have been, in triumph through the streets of the metropolis.

I forgot to mention that Lord Cochrane's original sentence, for the Stock Exchange hoax, was, that he should be imprisoned and stand in the PILLORY. The latter part of this sentence was remitted, not out of any kindness, but because the more prudent part of the Cabinet considered the experiment of placing his Lordship in the pillory, to be one upon which it would be a little too hazardous to venture. It

was currently reported, that, when Sir Francis Burdett heard of this infamous Star Chamber sentence, he at once declared that he would accompany his colleague, and stand by his side during the time of his undergoing that which was intended to be a disgraceful exposure. However, as I said before, this part of the sentence was remitted, for reasons the most obvious; since, instead of being a disgrace to his Lordship, it would have redounded to his immortal honour. The intention of placing men in the pillory is, to hold them up to the hatred, contempt, and execration of their fellow-citizens; but it was well known to his Lordship's persecutors, that their making the attempt, in this instance, would have had a directly opposite effect: for if they had proceeded to place his Lordship in the pillory, he would have been greeted with the applause and affection of the whole population of the metropolis. This exhibition was, however, dispensed with; but no thanks to the cruel, vindictive, and remorseless *Ellenborough*; no thanks to the amiable and the mild *Judge Bayley*, who passed the sentence; no thanks to the Ministers, who were only restrained from carrying it into effect by their fears, and by their fears alone. Those Ministers had already received a lesson on this subject. When Daniel Isaac Eaton was put in the pillory, for publishing some work which was pronounced to be blasphemous by the Judges, he was cheered by the people during the whole of the time that he stood there; every one endeavouring to console him by kindness and attention. The cunning Ministers did not want a second exhibition of this sort; what had passed was calculated to bring the punishment of the pillory into disrepute with the minions of despotism. The public were become too enlightened to contribute to the corrupt views of such a tool to the Government as *Ellenborough*, and therefore it was that one of the precious minions of the Whigs was selected to bring a Bill into Parliament, to abolish the punishment of the pillory, unless upon a conviction for perjury, and some other particular offence. This Bill passed through both Houses of Parliament without any opposition, and without any discussion. The punishment of the pillory surely is as good a punishment for misdemeanours as it was in the days of *Prynne*, who had his nose slit, his ears cut off, and stood in the pillory, by a sentence of the corrupt Judges of that day, but who lived to see his persecutors brought to condign punishment. Placing a man in the pillory is an appeal to public opinion; and therefore no punishment on earth can be inflicted which leaves greater disgrace upon the character of the sufferer, where public opinion coincides with and supports the sentence of the Court: but, where public opinion does not coincide with the sentence, where, on the contrary, the sufferer is caressed and applauded by the public, it inflicts no disgrace whatever, but may rather be considered an honour. It inflicted no disgrace upon Daniel Isaac Eaton, because not one single soul in the metropolis concurred in the justice of the sentence; the whole populace applauded him, and protected him, so that if one of the myrmidons of lawless power had dared to insult him, or to pelt him, that caitiff would have suffered on the spot for his temerity and villainy. Had Lord Cochrane been placed in the pillory (and I wish the corrupt knaves of the day had carried their design into execution), it would not have been the slightest disgrace to his Lordship; it would have only shewn that his malignant persecutors thought they had the power to carry their revengeful sentence into execution. As it was, they had the shame of having wished to do what they did not dare to do. At all events, the sentence, the being expelled from the navy and the House of Commons, and the kicking of his Lordship's knight's banner out of Westminster Abbey, was quite enough to show what they would have done, could they but have "screwed their courage to the sticking place."

When this prosecution was commenced, his Lordship was on board a ship of war, upon the point of sailing to cruise against the Americans, and to fight against the only free people in the universe. He was at that time not half a real Reformer, though he had certainly incurred the hatred of the Boroughmongers, by exposing the villainy of the Prize Courts of the Admiralty. He had even gone further; he had done that for which he will never be forgotten or forgiven by them. He had procured a return to be made to the House, of all the *places, pensions, and sinecures*, held under the Crown. His Lordship took the House rather unawares, he caught its members in a *complying mood*, and, like a man of war, he pressed on to conquest, and induced them to grant that which they can never recall; and for granting which they have scarcely forgiven themselves, and will certainly never forgive him as long as he lives. It was for THIS that he was prosecuted; it was for THIS that he was sentenced to stand in the pillory; it was for THIS that he was expelled the navy; it was for THIS that he was expelled the House of Commons; it was for THIS that his knight's banner was kicked out of King Henry's chapel: had it not been for THIS, he would never have been prosecuted at all; but if these things had never happened, I believe his Lordship would have never been a *real Radical* which now I hope and believe that he is; had it not been for this, I believe he would have still continued the ornament of the British Navy, and would never have joined to assist, by his talents and his consummate naval skill, to emancipate the South Americans from the slavery of Old Spain, the mother country, as it is foolishly called.

There were great emigrations to America, this year, 1815, both from England and Ireland, in consequence of the distressed state of the farmers, who gave up their leases, owing to the decreased prices of all sorts of agricultural productions. The average price of wheat, during the year, was sixty-four shillings and fourpence a quarter, about eight shillings a bushel; the quartern loaf was sevenpence. The supplies voted this year were EIGHTY-NINE MILLIONS eight hundred and ninety-three thousand nine hundred pounds, for England, and NINE MILLIONS Seven hundred and fifty



thousand pounds for Ireland, making 99,643,900\_1\_ This, together with the expenses of collection, (say five millions) and ten millions paid for poor rates, makes the round sum of 114,643,900\_1\_ collected in direct taxes this year from the pockets of JOHN GULL, besides tithes and other *et ceteras*. O, brave John! thou art at any rate a hard-headed and empty-pated fellow; and all in good time thy pockets will be as empty as thy hard pate now is!

As might have been expected, France and Spain were ruled with a rod of superstition, wielded by the flinty hearts and iron hands of the Bourbons, Louis the Eighteenth of France, and Ferdinand of Spain, a precious pair of English *proteges*. In spite of all the pledges and securities which had been given, executions, banishments, and proscriptions were the order of the day, both in France and Spain. In France, Labedoyere and Marshal Ney fell the victims of Bourbon revenge and cowardice. A law of pretended amnesty was indeed afterwards passed, but all the relatives of Napoleon were excluded from residing in the French territory. In the unhappy kingdom of Spain the execrable and impotent Ferdinand, impotent in all but cruelty, exercised the most unlimited powers of tyranny and oppression; a sad contrast to the comparatively mild and liberal Government of Joseph Buonaparte. In Spain, almost every man who had assisted Wellington to drive out the French, in fact, every avowed friend of civil and religious Liberty, were either executed, banished, or imprisoned by the execrable and despicable bigoted tyrant Ferdinand, the beloved Ferdinand! May the vengeance of Heaven pursue him! The Parliament of England met on the first of February, when Castlereagh moved that a national monument should be erected, to commemorate the late victories; which proposition was unanimously agreed to by the "collective wisdom" of the nation. Mr. Brougham moved for a copy of the treaty signed at Paris, by the allied despots, commonly called the HOLY ALLIANCE. This was negatived by the "collective wisdom," who also refused a copy of the treaty of Vienna. John Gull had to pay for all, but John was not worthy of being trusted with such mighty secrets.

The Ministers now attempted to continue the property tax; but this caused such a ferment through the country, that public meetings were called, and petitions were presented from every part of the kingdom: the Livery of London set the example, and sounded the alarm, which flew like lightning throughout the country. Seeing that the public were alive and anxious to oppose this tax, the Whigs once more made an attempt to rally; in fact, all the landed proprietors were against it; and the leading Whigs therefore called county meetings all over the kingdom; we had a county meeting in Hampshire. It was held at Winchester, and was called by the Whigs, the leader of whom was Mr. Portal, of Trifolk, whose father had amassed a large fortune, by making all the paper for the Bank of England notes. Mr. Cobbett and myself attended, and we completely frustrated the intention of the Whigs. The Whigs, as we expected, endeavoured to make a party question of it, and all their anger was directed against the Ministers, or rather against the Prince Regent, because he would not turn those Ministers out of place, and put *them* in. Mr. Portal called the tax a HIGHWAYMAN'S TAX. Mr. Cobbett and myself thoroughly exposed those hypocritical Whigs, and proved to the satisfaction of our hearers, that, if it were a highwayman's tax, the Whigs had taken to the road in 1807, and robbed the people quite as much as their more fortunate opponents. I recollect that I took occasion to remind the worthy descendant of the Bank of England paper-maker, that I agreed with him fully in the designation that he had given to the tax, and to assure him that I considered those who collected it as nothing better than highwaymen; but I begged that he, as well as those that heard me, would at the same time not fail to remember that I considered him (Mr. Portal) an accomplice; for he aided and abetted them in their robbery, by acting as a Commissioner of the Property Tax, and did it with so much heart and soul, that he sanctioned not only the assessor and the collector, but likewise scarcely ever failed to confirm every infamous surcharge that the rascally inspector chose to make. This caused a burst of laughter, at the expense of the said Whig Commissioner, who looked extremely foolish. Mr. Cobbett and myself approved of their petition, as far as it went, but we moved a rider, which prayed for the reduction of the war malt tax, the reduction of the standing army, the abolition of useless pensions and sinecure places, and also for a Reform of the Parliament. The Parsons, the Whigs, and the Tories, all united and voted against us, and maintained the propriety of continuing these burdens; and we were consequently left in a minority upon a division, as always was the case at every public county meeting that I attended at Winchester, with the exception of the county meeting held upon the subject of the Duke of York and Mrs. Mary Anne Clark, of notorious memory. Upon that occasion the public feeling was so unanimous, that Mr. Cobbett's motion, for a vote of thanks to Colonel Wardle, was carried by a very large majority. Between the Parsons, the placemen and their dependants, they have always contrived, at all other times, to carry every thing before them; when I say *they*, I mean an union of the Whigs and Tories against the people. I also attended the meeting at the Common Hall of the Livery of London, to petition against the renewal of the Property Tax. Although the petitions were by no means so numerous, nor so numerously signed, as they were against the Corn Bill, yet as a great body of the Members of the Honourable House were *personally interested* in abolishing the Income Tax, they, good souls, kindly condescended to listen, or at least they pretended to listen, to the prayers of the people, and on the eighteenth of March this infamous tax was repealed.

On the nineteenth of April a Bill was passed for detaining the Emperor Napoleon Buonaparte a prisoner at St. Helena. This Bill will ever remain a hateful and foul blot upon the statute book of England. Whigs and Tories joined in passing this disgraceful Bill; an act that will be handed down to posterity as a stigma not only upon the legislature of the country, but also upon the character of the age in which such an unjust and tyrannical proceeding could be permitted. Napoleon was not the prisoner of England. The moment that peace was signed he was as free to come to England as any other man in the world, and the English Government had no more right to seize him, and carry him prisoner to St. Helena, than the French had a right to seize the Prince Regent of England, and chain him to a barren rock for life. It was arbitrary, cruel, unjust, and most cowardly. The protest which Napoleon made against being sent to St. Helena was as follows: "I hereby solemnly protest, in the face of God and man, against the violation of my most sacred rights, in forcibly disposing of my person and my liberty. I came voluntarily on board the Bellerophon, I am not the *prisoner* but the *guest* of England. As soon as I was seated on board the Bellerophon, I was upon the hearths of the British people." Alas, poor Napoleon! you ought to have known that there was then no British people; that the British people, who formerly held an influence over the mind and actions of the Government, were no more; that the people of England were become a set of abject, grovelling slaves, ready to bow the knee and bend the neck to their taskmasters! The conduct of the Ministers, in transporting Napoleon forcibly to St. Helena, and afterwards sending out such a gaoler as Sir Hudson Lowe to worry him to death, was well becoming their upstart character; for none but the basest cowards will be found to insult a fallen foe. Mr. Brougham could not hold his tongue upon the occasion, but must disgrace himself, not only as a man but as a legislator, by declaring in Parliament, when this shameful measure was brought before the House, "that the law of nations justified the detention of Napoleon at St. Helena." Mr. Brougham did not condescend to tell us what law of nations; but of course he meant to say that the law of nations would justify any thing that a Government had the power to effect; this is the only standard by which modern statesmen estimate the law of nations. On the same principle, or, more correctly speaking, want of principle, an Act was passed, to restrict the Bank of England once more from paying their notes in cash; or, in other words, to protect them from the just demands of their creditors. The Act, however, explicitly declared that this protection should cease on the 5th of April 1818, when the Bank should positively pay their debts which they owed, and which they had so repeatedly promised to pay to the public. The Parliament was, in this case, like the shepherd boy, who so often cried "wolf," for fun to alarm the people, that when the wolf really came and attacked his flock, nobody either believed or heeded his cries. Thus it was with the Parliament; they had so repeatedly promised the people that they would make the Bank of England pay their notes, and they had so frequently broken this promise, that the people firmly believed that payments in cash would never be made. All those, too, who read the writings of Mr. Cobbett were persuaded that it was impossible for it even to be attempted, and therefore those who had any faith in his predictions were of course totally unprepared for it, on the time arriving for its being carried into effect.

On the 24th of April, 1816, Major-General Sir Robert Wilson, Michael Bruce, Esq. and Captain J. H. Hutchinson, were convicted, in Paris, of assisting the escape of the Count de Lavalette, who was condemned for high treason, and they were sentenced to three months' imprisonment. A well-written article has appeared in the *Times* newspaper, contrasting the mild sentence inflicted upon these gentlemen, with that which has been inflicted upon me, of two years and six months' incarceration in this Bastille.

Some time in the spring of this year, a public meeting was called of the freeholders of the county of Somerset, and it was advertised to be held at Bridgwater, John Goodford, Esq. of Yeovil, High Sheriff. I forget now what was the precise object of the signers of the requisition, but I believe that it was to congratulate the Regent upon the marriage, or the intended marriage, of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, to the Prince of Saxe Cobourg. This I know, however, that the meeting was called by that faction in the county, at the head of which stood the Rev. Sir Abraham Elton, Bart. By accident I saw, in a London paper, the advertisement for this meeting, and though I was then residing in town, I made up my mind to attend it.

When I arrived at Bridgwater, I put my horses up at the Globe, and during the time that I was changing my dress, I saw the country people and farmers ride into the town in droves, but I did not see a single soul whom I knew; and being a perfect stranger in the town of Bridgwater, I had to make my way up to the hustings alone. As, however, I passed up the street, Mr. Tynte, the present Member for that town, accosted me, saying, "Well, Mr. Hunt, what are *you* come here? I really believe that the meeting was called in this town because you were not known here, and therefore it was expected, or rather hoped, that you would not come. At Wells they knew you would carry any proposition that you might choose to bring forward, and I really believe it will be the same here." After this salutation from him I passed on; he took one side of the street, and I the other; for as he was a magistrate of the county, and one of the gang, it would not have been at all in character to have seen him walking at the same side of the street with me.

I reached the hustings just in time, and up I went with the rest. Little Squire Goodford opened the proceedings, and had the requisition read, after which he called upon the people to hear all parties that might choose to address them, &c. &c. &c. Sir Abraham Elton next came forward, and addressed the meeting in one of the most bombastical and ridiculous speeches that I ever heard. He expatiated upon the GLORY that we had acquired by the war, and the overthrow of Buonaparte, and predicted that peace, plenty, and their concomitant train of blessings, would strew the path of John Bull. Of the virtues of the Prince of Saxe Coburg, he spoke in high-sounding terms; and he drew the conclusion that the union between him and our Princess Charlotte would contribute greatly to the happiness, and even safety, of the British people. Some one of the same kidney followed him, and seconded his motion in a similar strain of sublime humbug and nonsense.

While this farce was performing by the Rev. Baronet and his band, and while the people of Somerset, who were assembled to the amount of six or eight thousand persons, were gaping and swallowing all the stuff and trash dealt out to them by these worthies, a Mr. Trip, a gentleman of the lower part of the county, a barrister, addressed himself to me, requesting to know if I meant to propose any amendment. I told him I had some resolutions of a very different nature, which I certainly meant to move as an amendment. He then shewed me some resolutions which he had drawn up, and which he had intended to propose as an amendment, if no others were offered. Upon reading them over, I found that they embraced all the material points contained in those which I had framed; and as they went most decidedly to object to the whole that was proposed by Sir Abraham, it was settled between us that he should move, and that I should second them. He accordingly moved them, after a very able and violent speech, which certainly contained a great deal of good matter, though it was evidently clouded every now and then by ebullitions of party spirit, which at county meetings generally shews itself. He was, nevertheless, heard with attention, and received considerable applause. The moment that I came forward to second the resolutions, a murmur ran through the crowd to know who I was; and, on my name being announced, I was instantly honoured with three cheers. In seconding Mr. Trip's resolutions, I certainly took rather different ground upon which to found my arguments. I ridiculed, in indignant language, the idea of granting sixty thousand a-year to a young German adventurer, merely for marrying our Princess, and of giving them *fifty thousand* pounds as an outfit. But the most monstrous and most infamous proposition of the whole, I considered that of settling *fifty thousand* a-year upon him for life, in case of the decease of his wife. It was, I said, a premium upon her death.

I was going on amidst the laughter and cheers of the whole multitude, when little Mr. Goodford, the Sheriff, interfered to call me to order; adding, that as he stood there as the representative of the King, and as a loyal man, he could never suffer the Royal Family of England to be spoken of in the way in which I had spoken of it, and he *insisted* that I should not go on so in his presence. This interruption was received with evident marks of disapprobation. Never at a loss upon such an occasion, I replied, that I considered myself quite as loyal a man as Mr. Goodford, both to the King and the people, and that, as the meeting appeared almost unanimously disposed to hear me, Mr. Goodford, as chairman, had nothing to do but to take the sense of the meeting, which, if he did not choose to act up to, it was only for him to vacate the chair, and we would place some one in it that would. The little Sheriff did not relish the idea of vacating the chair, and therefore the question was put whether the meeting would hear what I had to say or not. The show of hands in favour of my continuing in the same strain was nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand; there being only three hats, that I saw, held up against it. These three persons consisted of a little knot of placemen, led on by a notorious Custom-house scamp of that town; a tall, lanky fellow, whose head was nearly half a foot above the rest of the crowd. From the visage of this worthy projected a cocked nose of a very peculiar kind, the nostrils of which appeared to be two round holes passing horizontally, instead of perpendicularly, into his head. Upon this delicious proboscis (which was a sort of mixture between the pug-dog and a Chinese pig), was mounted a pair of silver barnicles, apparently placed there for the purpose of hiding a brace of things more resembling coddled gooseberries than human eyes. That feature which, in men, made as they ought to be, is called a mouth, was in him not entitled to the name; it being a vulgar gash, with a pair of very thick lips, extending across two dumpling cheeks, and nearly uniting a brace of tremendous asinine ears. These altogether formed something like a half-decayed turnip stuck upon a mop-stick. Let the reader only imagine to himself a figure of this sort, constantly opening the slit that I have above described, and vomiting forth at once, from a fetid carcass, the most disgusting sound and stench, and then he will have some faint idea of the scene exhibited by this animal of a Customhouse officer. After being admonished twice to be peaceable, and not attending to it, he and his satellites were handed out of the crowd, and banished from the scene of action, amidst the cheers of the multitude. This operation being performed upon the Customhouse ass and his two supporters, I proceeded to address the meeting, for the purpose of winding up the subject upon which I had been dilating, when Squire Goodford spoke to order. I certainly handled, with very little ceremony, the trash which Sir Abraham had been sporting, and, after having admonished my hearers to exercise their own judgment like Englishmen, and not be led by the nose like slaves, I concluded by seconding the resolutions which had been moved by Mr. Trip, which, of course, included a resolution declaring the necessity of a Reform in

Parliament.

What followed was more curious than all the rest. Sir John Acland, the Chairman of the county quarter sessions, now came forward, and, like a cunning old fox, who saw which way the wind blew, he turned short round upon those whom he meant before to support, and declared that the resolutions moved as an amendment by Mr. Trip, and seconded by Mr. Hunt, had his full concurrence. Sir John saw which was the strongest side, and which way the current of popular opinion was rolling, and therefore he was determined to come in for his share of merit, by joining in the cry and running with the stream. Upon a shew of hands our amendment was carried by a majority of one hundred to one, at least. I never saw a man so delighted as Mr. Counsellor Trip was, I thought he would have jumped over the hustings for joy. It was evident to me that this success came upon him unawares, and that, although he had made up his mind to move an amendment, yet he had not the slightest idea that it would be carried. I was more accustomed to these things, and took it more coolly; in fact, I felt it necessary to admonish him to bear his victory with more becoming joy, and not to exult so outrageously. A vote of thanks was passed to little Squire Goodford, the nominal High Sheriff; I say *nominal*, for, *in fact*, all the Sheriffs of this county, for many, many years, have been called *pauper Sheriffs*, and have been merely nominal High Sheriffs; Messrs. *Perpetual*, or rather Messrs. *Alternate* Sheriffs, that is to say, Messrs. Mellior and Broderip, being the real or *bona fide* Sheriffs, their masters having been their mere puppets or nominal Sheriffs.

When the meeting was dissolved, almost the whole assembly followed, or rather attended me to my inn, where I was obliged to address them from the window, before they could be prevailed upon to depart. Every one appeared delighted with the result of the meeting, except poor Sir Abraham, the Sheriff, and a little knot of Whigs, who had meant to curry favour with the Prince Regent, by presenting to him an abject, time-serving address from the county of Somerset; but who had been foiled, and, in a great measure, by my exertions. Sir Abraham, and his friend the Sheriff, looked most wretchedly; no Frenchman ever shrugged his shoulders with a more emphatic expression of disaster, than the Rev. Baronet did; and he really reminded me of the knight with the rueful countenance. Will any man who reads this believe that the *worthy* Judges of the Court of King's Bench had not the effect of this meeting in their mind, when they sentenced me to be confined TWO YEARS AND SIX MONTHS in Ilchester Bastile, where they well knew the Rev. Baronet and the worthy Squire were two of the VISITING MAGISTRATES? Will any one who reads this have the least doubt, that those who have persecuted me here have been actuated by the cowardly feeling of wishing to be revenged upon me, now that they have me in their power, because I defeated their ridiculous and time-serving projects, and exposed their folly at the said county meeting at Bridgwater? Can any one doubt that the Ministers ordered their tools to send me here, that their underlings might exert their petty tyranny, in order to annoy me?

On the twelfth of May, in this year, the Prince of Saxe Coburg was married to the Princess Charlotte of Wales. The Parliament, as I have before observed, gave them for an outfit *fifty thousand pounds* of John Gull's money, and settled *sixty thousand pounds* a-year of the said John's money, and also settled upon him as a dower, for his life, *fifty thousand pounds a-year*, in case of her death: so that this hopeful German now receives annually out of the pockets of the distressed people of England *fifty thousand pounds a-year*, while the President of the United States of America only receives *six thousand* pounds a-year; so that *Saxe Coburg* does us the honour to drain the people of England of a sum more than *eight times* as much as the President of the United States of America receives from the people of that country, for attending to all their affairs, and presiding as the Chief Magistrate of a vast and free country, containing ten millions of people.

In the middle of May there were disturbances at Bideford, from the poor endeavouring to prevent the exportation of potatoes. There was also a riot and great disturbances at Bury, by the unemployed, to destroy a spinning-jenny. On the 24th, a great body of farmers and labourers assembled in a very riotous manner at Ely, and committed many depredations. They were at length suppressed, after some blood had been spilt. On the 28th, there were great disturbances, amongst the pitmen and others, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. On the same day a serious tumult occurred at Halstead, in Essex, to liberate some persons who had been taken up for destroying threshing-machines. On the 2d of July, the Prince Regent prorogued the Parliament, after a new Alien Bill, and a Bill to regulate the Civil List, had passed. On the 12th of July, 1816, there was a public funeral of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. certainly the most brilliant and accomplished orator of the age. In my opinion, he far surpassed either Pitt or Fox in real eloquence, and, in the midst of all his changings and vacillations, he was always, without one exception, the steady and zealous friend of the liberty of the press. Poor Sheridan was always in pecuniary difficulties, and overwhelmed with debt; and he at last became quite a swindler in order to evade his creditors, and he died at a time when he could not obtain credit for a pot of porter. On the 22d, the Duke of Gloucester, who was called by the Royal Family *Silly Billy*, was married to one of his cousins, the Princess Mary. Fortunately for the public, they have, I believe, no children for John Gull to keep. On the 2d of August, a riot took place in the Calton, one of the suburbs of Glasgow, on

account of the soup-kitchens, which was not suppressed till some blood was spilt. On the 8th of the same month, a mortar of uncommon size, left by Marshal Soult on his retreat from Cadiz, was fixed in St. James's Park, opposite the Horse Guards. This piece of ordnance is commonly known by the name of the Prince Regent's bomb. On the 27th, Algiers was bombarded, and the batteries destroyed by the English fleet, commanded by Lord Exmouth—a treaty was entered into afterwards, by the Dey of Algiers and Lord Exmouth, in which Christian slavery was abolished. On the 16th of September a riot and great disturbance took place at Preston, in Lancashire, by the distressed and unemployed workmen. There was also a riot at Frome, in consequence of a sudden rise of one-third in the price of potatoes, in which riot the Yeomanry Cavalry sustained a defeat, and were driven from the field of action by the stones, potatoes, and rotten eggs that were hurled at them by the multitude, several of whom were taken into custody. One of that anomalous hermaphrodite race called Parson-justices, a person of the name of Sainsbury, read the Riot Act, and called out the cavalry. But, by the judicious conduct of Mr. Champness, of Orchardleigh, the disturbances were quelled, and peace was restored. A Mr. Thornhill, who was a paid agent and adjutant of the Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry, who came over from Bath on the following day, after all was peace and quietness, wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Courier* newspaper, giving a most ridiculous and false account of the whole transaction. In order to ascertain the truth, as to what really took place, I drove over from Bath, with Mr. Allen of Bath, and having detailed the circumstances to Mr. Cobbett, he handled the brave blustering Captain in a masterly stile, and fixed upon him the name of Captain Bobadil, which will last him as long as he lives. Captain Bobadil and the battle of Frome will not readily be forgotten in the west of England, nor, indeed, in any place where Mr. Cobbett's Register was read, which was now published at TWO-PENCE a number, and in consequence had increased ten-fold in its circulation. There were also great riots at Nottingham, by persons calling themselves Luddites; these consisted of unemployed workmen, who went about in the most lawless manner, destroying the frames by which the stocking manufactory was carried on. There were riots, too, at Myrthir-Tydvil, in Glamorganshire, by the workmen employed in the iron-manufactories, on a reduction of wages; and at Walsall, in Staffordshire, amongst the distressed and unemployed workmen.

In fact, great distress and dissatisfaction prevailed, not only in England, Ireland and Scotland, but all over Europe, which was in a calamitous state, produced by the reaction of the war, the fatal effects of which now began to be felt most severely. The distress amongst the farmers was very great, and the agricultural gentry began to cry out most unmercifully. The fools now began to find out that what I had told them was true, namely, that the Corn Bill would not ultimately serve them, that it was never intended by its promoters for any other purpose than to enable the Government, by means of keeping up the price of corn, to continue to extract from the farmers high rents and high taxes. In many parts the manufacturers likewise suffered greatly, particularly in Staffordshire, South Wales, and the Metropolis, and especially amongst the poor weavers in Spitalfields. The truth was, that the Bank of England had curtailed the issue of their notes, in order to meet the demands of their creditors, which they expected they should be compelled to pay in cash, instead of being longer protected by a pretended restriction, designed to prevent them from being called upon to pay any thing more than "I promise to pay," in exchange for "I promise to pay." This restriction was nothing more nor less than a *Government protection* against the demands of their creditors, which enabled them to refuse to pay their just debts with impunity, and according to Act of Parliament. Distress and discontent therefore prevailed from one end of the land to the other, but in no place more than the metropolis, which was full of discharged seamen, who had been dismissed from the British Navy, which was now dismantled almost universally. These poor fellows, who had fancied that they had been fighting the battles of their country, who had suffered all the hardships of a sailor's life, during a long and bloody war, and who had been successful against every power for such a length of time, had become exceedingly disheartened by the checks and defeats they had experienced in the naval warfare with the Americans, who, if I may use a familiar phrase, had completely taken the *shine* out of the British seamen, a race proverbial for being very superstitious. They had always boasted that an English sailor was a match for two Frenchmen, or any other seamen; but Jack found in the American sailor not only his equal in bravery and skill; but more than his match. Thus dispirited and almost broken hearted, and the British Navy being laid up, our sailors were discharged and treated worse than dogs; they were put on shore at any port, and they had to march to London, barefooted and penniless, to receive the little pay and prize money that was due to them. Hundreds and hundreds did I relieve, as they passed by Middleton Cottage; broken down in body and in spirit, they were made to feel that they had been fighting for despotism instead of Liberty. Soup Committees were established, and subscriptions raised all over the kingdom, to supply the starving poor with soup; but to the offer of it they replied, that they did not want charity, they wanted work, and they would much rather live upon a scanty meal, the fruit of their own labour, than be feasted by charity.

Some time in the early part of September, I received a letter from London, signed A. Thistlewood, requesting me, when I came to town, to do him the favour of a call, as he had to communicate to me matters of the highest importance, connected with the welfare and happiness of the people, to promote

whose interest he had always observed that I was most ready and active, &c. &c. As Mr. Thistlewood was a perfect stranger to me, and as I was a stranger even to his name, I wrote to a Mr. Bryant, a quondam attorney, and Clerk of the Papers at the King's Bench; a man who was said to know every body and every thing that was going on in London, both in high and low life;—I wrote to this gentleman, and requested him to inquire at such a number for Mr. Thistlewood, and let me know who and what he was, as I had received rather a mysterious letter from him, and I wished to know something of him before I gave him any answer. The answer which I received from Mr. Bryant was such that I never replied to the letter of Mr. Thistlewood, or took any further notice of it.

Some time, however, in the beginning of November, I received a letter from London, signed Thomas Preston, Secretary, to say that a public meeting of the distressed inhabitants of the metropolis was advertised to be held in Spafields, on Monday, the 15th of November, and that he was instructed by the Committee to solicit my attendance. This letter was dated from Greystoke-place, and the writer requested an answer, which I gave him by return of post, desiring to be informed what was the object of the meeting. I received a reply, stating, that the object was to agree to a memorial to the Prince Regent, setting forth their grievances, and praying for relief. I instantly wrote, to say that I accepted their invitation, and I would attend the meeting at the time appointed.

On the next day I rode over to my friend Cobbett, at Botley, to consult with him what was best to be done. When I mentioned the circumstance to him, he looked very grave, and said it was a dangerous experiment, and he scarcely knew how to advise me, whether to go or not. "Oh," said I, "make your mind quite easy upon *that* point; there is no difficulty in it, I have accepted the invitation, and I mean to attend the meeting. The moment that I ascertained that it was for a legal purpose, that of addressing the Prince Regent upon the distressed state of the people, and praying for redress, I no longer hesitated, but accepted the invitation, and promised to be there in time. All that I want you to do, therefore, is, to assist me in drawing up some resolutions, and preparing a proper address to be presented to his Royal Highness upon the occasion." "That," said he, "I will do with great pleasure." After due consideration the resolutions and the address were agreed upon, and drawn up by him. Mr. Cobbett never mentioned one word to me that he had been invited by the same party to attend this said meeting; but he said he should be at his lodgings in London at the time.

I arrived in London the Saturday before the intended meeting, and called at Graystockplace, to inquire for Mr. Thomas Preston. I found no one there but two or three dirtily dressed, miserable, poor children, who told me that I should find their father at some house in Southampton-buildings, Chancery-lane. Thither I repaired, meditating as I went along on the wretched emblem of the distresses of the times, which I had just witnessed in the family of Mr. Thomas Preston. When I reached Southampton-buildings, I knocked at the door, and inquired for Mr. Preston. The servant said there was no such person there, but she would go and inquire of Mr. Thistlewood and the Doctor. She then desired me to walk in, and I was shewn into a very neat and well-furnished dining-room. I could not avoid observing to myself the contrast between the elegant apartment I was now in and that which I had just quitted in Graystock-place; the name of Thistlewood was still tinkling upon the drum of my ear, I having quite forgotten where I had heard it before.

In a few minutes two gentlemen walked in; the one dressed in a handsome dressing-gown and morocco slippers, the other in a shabby-genteel black. The former addressed me very familiarly by name, saying, that he was Mr. Thistlewood, and he begged to introduce his friend Dr. Watson. They at once informed me that they were part of the Committee, for whom Mr. Preston acted as Secretary; that they had called the meeting, and directed their Secretary to invite me to attend it, and that they had also written to invite Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, Mr. Waithman, Mr. Cobbett, and several other political characters. I then inquired what was the nature of the memorial or address which they meant to submit to the Prince Regent? They answered, that they had it not then by them, but that, if *I wished it*, they would procure me a sight of it before I went to the meeting. To this I replied, that I certainly did not wish merely for a sight of it, but for something more; as, if I attended the meeting to take any part in it, I should choose to have time to peruse the memorial very minutely before I undertook to give it my support. This they promised I should have an opportunity of doing, and the Doctor appeared anxious to have my opinion upon it. I could, however, see that Mr. Thistlewood had set his heart upon this memorial as it stood, and he slightly intimated that the Committee had made up their minds on the subject, and that it was finally settled that the memorial was to be submitted to the meeting. I inquired who the Committee were composed of, and I soon found that Mr. Thistlewood and Dr. Watson, the two gentlemen before me, were in reality the Committee; young Watson, Preston, Hooper, *Castles*, and one or two others, who formed the remainder of the Committee, being merely nominal members. I informed them that I was staying at Cooper's Hotel, in Bouverie-street, which makes part of the Black Lion Inn, in Water-lane, where they promised to wait upon me in the evening with the memorial, that I might look it over.

Mr. Thistlewood and the Doctor came at the appointed hour, and brought the document with them. It

was very long, and filled several pages closely written upon foolscap paper. As soon as I had read the first resolution, I was satisfied in my own mind as to how I ought to act with respect to this voluminous production; but when I had read to the bottom of the first page I closed the book, and very seriously informed my visitors that it evidently contained treasonable matter, and that nothing more than the overt act of holding the meeting, to carry the scheme into execution, was required to make all that were concerned in it liable at least to be indicted for high treason. I certainly should not, I told them, countenance any such measures as were proposed even in the first page, and the project of marching in a body to Carlton House, to demand and enforce an audience of the Prince Regent (which formed a part of their design), was quite preposterous, as well as unjust and unreasonable. As a private gentleman, I myself would not submit to be intruded upon in such a manner, and it was very unreasonable to expect that it could be endured by the Chief Magistrate of the country. I found, in fact, that the whole affair was made up of Spencean principles, relating to the holding of all the land in the kingdom as one great farm belonging to the people, or something of that sort. I told them my ideas upon the subject, which were, that the first thing the people had to do, in order to recover their rights, was to obtain a Reform of the Commons' House of Parliament. When once the people were fairly and equally represented in that House, such propositions as were contained in their memorial might then be discussed, but for one set of people to dictate to any other what should be the law, I maintained to be arbitrary and unjust. The Doctor very readily concurred with me, and he asked my advice as to what was best to be done. I replied, that the only course to be pursued was, to pass certain resolutions, pointing out the distressed state of the country, and the absolute necessity of Reform, to save the wreck of the constitution, and declaring that the only Reform that would be of any avail must be upon the principles of Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot. They both at once agreed to the propriety of my suggestions, and requested that I would prepare some resolutions, and an address to his Royal Highness, which they also begged me to propose to the meeting, and they would support them. I asked them if they did not expect the attendance of any other of the public characters to whom they had written? To this they replied, that I was the only person who had accepted the invitation. The Doctor and Mr. Thistlewood promised to take care about the hustings being erected in Spa-fields, and the former was to call on me on Monday morning, to prepare and transcribe the resolutions and the petition which were to be submitted to the meeting.

The Doctor came at the time appointed, and he copied the resolutions and the petition which I had drawn up, which, with some few alterations and additions, were the same as were agreed upon by Mr. Cobbett and myself at Botley. Before we had finished these, a messenger arrived, to say that an immense number of persons were assembled in the front of the Merlin's Cave public-house, in Spa-fields, and that they were impatient for our arrival. Upon this, the Doctor and myself got into a hackney-coach, and drove immediately to the spot, which was covered by much the largest concourse of people I had ever seen together in my life. We were hailed with the most deafening shouts, and, with some considerable difficulty, we were driven to the summit of the hill, surrounded by the multitude. Upon inquiry where the hustings were, I found that nothing had been done or thought of towards the erecting of them. In this dilemma I mounted upon the top of the hackney-coach, and was immediately followed by the Doctor and another person, which person, without further ceremony, hoisted a tricoloured flag, *red, white, and green!* The bearer of this flag was no less a personage than the notorious Mr. JOHN CASTLES, a gemman that I had never seen before. I soon found that it was impossible to address such an immense multitude from such a situation as that of the top of a coach, and as the wind blew very sharp, our birth was a very disagreeable one. While we were looking round for a better situation, we were hailed by some gentlemen from the window of a house in the neighbouring row, and a young person, whom I afterwards found to be Mr. William Clark, having made his way to the coach, invited me to enter the house opposite, and to address the multitude from the window; and, as the party who were assembled in that room still kept beckoning me to join them, I readily assented. We dismounted and followed Mr. Clark, who led us up stairs into the front room of the Merlin's Cave public-house, which I afterwards found had been taken by, and was partly occupied by, the Magistrates, accompanied by a number of the officers of the police and the reporters of the public press. The sashes were immediately removed from the window, and I presented myself to the assembled multitude amidst universal shouts of applause. I found myself surrounded by strangers, there being scarcely a man in the room I had ever before seen, with the exception of Mr. Clark and some of the reporters of the public press. I proposed that Mr. Clark should take the chair, which proposal was seconded, and carried by acclamation. I was the only person present who was known to the multitude as a public man. I had often appeared before the people at Palace-yard, and at the Guildhall of the city of London, and I was instantly recognized by them. In fact, I believe that it had been publicly placarded and advertised that I had accepted the invitation to attend, which had been sent to me by the Committee, and I was, therefore, expected. The Chairman having, in an appropriate speech, briefly opened the meeting, I stood forward to move the resolutions, which I prefaced by a speech of about an hour in length. I pointed out the enormous sums paid by the public for what is called the Civil List, amounting in the last year to 1,038,000£; and in the same year, on account of deficiencies of the said Civil List, 584,713£ more; and for the Civil List for Scotland, 126,613£

additional, making in the whole, for the Civil List of that year, ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX POUNDS. I showed that the expense of keeping up the army, including the ordnance, was 26,736,017£; that the additional allowance to the Royal Family that year was 366,660£; that the secret service money was 153,443£; and that the sum voted for the poor clergy of the Church of England was 100,000£. I also read a list of some of the most profligate sinecurists and pensioners, male and female, in which I included a sufficient sprinkling of ladies and gentlemen belonging to both the great factions of Whigs and Tories, taking as nearly as I could an equal number from each of them. Among those whom I specified were the Marquis of Buckingham and Lord Camden, the two Tellers of the Exchequer, whose sinecures at that time were about thirty-five thousand a-year each; Lord Arden, the elder brother of Perceval, thirty-eight thousand a-year; Lords Grenville and Erskine, &c. &c. &c. Amongst the number of lady pensioners I noticed Lady Auckland, Lady Louisa Paget, Mrs. Hunn, the mother of Mr. Canning, &c. &c. I represented these persons as contributing to the distresses of the country, by taking such large sums out of the taxes, without doing any thing for it. I contended that the enormous weight of taxation alone produced the misery under which the people were groaning, and that the sole cause of such heavy impositions being placed upon the people, arose from the corrupt state of the representation in the Commons' or people's House of Parliament; and I laboured strenuously to convince them that the high price of bread and meat did not originate with the bakers and butchers, as was falsely asserted to be the case by the corrupt conductors of the daily press. I demonstrated to them the folly of wreaking their vengeance upon unoffending tradesmen, who were suffering from the weight of taxes nearly as much as themselves; and I endeavoured to convince them of the *superiority of mental over physical force*; contending that it would be an act of injustice, as well as folly, to resort to the latter while we had the power of exercising the former. Above all things, I took the greatest pains to promote peace and good order, as the only means by which they were likely to obtain any redress for their grievances, or any alleviation of their miseries, and to convince them that to commit acts of violence was to prove themselves unworthy of relief. I concluded by reading and recommending to their adoption the four following resolutions. These resolutions were received with long continued shouts of approbation:

Resolved 1st, That the country is in a state of fearful and unparalleled distress and misery; and that the principal immediate cause of this calamity, which has fallen upon all classes of persons, except that class which derive their incomes from the Taxes, is, that enormous load of taxation, which has taken, and which still takes, from the Farmer, the Manufacturer, and the Tradesman, the means of maintaining their families, and paying their debts, and of affording, in the shape of wages, a sufficiency to employ and support their Labourers and Journeymen.

Resolved 2d, That the causes of this intolerable burden, are, 1st, the amount of a Debt contracted by Boroughmongers for the purposes of carrying on a *long, unnecessary, and unjust War*, the main objects of which now appear to have been to *stifle* Civil, Political, and Religious Liberty, and to restore Despotism and Persecution; 2d, The maintenance of an Army in France, in order to uphold the restored Despots and Priests in opposition to the express wishes of the whole French Nation; 3d, The keeping up of an enormous Standing Army in these Kingdoms, with a view of overawing the People, and compelling them to submit to War Taxes in time of Peace; 4th, A lavish and profligate expenditure of the Public Money on innumerable men and women, who are the holders of Sinecures, Pensions, Grants, and Emoluments of various descriptions, without having ever performed the smallest service to their Country.

Resolved 3d, That the *sole cause* of these desolating measures and practices, *is the want of the People being represented in the Commons' House of Parliament*, and the return of Members to that House by those base and corrupt means, which were by the Members themselves shamelessly confessed to be "as notorious as the sun at noon-day."

Resolved 4th, That a Petition be presented to the Prince Regent, beseeching him to take into his gracious consideration the sufferings of this industrious, patient, and starving People, praying that he will be pleased immediately to cause the Parliament to be assembled, and to recommend to them, in the most urgent manner, to reduce the Army, to abolish all Sinecures and all Pensions, Grants, and Emoluments not merited by Public Services; and to apply the same to feed the "HUNGRY AND CLOTHE THE NAKED," so that the unhappy and starving People may be saved from desperation; and above all, to listen, before it be *too late*, to those repeated prayers of the People, for being restored to their undoubted right of enjoying the benefit of Annual Parliaments chosen freely by the People.

Dr. Watson seconded these resolutions, and they were carried unanimously, amidst the cheers of the multitude, without one dissenting voice. I then read the following petition, which, after having been seconded by the Doctor, was unanimously adopted by the greatest concourse of people that had ever, within the memory of man, been known to assemble for any political purpose.



*"To his Royal Highness the Prince Regent of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.*

"The Petition of the distressed Inhabitants of the Metropolis, held in Spa-fields, the 15th day of November, 1816,

"HUMBLY SHOWETH—That this kingdom is in a state of unparalleled distress and misery, and that the principal immediate cause of this calamity, which has fallen upon all classes of persons (except that class which derive their incomes from the taxes), is that enormous load of taxation which has taken, and which still takes, from the farmer, the manufacturer, and the tradesman, the means of maintaining their families, and of paying their debts, and of affording, in the shape of wages, a sufficiency to employ and support their labourers and journeymen.

"That the causes of this intolerable burden are—First, The amount of a debt, contracted by Borough-mongers and their agents, for the purpose of carrying on a long, unnecessary, and unjust war, the object of which now appears to have been to stifle civil, political, and religious liberty, and to restore despotism and persecution. Second, The maintenance of an English Protestant Army in France, in order to uphold the restored Despots and Priesthood, whom we have been taught to hold in abhorrence. Third, The keeping up in these kingdoms of an enormous Standing Army, with all its *colleges, barracks, and arsenals*, with a view of overawing the people, and compelling them to submit to War Taxes in time of Peace. Fourth, A lavish and profligate expenditure of the public money on innumerable men and women, who are holders of *sinecures, pensions, grants, and emoluments* of various descriptions, without having ever performed the smallest service to the country.

"That the *sole cause* of these desolating measures and practices is, *the want of the people being represented in their own House of Parliament*, and the return of Members to that House by those base and corrupt means, which means were, by the Members themselves, shamelessly confessed 'to be as notorious as the sun at noonday.'

"Upon the ground of these facts, the existence of which must be familiar to the mind, and painful to the heart of your Royal Highness, we earnestly beseech your Royal Highness to take into your gracious consideration the sufferings of this *industrious, patient, and starving people*; and we earnestly pray,

"That your Royal Highness will be pleased to cause the Parliament to be assembled immediately, and, as the friend of your Royal Father's people, to urge the two Houses to reduce the Army, to remove those barracks, military colleges, and all those menacing parades so hateful to our eyes and so hostile to that Constitution which your Royal House were placed on the Throne to defend; to abolish all sinecures and all *pensions, grants, and emoluments* not merited by public services, and to apply the amount of the same to *feed the hungry and clothe the naked*; and, above all, to listen, before it be TOO LATE, to those repeated prayers of the people for being restored to their undoubted right of annually choosing their own Representatives. In the mean time we implore your Royal Highness to appropriate a *few hundred thousands* of the enormous Civil List for the immediate relief of the *numerous suffering, starving, and dying* people.

"And we shall ever pray, &c. &c."

The following resolutions were then proposed and carried unanimously: Resolved 5th, That Sir Francis Burdett, Bart. be requested to wait on the Prince Regent, and deliver this Petition into his hands as soon as possible.

Resolved 6th, That Henry Hunt, Esq. be requested to accompany Sir F. Burdett.

Resolved 7th, That Sir Francis Burdett, Bart. assisted by Major Cartwright, be requested to prepare and bring into Parliament, as soon as they meet, a Bill for a Reform thereof, agreeable to the Constitution.

Resolved 8th, That this Meeting do adjourn to Monday fortnight, then to assemble to hear the answer of the Prince Regent, in Spa-fields, at One o'Clock precisely.

Resolved 9th, That this Meeting do re-assemble the first day after the meeting of Parliament, in Palace-yard, Westminster, at One o'clock, to petition Parliament for a Reform thereof, agreeable to the Constitution.

Resolved 10th, That our fellow-countrymen of Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Leicester, Glasgow, Paisley, and of every City, Town, and populous place in the United Kingdom, are hereby invited, and requested by this Meeting to assemble and meet on the *same*

day, at the same hour, and for the SAME PURPOSE.

Resolved 11th, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to H. Hunt, Esq.

Resolved 12th, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to Mr. Dyall and Mr. Preston, and those Gentlemen who called the Meeting.

Resolved 13th, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Chairman, William Clark, Esq.

The parties thanked having briefly returned the compliment, the meeting was dissolved by the Chairman, who accompanied me into a coach, which the multitude immediately took possession of, and drew amidst the most unanimous cheers, to my inn, the Black Lion, Water-lane, where I had appointed to meet a friend to dine. As soon as they had safely conveyed us, they dispersed to their several homes, in the most peaceable manner.

Just as we were sitting down to dinner, four of us, Mr. Bryant, his son, Mr. Clark, and myself, to our great surprise in marched Messrs. Watson, Thistlewood, and three or four strangers, whom they introduced as Mr. Watson, jun. Mr. Castles, Mr. Hooper, &c. who had followed us from the meeting, with an intention, as they said, of dining with me. I was very much disconcerted by this intrusion, and told them that I had private business to settle, that I had no idea of dining in public, and that dinner was only ordered for four. As, however, they did not appear to take the hint (although it was a pretty broad one), Mr. Bryant ordered more fish and some chops to be added to our dinner, and the table being lengthened, down we all sat together. Mr. Bryant took the chair, at my request.

Dinner being ended, Mr. Bryant drank the health of the King, which toast passed round till it came to Mr. Castles, who, having filled a bumper, substituted the following vulgar and sanguinary toast for that of the King—"May the last of Kings be strangled with the guts of the last priest;" a piece of brutality which had not even the miserable merit of being original, he having copied it from one of the French anarchists. This was a pretty specimen of the company that had intruded upon us! I remonstrated against such blackguardism, and declared that I would not remain in the room if there was any repetition of it. Mr. Castles, nevertheless, soon began again in a similar strain, and having put forth some most outrageous speech, as vulgar as it was seditious, both myself and Mr. Bryant insisted upon the worthy gentleman leaving the room, or holding his peace. He promised to do the latter, and he soon dropped off, or appeared to drop off, into a very sound sleep. This was a circumstance which struck me as being very suspicious, and therefore I was particularly guarded in what I said, and in what was said by others. At length two of the party, young Watson and Hooper, made a move to retire, and I insisted upon it that they should take their friend Castles with them; but he shammed so sound a sleep that it was with difficulty he was got out of the room, and it was only effected by my pulling the chair from under him; upon which he was in an instant as wide awake as any man in the room. This convinced me that his sleep was all a mere pretence. Soon after this the rest of the party left us, and Mr. Bryant and myself remained to talk over the curious adventures of the evening. We were both convinced that Castles was at any rate a great villain, and I was determined in future not to be in a room where he was.

On the next morning, Dr. Watson and Mr. Thistlewood came to apologise for the ill-behaviour of their friend Castles, who they assured me was at heart a very good fellow, but that he was overcome with liquor on the preceding evening, and that he now wished very much to have an opportunity of making an apology in person, for which purpose he was waiting hard by. I, however, positively refused to see him, saying, that I believed him to be a great scoundrel, and that I would on no account suffer him to come into my room again; and I not only cautioned the Doctor against him, but I believe I told him to take care, or Castles would bring him to the gallows. In fact, I made up my mind that as long as the Doctor and Mr. Thistlewood kept company with such a fellow, I would have nothing to do with them in private, nor would ever see them alone. The Doctor will recollect that, when they called on me in the evening afterwards, to make some inquiry about the proceedings which were to be adopted on the following meeting, intended to be held on the 2d of December, I declined to enter into any particulars, and did not even ask them to take a seat, although Mr. Mitchell, a liveryman of the city, was with me. I felt that I had been in very dangerous company, and, though I would not neglect my public duty, I was determined that I would not place myself in the power of such a man as Mr. Castles appeared to me to be.

On the day of the meeting of the 15th of November, the *Courier* newspaper roundly stated that HUNT had arrived at the meeting about one o'clock, and, after having addressed the multitude in a most inflammatory speech, had submitted to them a memorial to be presented to the Prince Regent, full of *treasonable matter*; and the corrupt knave, who conducts that paper, actually inserted one of the resolutions of the memorial which Dr. Watson and Mr. Thistlewood had submitted to me, and which I had rejected. The truth was, that the Government had previously procured a copy of the said memorial,

from a person of the name of Dyall, one of the party who had called the meeting, and as this memorial had been unanimously agreed to by the Committee, my Lord Sidmouth, the Secretary of State, and his agents, made so certain that I should fall into this *trap*, and propose it to the meeting, that their principal organ, the editor of the *Courier* newspaper, actually inserted a copy of it in the paper, as having been proposed by me at the meeting. But they soon found, to their sorrow, that old birds were not to be caught with chaff; for that I had blasted their fondest hopes of bloodshed, by proposing a petition to the Prince Regent, of a nature totally the reverse of the said memorial; which petition was universally adopted by the meeting; and that I had undertaken to present it to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and had also promised to report the answer, if I received any, at the next meeting, which was appointed to be held on Monday, the 2d of December.

On the following day, not only the *Courier* and the *Morning Post*, but every paper published in the metropolis (with the exception of the *Statesman*, which was then conducted by Mr. Lovell), joined in pouring forth a torrent of falsehood, misrepresentation, and abuse of me. I do not know that I can give a more correct account of what took place in London, more fairly represent the conduct of the public press upon this occasion, than by giving an extract from Mr. Cobbett's Register, which was published the ensuing week, as follows, headed "SPA-FIELDS MEETING:"

"Since my long acquaintance with the press, I do not think that I have ever witnessed so much baseness of conduct as this Meeting has given rise to. If Mr. Hunt had been the most notorious pick-pocket; if he had been a raggamuffin covered with a coat hired for the day; if he had been a fellow who took up his lodgings in the brick-kilns or in the niches on Westminster Bridge; and if he had actually proposed to the Meeting to go directly and plunder the silversmiths' shops and cut the throats of all those who opposed them; if he had drank off a glass of human blood by way of moistening his throat: monstrous as this is, it is a real fact, that, if he had been and had done all this, the London press could not have treated him in a worse manner than it has. The *Statesman* newspaper is an exception; but, I believe, that it is almost the only exception. Talk of *violence* indeed! Was there ever violence *like this* heard of in this world before? And, what is the monstrous *crime* which has emboldened these literary ruffians to make this savage assault, and which induces them to suppose that they shall finally escape with impunity? They, the vile wretches, are the *real mob*. They attack in body; they know that *defence is impossible*; they know, that a hundred times the fortune of Mr. Hunt would not purchase enough of their columns to contain an answer to their falsehoods. Is this *manly*, is this *fairness*, is this *discussion*, is this *liberty of the press*? Infamous cowards! They merit to be dragged by a halter fastened round their necks, and whipped through the streets. They talk of *decency* and *decorum* indeed! They call people *blackguards* and ruffians! They pretend to complain of *misrepresentation* and *exaggeration*! They! who set up one common howl of foul abuse and viperous calumny.

"But, what is the act which has awakened all those filthy curs, and put them in motion? Some persons, no matter who, but, I believe, some suffering tradesmen, in London, agreed to call a meeting of *distressed* people in Spa-fields, in order to present a petition on the subject of their sufferings: one of the Committee, who had called this Meeting, wrote to Mr. Hunt to come and assist at it. This he did. Being there, he proposed a Petition, which was agreed to. This Petition has appeared in the *Statesman* newspaper, to which I refer the reader; and when he has looked at it, he will be convinced, that, if the language of *moderation* be desirable, the language of this petition is much *more moderate* than that of almost any petition, which has recently appeared in print. Upon what *ground*, then, is this outrageous abuse founded? The Meeting separated very quietly; never did any Meeting partake less of riotous behaviour. In the evening of the same day, a mob of boys and others attacked some *bakers'* and *butchers'* shops. But, whose fault was this? Was it Mr. Hunt's, who seems to have spent a quarter of an hour in endeavouring to convince his hearers, *that to commit such acts was to prove themselves unworthy of relief*; or, was it the fault of those pestiferous vehicles of falsehood, the *Courier* and the *Times*, who are incessantly *inveighing against the avarice of bakers and butchers*?

"It is clear, that these proceedings of the evening had no connection with the Meeting, but, on the contrary, that every thing which was said at the Meeting had a natural tendency to prevent them. As to the *attack on the office of the Morning Chronicle*, that might possibly arise out of what Mr. Hunt said at the Meeting. And, what then? Was he to endure the calumnies, the unprovoked calumnies, of that paper *for years*, and never reply a word? It would have *cost him hundreds of pounds* to cause to be published in that paper *answers* to a hundredth part of the base attacks upon him contained in that same paper. And, was he never to answer in any way? Was he, when he had a hundred thousand men within his hearing, to abstain from expressing his indignation at the conduct of that paper, lest, by possibility, the indignation might be catching? *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Courier*, and *Times*, make no scruple to endeavour *to cause him to be knocked in the head*; they point him out for either hanging or murdering; they are ready beforehand with an

apology for any one who may take his life. And is he, who can find no entrance into their columns, without covering his paragraph with gold, to abstain from uttering a word against them when he comes before a public meeting, lest the people should espouse his cause and demolish their windows? Whence have *they* derived this privilege of assaulting him with impunity? He has no newspaper in his hands. He has no means of answering them through the press. They assail him, sitting snugly in their offices. They assail him daily. And, is he never to open his lips at any time, or at any place?

"Where, then, is the ground of all this infamous abuse? After accusing Mr. Hunt of having raised a mob for *treasonable* purposes, some of the papers have, in the most *serious* manner, asserted that he was *insane*, and that he had been to a *madhouse*! Is not this a pretty stretch of calumny? Is a man bound to endure this in *silence*? 'He has his redress *at law*.' Oh! the base cowards! Their answer is worse than their crime.

"Was it any *fault* in an Englishman, living in the country, to come to London to take part at a *Meeting of Englishmen in distress*? Was this any *fault*? No one can say that it was.—The Meeting had been advertised many days before any knowledge of it reached Mr. Hunt; he was requested to come up; and who can blame him for coming? However, it is not a question of blame or no blame; he had a *right* to come, and he chose to exercise his right. If, indeed, the invitation had been from persons in *prosperity*, he might have easily declined; but, I do not see how he was to resist the call of people in distress.

"But his speech, that was '*inflammatory*.' Good God! what is *not* inflammatory now-a-days? But, though the speech might, and, I dare say, did contain matter much stronger than that which I have read in the report of it, I am very sure that it could not surpass what I have read in the *Morning Chronicle* within this month; and that it could not surpass (for nothing can surpass) the inflammatory matter in the *Times* and the *Courier* on the subject of their alleged extortions of the Bakers and Butchers. Besides, as to the printed reports of the speech, Mr. Hunt was wholly *at the mercy of the Reporters*. They have made him say just what they pleased, and he has no redress; no means of correction; no chance of being heard in explanation. They impute to him the having asserted, that *Lady Oxford* is on the *pension list*. This was false, as he has since proved to me by the list which he read. It has been asserted, that he went to the Meeting with a tri-coloured flag. This is also false, he never having known of the existence of any flag until his arrival on the spot; and, was he to go away merely because some whimsical persons had *hoisted a flag and a cap of Liberty*? Besides, are there not flags enough at contested elections? Do not freemasons and others parade about with flags? Why was this meeting not to have a flag, if it chose it? Call the thing *nonsensical* if you please, and I shall not dissent. But, where was the *harm*? Where was the justification for all this vile, this atrocious abuse?

"It is said, that Mr. Hunt urged the people to use *physical force* if their petition was not granted. This also is false; or, at least, he assures me that it is; and I believe him, because it was too foolish for him to think of. But, how often have we heard of *resistance* being recommended? Mr. Fox once recommended it, and he never was calumniated in this outrageous manner. I have no doubt that many things escaped Mr. Hunt during his speech, that he himself wished he had uttered in more select phrases; but, who is there who is so very choice upon such occasions? If any one say, that he would do better to remain in Hampshire or Wiltshire, and take care of his farms, the answer is, that *he* is seemingly of a different opinion. He *chooses* to take a part in public matters. He prefers this bustle to the tranquillity of a country life. The boisterous hallooing of multitudes is more pleasing to his ears than the chinkling of the plough traces, the bleating of lambs, or the song of the nightingale. His taste may be bad; but, a'God's name, do not cover him with all sorts of infamous names and imputations, on account of his want of taste. Besides, if this sort of objection were made to leaders at Public Meetings, we should, I imagine, have very few meetings. One might be told to keep to his snuff shop, another to his haberdashery, and so on. Indeed, the tools of Corruption are so very nice upon this head, that I have never yet heard of any one trade, or calling, which they did not despise, if a man who came forward against abuses happened to be of that trade or calling; and, on the other hand, there is nothing too low or vile for them, if it be put forward in Corruption's defence, or employed as one of her agents.

"We shall see in the end how this most calumniated gentleman conducts himself. He has engaged to carry the Prince's answer to the Spa-fields Meeting next Monday week. Now, if, in the conducting of this business, he shall be found to have acted the part of a stupid country jolterhead, or of a head-strong insolent ass, let him be left to the public contempt; but, if he shall be found to have carried the matter through with due respect towards the Prince and his Ministers, and at the same time, with the spirit and resolution of an independent man, let him have the praise that will be his due.

"In the meanwhile it must be not a little mortifying to the *Morning Chronicle* in particular to see, that *votes of thanks to Mr. Hunt* have been passed at many of those meetings, in different parts of the kingdom, the proceedings at which meetings Mr. Perry has very highly and very justly *praised!* How will this calumniator of Mr. Hunt account for this? And how will he account for the speech of Mr. Hunt, at the late Westminster Meeting, having been re-published in *Norfolk*, and widely circulated in that county? There can have been no *trick* made use of by Mr. Hunt to produce these effects. He has no acquaintances and cronies about the country. Ten times his fortune would not have purchased him these marks of popularity. And, why should the people of Spa-fields be abused for having chosen to ask the assistance of him, who has received votes of thanks from those very meetings, both in England and Scotland, the proceedings of which meetings Mr. Perry of the *Chronicle* has *praised* to the skies? Surely, the people in Scotland, in Norfolk, in Lancashire, cannot have had their judgment *unduly biassed* in his *favour!* They have heard the former outrageous *abuse* of Mr. Hunt; never have heard, except by mere accident, a word in his defence; and, yet they have most solemnly decided, that his efforts are worthy of their praise and of their specific thanks.

"Were I, who am acquainted with Mr. Hunt, to say to him, 'why do you not stay quietly at home and attend to your country affairs, and pursue the foxes, and hares, and pheasants, when you find yourself in need of recreation? You will be much happier in so doing, than in getting into all this turmoil of politics, and exposing yourself to so much calumny, and, indeed, to the hatred of those, whose hatred is full of danger to you.' If I were to say this to him, would he not be fully justified in asking me, why *I did not myself* act upon the principle of my own advice? *Times* and *circumstances* create *men*; or, at least, they call men forth, who would otherwise have remained unknown to the end of their days; and the present are times when it is impossible for such men as Mr. Hunt to remain dormant.

"Since writing the former part of this article, I have discovered, that the report of Mr. Hunt's speech in the *Statesman* was taken, word for word, or nearly so, from the *Chronicle*. The evening papers have, I find, *no reporters*. So that *no true* account has gone forth; and thus has the misrepresentation circulated without the *possibility* of defence! There is a gentleman in Wiltshire, whose name is Benett, whose speech, at an agricultural meeting, about the Corn Bill, was published in all the London papers, and which speech, as published, drew down on him the *execrations* of those same papers, and, indeed, of the public in general. He said, that he never uttered such words; that he had been very grossly misrepresented. He wrote to some of these same papers a *contradiction* of the statement; a *defence of himself*. But, in order to get in a short paragraph, he was called upon to pay to one paper *nineteen guineas!* and, though he has a fortune of, probably, 10,000 l. a year, he declared that his fortune would have been insufficient to obtain the means of defending himself through the same channels which had attacked him. A hundred such fortunes would not have obtained the means of such defence; for, the moment he had paid for inserting a defence against one calumny, he would have found another to defend himself against. What, then, is a calumniated man to do? The *law!* The reptiles know how to evade that; and, besides, where is the fortune sufficient for *law*? Therefore, the calumnies must go and take their course. If men cannot hear up against them, they must hold their peace, and retire from before the public. Whether Mr. Hunt is to be driven off by these means remains to be seen.

**"WM. COBBETT."**

The reader, who is old enough to recollect this circumstance, will never forget the infamous conduct of the public press at that time. Mr. Cobbett's description of it, in the above extract, is by no means an exaggeration. The younger branch of my readers may thus form some faint idea of what a bold and straight-forward friend of the people had to encounter in the year 1816. While this cry was yet at its height, I wrote to Sir Francis Burdett, who was then staying at Brighton, with General Halse, the Aide-de-Camp of the Prince Regent, and I informed him of the resolution which had been passed, requesting him, at the same time, to present the petition to the Prince Regent, a copy of which and of the resolutions, I enclosed to him as they were published in the *Statesman* newspaper. I likewise begged that he would favour me with an answer, to say when he would please to present it, as I wished to accompany him, agreeable to the instructions of the meeting. I received a very laconic answer from the Baronet, saying, that "*he did not choose to be made a cat's-paw of, neither would he insult the Prince Regent.*" As I had for many years been upon terms of intimacy with Sir Francis Burdett, and had always acted in strict conformity with his political principles, I own that I considered that answer to me as a direct insult, and, in the heat of the moment, I was disposed at once to resent it as such. From this, however, I was dissuaded by Mr. Cobbett and Major Cartwright, who were extremely anxious not to do any thing to risk the loss of Sir Francis Burdett's support to the numerous petitions which had been agreed to, and were preparing to be sent up to the Parliament, from all parts of the kingdom.

Mr. Cobbett had addressed several of his Registers to Sir Francis, pointing out what sort of Reform it was necessary and just the people should have. In these letters he contended for Annual Parliaments, and that all direct tax-payers should have a vote, but no others. In his Register, No. 16, of Volume 31, published on the 19th of October, after having in a very elaborate manner maintained this doctrine, he says, "All, therefore, that the Reformers have now to do, is to adhere to the above-stated main points. *Every man who pays a direct tax to have a vote; and Parliaments to be elected annually.*" The test to ascertain whether a man should have a vote or not, is laid down by Mr. Cobbett as follows:—"When a man comes to vote, the Church-wardens who have the charge of the ballot-box ask his name; the Overseers look into their rate-book, to see whether he be a TAX-PAYER; finding his name there, they bid him put in his ballot, which done, home he goes to his business. *If the Overseers do not find him to be a tax-payer, he, of course, does not vote.*" This was the sort of Reform which, on the 19th of October, 1816, Mr. Cobbett proposed as competent to work our salvation.

Mr. Cobbett, very properly, attributed a great portion of the evils which the people endured to the corrupt state of the public press, which he denominated "*blind guides.*" "They are," said he (in speaking of the provincial papers), "some of them tools of corruption, and some of them *dumb dogs*, that have not the courage to take the part either of right or wrong; they are neither one thing nor the other; they are quite vapid, and, therefore, will the public 'spew them out of their mouths.' Not, indeed, such papers as the *Nottingham Review*, the *Stamford News*, the LIVERPOOL MERCURY, and some others, the proprietors of which do honour to the press, and the pages of which will always be read with pleasure and advantage." This is the way in which he spoke and wrote of Mr. Egerton Smith, the proprietor of the *Liverpool Mercury*, in the year 1816.

After the great public meeting, which had been held in Spa-fields, on the 15th of November, Mr. Cobbett, in the very next Number of his Register, published on the 23d of that month, came round all at once to *Universal Suffrage*; and he says, "In Nos. 16 and 18 I gave my reasons for *excluding* from the vote all persons who did not pay direct taxes." He then very clearly demonstrates the justice of *every one* having a vote, and adds, "But, it appeared to me, when I wrote Nos. 16 and 18, to be too difficult to put this right in motion all at once; and therefore I recommended the confining of the right of voting *to the payers of direct taxes*, until there should be time for a reformed Parliament *to change the mode of taxing.* Since, however, I have come to London, I have had an opportunity of consulting MAJOR CARTWRIGHT upon the subject; and the result is, my THOROUGH CONVICTION that nothing short of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE would be just, and that such a system is perfectly practicable." This was published on the 23d of November, 1816. The reader will have to recollect these things when I come to detail what took place at the meeting of delegates, in London, on the following January. Now, Mr. Cobbett says that "there are three things for which I contend—*Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments, and Vote by Ballot.*"

As soon as I received Sir Francis Burdett's letter, declining to present the petition of the distressed people to the Prince Regent, I took the earliest opportunity of proceeding to Carlton House by myself. When I arrived there, I was informed that Colonel McMahan, his Royal Highness's secretary, had left town, and would not return till two o'clock the next day. I informed the under secretary, who was in waiting, who I was, and what was my business, and I made an appointment to wait on Colonel McMahan at two o'clock on the following day. I took care to knock at the gate at Carlton House at the appointed time, and the moment that the gate was open, the porter took off his hat, and, ringing a bell, accosted me by *name*, and requested me to walk forward to the front door, which I had scarcely reached before the large folding doors of Carlton House were thrown open, and I was politely requested by the attendants to walk in, as Colonel McMahan was ready to receive me. I was ushered into his apartments in great state, and was immediately introduced to him by name. I was most graciously received by the Secretary, to whom I stated that I was deputed to present to his Royal Highness a petition, agreed to at a meeting of nearly one hundred thousand of his distressed subjects of the metropolis, assembled in Spafields on the 15th, and that I wished to know when I could have an audience for that purpose. The Colonel then took his book, and informed me that the next levee would take place in about three weeks, which was the first opportunity that I could have of being introduced to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. I told him that would be too distant a date, and I begged to know if there were no means of presenting the petition earlier, as I had promised to deliver the Prince's answer to the people on the second of December, when they would assemble again to hear what the answer was. To this he replied, that the only other means was to forward the paper through the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who, he had no doubt, would deliver it to his Royal Master immediately, as he knew it was considered by the Ministers as a matter of very considerable importance. I thanked him for his polite attention and obliging information, and I then retired with the same form as I entered, the Colonel attending me to the doors, which were thrown wide open as before.

I immediately wrote a letter to Lord Sidmouth, to appoint a time when I could have an audience, for the purpose of delivering to him the petition to be presented to the Prince Regent, and I carried this

letter myself direct to the office of the Secretary of State, and sent it up to his Lordship, saying, that I would wait in the ante-room for an answer. In a very few minutes the servant in waiting returned, attended by an under secretary, who said that Lord Sidmouth would give me an audience immediately, and he desired that I would follow him. I did so, and was forthwith introduced into the audience room, where his Lordship received me with all that parade of overstrained politeness which belongs to a finished courtier. He was surrounded by some half-dozen lordlings, who, from the manner in which he ordered them out of the room, appeared to be hungry expectants, seeking and supplicating some place, office, or boon. They vanished in a twinkling, and his Lordship could not hear a word for the world, till I did him the honour to take a seat, which he politely drew for me. My letter had explained the object of my visit, and, after having briefly apologised for intruding at a time when he was surrounded by others, I expressed my wish to have the petition of 100,000 of the distressed inhabitants of the metropolis, who had assembled in Spafields the preceding Monday, presented to the Prince Regent; and I then put into his hands the petition: he read it over attentively, and having finished the perusal of it, he said that it was a most important paper, and was couched in such proper language, that he should feel it his duty to lay it before his Royal Master the very first thing on the following morning, and he had not the least doubt but every attention would be paid to the prayer of it. I begged to know if I might expect any reply from his Royal Highness. He answered, certainly not; it being the practice never to give any answer to petitions; but, if it was thought advisable to attend to the prayer of it, his Royal Highness's Ministers would immediately act upon it, and indeed he had no doubt that it would receive due attention. He then entered into familiar conversation as to the nature and extent of the meeting; and I embraced the opportunity of pointing out, in glowing terms, the great and severe distress under which the mass of the people were labouring, and expressing my earnest hopes that some relief would be granted to them. He next introduced the subject of the *Memorial*, a copy of which, he informed me, he had received several days before the meeting was held; and he declared, that if any attempt at going in a body to Carlton House had been made, it would have been resisted by the military, and that bloodshed would have been the consequence. He was perfectly aware that I had been the cause of setting aside the Memorial, and substituting the petition in its stead; and he emphatically added, "his Majesty's Ministers are greatly indebted to you, and they are fully sensible that you have been the cause of preventing a great public calamity; you have prevented the spilling of human blood." I told him that I had promised to attend another meeting, in the same place, on the Second of December, to acquaint them with the result of my application, and I promised him that I would represent it fairly. With this he appeared perfectly satisfied, and he repeated the assurance, that he would lay the petition before his Royal Highness the moment he could gain access to him in the morning, and that he had no doubt it would receive due attention.

In the evening paper, the *Courier*, of the next day, it was announced that the Spafields petition had been presented to the Prince Regent, who had graciously ordered FOUR THOUSAND POUNDS to be paid to the Spitalfields soup committee; which sum was to be taken from the Droits of the Admiralty. In consequence of this grant from his Royal Highness, the soup committee met, and called a public meeting in the city, for the purpose of promoting the subscriptions, and devising the best means of relieving the distress which now was admitted universally to prevail amongst the labouring classes in the metropolis; so that it was quite evident that our Spafields meeting had produced infinite good, that in all probability it had been the means of saving the lives of thousands, and relieving the distresses of tens of thousands. Mr. Fowell Buxton attended this meeting, and, after having described the unparalleled distress and misery of the people, he made a most animated and feeling appeal to the humanity of the public, to come forward to relieve them. This and all the other meetings that followed, and all the subscriptions that were raised, may very justly be ascribed to the meeting at Spafields; for till that meeting took place, the general overwhelming distress was little known, and less regarded, by the opulent and powerful, who alone had the means of relieving it. Notwithstanding this was undeniably the fact, yet the whole public press of the metropolis, with very few exceptions, was daily employed in spreading the most atrocious falsehoods and calumnies against me, for having attended that meeting. I was represented as a traitor, and one who wished to overturn the sacred institutions of the country, and to produce revolution, confusion, and bloodshed. The *Times*, the *Chronicle*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Courier*, held me up to public execration, and even pointed me out for destruction. The editor of the *Times*, who was then the notorious Dr. Slop, alias Dr. Stoddart, the present proprietor of the *New Times*, urged my assassination over and over again. As, however, no one would kill me in reality, he determined at least to kill me in print. Accordingly along article was inserted in the paper, announcing, in the gravest manner, the death of Hunt. It stated that I had got drunk, at Mr. Thompson's gin-shop on Holborn-hill, and had fallen into one of the areas of the new buildings at Waterloo-place, opposite Carlton-House, where I was found dead. A few days afterwards, it was declared that they were misinformed as to my death, but that I was taken in a melancholy state of insanity to Bedlam; and the writer gave an account of the incoherent conversation which I had held with Major Cartwright, Mr. Cobbett, and Sir Francis Burdett, who had been to visit me. These accounts were given in such a serious manner, the details were so minute, and they had altogether so much the appearance of truth, that many of my friends and relations in the country were exceedingly alarmed,

not having any idea that the editor of a respectable newspaper would have the impudence to put forth such barefaced falsehoods. There was also generally one scoundrel or other who gratified his malignity by writing to my family some dreadful story of my death, or of some serious injury which I had received.

On the Saturday previous to the 2d of December I drove again to London, and as I was sitting, in the evening of that day, in the room at the Black Lion, Water Lane, Dr. Watson and Mr. Thistlewood called to consult me upon what I meant to propose on the following Monday. I declined, however, to have any conversation with them upon the subject. I should, I told them, be there at the time appointed (one o'clock), on the ensuing Monday; but that I was going out of town on the next morning, and should return on the following day in time for the meeting. On Sunday morning I left London with my servant, and drove to a friend's, at Wanstead, in Essex, where I passed the day and slept, on purpose to be out of the way of the party which I had before met at Spafields; as, after what I had seen and heard when Mr. Castles was present, I was determined to avoid having any communication with any of them, unless it was in public.

About twelve o'clock I started from Wanstead in my tandem, and, as I was driving down Cheapside at a pretty smart pace, I met a considerable crowd going towards the Mansion-House; and, just after I passed Bow-Church, I saw Mr. John Castles amongst those who appeared to be going in a contrary direction from that which led to Spafields. He beckoned me, and I drew up to the pavement to inquire the cause of what appeared to me rather extraordinary. Before, however, I could put the question to Mr. Castles, he inquired where I was going? to which I replied, "to Spafields, to be sure." "Oh," said he, "the meeting has been broken up these two hours nearly; young Watson has got possession of the Tower, and we are all going thither; turn your horses' heads and come with us." I gave him a look that appeared to strike him dumb, and laying my whip upon my wheel-horse, I passed rapidly on, exclaiming "what a —— scoundrel!" I looked at the clock of Bow-Church, and saw that it wanted a quarter of an hour to one. I drove on at a smart pace towards Spafields, and observed to my servant, that I had no doubt in my own mind that Castles, the villain whom we had met, was an agent of the Government, a spy; and the suspicions which I entertained of him when I first met him, were now fully confirmed.

When we reached Spafields, the throng was very great, much larger than even at the first meeting of the 15th of November. By the kindness of the multitude I was enabled to drive up to the door of the Merlin's Cave, in the front of which the people were assembled. My servant returned with my tandem, with orders to have my horse Bob, which I drove as leader, ready in the evening with a saddle and bridle on, that I might ride him home to my Inn from the meeting. The cheers of the congregated tens of thousands were almost insupportable; I never heard such before. I made my way into the Merlin's Cave with difficulty, as it was again taken possession of by the police. When I entered the room, I found very few persons there except the newspaper reporters, and the police magistrates with their officers, and none of those that had taken any part at the previous meeting but Mr. William Clark, who was again appointed to take the chair. Watson, Thistlewood, Preston, and all that party were absent, but I had no knowledge of the cause, any farther than the intimation which I had received from the very worthy Mr. John Castles, not one word of which did I believe to be true.

After having addressed the people, I moved a string of resolutions, the first of which inculcated the necessity of peaceable conduct, and denounced as the greatest enemies of Reform all those who should commit any act of violence, or any breach whatever of the peace. Another resolution was, to agree to petition the House of Commons for a Reform in the representation of the people, upon the principle of universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and vote by ballot. The resolutions being seconded by Mr. Haydon of Welbeck-street, were all passed, and the petition which I proposed was unanimously agreed to, and was, as will hereafter be seen, signed by *twenty-four thousand* of the suffering unrepresented people, and which was presented to the Honourable House by Lord Cochrane.

Towards the latter end of the meeting information was brought to me that, in the course of the day, there had been some serious riots in the city; I therefore immediately cautioned all those who had attended our meeting to avoid mixing themselves up in any way with those illegal and foolish proceedings. I told them that I should ride home to my hotel upon my favourite horse BOB, and, as I knew they would attend me, I earnestly entreated them that, as soon as they had protected me to my abode, they would each of them peaceably and quietly return home, and not give the enemies of Reform an opportunity of attributing disorderly conduct to any part of the meeting. This advice they promised me they would attend to. I then mounted my horse, and almost the whole assembly accompanied me to my inn. As we passed in the front of the House of Correction, in Cold Bath Fields, I observed great numbers of constables and police officers assembled, armed with their staves of office, &c. &c., as if for the purpose of protecting that building from the fury of the populace. But there was not the slightest occasion for this, as the people did not evince the least disposition to do any harm to any one; and, notwithstanding the immense pressure of the crowd, I do not believe that there was a single pane of glass broken.



When we arrived at the Black Lion in Water-lane, I stood up in my stirrups, and demanded of the people if they would grant me *one favour*? A thousand voices exclaimed "Yes, Sir, any thing that you wish." I then requested them to disperse immediately, and return to their homes. They answered, "We will, we will!" I alighted and went into my inn, and in a very few minutes afterwards the whole of this immense multitude had dispersed, and were on their way homeward, without doing any mischief.

It was now for the first time that I heard any thing of the riots which had taken place in the city. A second edition of the *Courier* gave a most exaggerated account of them, misrepresenting every thing, and heading the statements "*Spafelds Meeting*;" when the truth was, that so far from any of the persons who attended the Spafields meeting having had any hand in the riots, they actually knew nothing of the matter, till they heard it from their neighbours, after they had returned home from the meeting. The fact was this: Watson and Thistlewood found that I would not have any thing to do with their wild schemes, whatever they might be; they therefore assembled in Spafields about eleven o'clock in the morning, more than an hour before the persons who meant to attend the meeting began to meet together; they mounted the waggon, and addressed the few individuals that surrounded them, perhaps at the time two or three hundred; the elder Watson harangued them upon the advantages of the Spencean plan, and young Watson, urged on by Castles, having briefly addressed them, jumped from the waggon, and called upon those who wished to be led on to victory to follow him; the villain Castles taking care to leave a few bullets, wrapped up in an old stocking, so exposed in the waggon, that those who remained could not avoid seeing them. The whole of what occurred was reported by Mr. Spectacle Dowling, a confidential reporter of the Sunday *Observer*, who swore to the particulars afterwards with an astonishing degree of minuteness, although other reporters who were present declared, that not one-tenth of what was said could be heard.

About forty persons followed young Watson, accompanied by his friend Castles; and Mr. Dowling the reporter followed this little squad of desperadoes, no doubt for the purpose of giving a faithful detail of what passed, although he was sent by Mr. Clement, of the *Observer*, to report the proceedings of the meeting to be held in Spafields at one o'clock. It appears that having been reinforced by a party of distressed sailors and others, who were returning from the Old-Bailey, where they had been to witness the hanging of some criminals, these gentry attacked and began to plunder the shop of Mr. Beckwith, a gun-smith, in Skinner-street. It is said that young Watson was seized there by a man of the name of Platt, and that, in order to save himself, he fired a pistol loaded with powder and wadding only, which wounded the said Platt in the groin. Young Watson was, however, seized and taken up stairs into a back room, and the front doors of the shop and the windows were closed. During the confusion Platt escaped over a back wall of the premises, and as young Watson was left in the house a prisoner at large, he walked into a front room, opened a window that looked into the street, and waved his handkerchief to the multitude, to make an effort to relieve him. This they immediately attended to: a sailor volunteered his services, and being hoisted up by the people, he threw himself through the fan-light over the front door, which he soon opened, and Watson was released without any resistance. They then seized some of the guns, and pushed forward towards the Exchange, firing in the air as they passed along Newgate-street and Cheapside. They entered the Exchange; upon which the doors were closed upon them, and Alderman Wood, who was a second time Lord Mayor, and Sir James Shaw, seized a sailor or two, one of whom proved to be Cashman, who was then bearing the tricoloured flag. The rest of the party, headed by Watson, marched off to the Tower, where, as it was afterwards sworn, Thistlewood demanded of the soldiers upon duty on the parapets to surrender the Tower to them. Some of the party broke into a gunsmith's shop in the Minories, and carried off several of his guns, some finished and others not finished. By this time, however, a half-dozen of horse soldiers made their appearance upon Tower-hill, upon which the authors of this mighty insurrection all fled with the greatest precipitancy, helter skelter, the devil take the hindermost, without the soldiers having made a charge, raised an arm, or even approached near to them.

So much for this disgraceful and contemptible riot, during the whole of which not one life was lost, and, with the exception of Platt, not one person was even wounded or hurt. While these things were going on, it has been seen that Castles had contrived to way-lay me, in Cheapside, on my road from Wanstead towards Spafields; and, as I have before observed, kindly invited me to accompany him to the Tower, which he said young Watson had got possession of for more than an hour before.

In the evening the elder Watson and Thistlewood were taken near Paddington or Islington, as they were endeavouring to make their escape into the country. The worthy Mr. John Castles no doubt surrendered himself, and soon after Preston and Hooper were apprehended, and they were all five committed to prison. I believe a reward of 750\_l. was offered for the apprehension of the chief conspirator, young Watson. The next day the London papers were crammed full of the most wonderful accounts of this most wonderful plot and insurrection; attributing the whole of it to ME, and to the Spafields meeting. The London press had raised such an outcry as never was heard of before; and if ten thousand of the inhabitants of the city had been massacred, there could not have been greater

consternation produced throughout the whole country; which consternation was sedulously kept up by the most abominable falsehoods promulgated by almost the whole of the country provincial newspapers. As a faithful account of the whole transaction was published at the time by Mr. Cobbett, in his Register of the 13th of December, in a letter which he addressed to me on the subject, and as it contains matter worthy to be recorded in my Memoirs, I shall insert it verbatim.

*"A Letter to Henry Hunt, Esq. of Middleton Cottage, near Andover, on the London Plots.*

"London, 13th Dec. 1816.

"Sir—The summer before last, when you came over to Botley and found me transplanting Swedish turnips amidst dust, and under a sun which scorched the leaves till they resembled fried parsley, you remember how I was fretting and stewing; how many times in an hour I was looking out for a south-western cloud; how I watched the mercury in the glass, and rapped the glass with my knuckles to try to move it in my favour. But great as my anxiety then was, and ludicrous as were my movements, ten thousand times greater has been that of Corruption's Press for the coming of a PLOT, and ten thousand times more ludicrous its movements in order to hasten the accomplishment of its wishes! You remember how my wife laughed at me, when, in the evening, some boys having thrown a handful or two of sand over the wall, that made a sort of dropping on the leaves of the laurels, I took it for the beginning of a *shower*, and pulled off my hat and held up my hand to see whether more was not coming, though there was nothing to be seen in the sky but the stars shining as bright as silver. Just such has been the conduct of Corruption's sons upon hearing of the *discovery* of Mr. Watson's and Mr. Preston's *papers*.' They sigh for a PLOT. Oh, how they sigh! They are working and slaving and fretting and stewing; they are sweating all over; they are absolutely pining and dying for a Plot!

"In these their wishes it is hard to say which character is most prominent, the *fool* or the *knave*; for, if by any means, they were to make out the real existence of a Plot for the destruction of the Government, would such proof tend to the *credit* of that Government in the eyes of the world at large, or in those of the people of this kingdom? Would it tend to make the world believe that the Government is good, and is beloved by the people? Would it tend to lessen the mass of misery that is now in existence? Would it tend to enable the Landlords and Farmers to pay the interest of the Debt? And, if it would have no such tendency, what good could arise to the Government from the producing of even undeniable proof of the existence of a Plot of any sort, however extensive?

"But, as clearly appears from all their publications, the main hope of Corruption's sons has been to trace a Plot to YOU! In order to effect this, they have stuck at no thing that villainy could suggest. They have asserted *as admitted facts* hundreds of falsehoods. As a specimen of these, the *Times*, *Sun*, *Courier*, and others have stated '*on authority*,' that you and I were in *close consultation*, on the Sunday before the riots, *with Lord Cochrane, in the King's Bench Prison*. You know that you were at *Wanstead, in Essex*, all that day; and I know that I was at *Peckham, in Surrey*, never having seen you on that day, and not until the succeeding Tuesday. The wretched man who conducts the *Sun* newspaper asserted, that I came up for the express purpose of organizing the Plot; and that, having prepared every thing, I *set off to Botley* the night before it broke out.—*Here* I have been in London, however, without having stirred out of it one minute from that time to this. I could mention a hundred other falsehoods which the sons of Corruption have sent forth with equal boldness, with equal impudence, and with equal baseness. But, the *Times* newspaper, always preeminent in infamy, asserted, that '*Young Cobbett*' was one of the persons who *spent the evening* with you after your return from the Spa-fields Meeting on the Monday. The object of this falsehood was to alarm his *mother* and *sisters* for his safety, seeing that that statement was accompanied with other falsehoods calculated to excite a fear that all who were with you that evening would be *implicated in some state crime!* It is for the *Courier*, the *Sun*, the *Post*, and some others to be guilty of premeditated falsehoods, but it is only, I believe, for Walter, the Proprietor of the *Times*, and the instigator to the killing of the brave Marshal Ney, to be guilty of such baseness as *this*.

"However, even these falsehoods will tend to good. There are yet many very worthy people, who have believed in the statement of these sons of Corruption; who, judging too much from their own hearts and minds, have not been able to work themselves into a belief, that other men could be so totally void of all sense of moral feeling as coolly to put upon paper, in the most serious and solid manner, and to send forth as acknowledged truths, that which they know to be utterly false. To such worthy persons it seems to be a libel on human nature to suppose, that such black-hearted villainy can be in existence. They cannot conceive how a man can dare walk the streets, or how he can look even his acquaintances or his own family in the face, after being guilty of such shameful conduct. They now see, however, that this really is the case; and, though there are some who will still, from corrupt motives, *affect* to believe in the statements of these corrupt men, there will, I hope, be found a great many to say, that they have been deceived, and that they will be deceived no longer.

"The unfortunate men, whom want and ruin have driven to deeds of desperation, are not, with all

their temptations, more desperate in their way than are the sons of Corruption in theirs, without any temptation at all. The numerous and ponderous facts, the clear and forcible arguments, by which they have been assailed, leave them no means of *defence*.—They have been driven to the wall, beaten, subdued. They dare not show themselves, in the field of dispute. They, therefore, resort to false accusations; and, unable to find any thing upon which to put a false construction, they have, at last, thrown aside all attempts to discover the means of misrepresentation, and have had recourse to open, unblushing, to sheer *invented falsehoods*. That love of *fair play*, for which all orders of Englishmen in all ages have been so famed, finds no place in the bosoms of these degenerate men.—They enter the ring with seeming bravery, but being, round after round, knocked down and crippled, they use, like a Dutchman, their remaining strength to draw out a *snigarsnee* to run into our bowels. Let us, however, by a steady and cool perseverance in the cause of our country's freedom and happiness, endeavour to break the arm that wields this hateful instrument of malignity and cowardice.

"You, conscious of your honourable motives, and listening only to your courage, have always been deaf to the intreaties of those who cautioned you against the danger of spies and false-witnesses. But, do you think that the wretches who could be base enough to publish falsehoods such as I have enumerated above: who could coolly represent you as having been sent first to gaol and then to Bedlam; and who, in order to deter me from my duty, could exhibit my son as being in danger of his life, and thereby cause alarm in his mother and sisters: do you think that men so lost to all sense of shame, and so devoted to every thing that is corrupt; do you think they would hesitate one moment to bribe villains to swear falsely against you or against me or against any man, whom they thought it their interest to destroy? Nay, do you think that they would hesitate one single half moment to be guilty, for such a purpose, of the blackest perjury themselves? Be you assured, that there is nothing of which such men are not capable; intimidation, promises, bribes, perjury, any thing such men are capable of recommending to others, or of doing themselves. Your country life, your sober habits, your dislike of feasting and carousings; these are great securities; but, while you follow the impulses of your public-spirit and your valour, I hope you will always bear in mind, that there are such things as *false-swearing* in the world, and that a defeated coward has never been known to be otherwise than inexorably cruel. The proprietor of the Morning Post, in his paper of last Monday, says, that Cobbett and Hunt ought at least to lose their lives; and the author of the Antigallican has, I am told, put the drawing of a gallows in his Paper, with a *rope* ready for use, having *my name* on it, or very near it.—And, you may be well assured, that, if the *false oaths* of these men could do the job, those oaths would be very much at our service. Therefore, though I am quite sure, that these menaces will not deter you from doing any thing, which you would have done if the menaces had never been made; yet, as being proofs of the shameless, the remorseless, the desperate villainy of these tools, their present conduct ought to impress on your mind the necessity of being on your guard, so far, at least, as not *unnecessarily* to expose yourself to the consequences of *false-swearing*. These men and their associates call the younger Mr. Watson (whom they, without proof, charge with shooting Mr. Platt) an *assassin*, though they themselves state, that the shot arose from the seizure of Watson by Platt, and that the former, like a wild enthusiast as he appears to have been, expressed his sorrow on the instant, and actually went to work to save the life of the wounded man. Nobody justifies, or attempts to justify, the shooter; but, if he were an *assassin*, what are these men who, while they keep their *names hidden*, are endeavouring to produce persecution and ruin and death in every direction? The man who shot Mr. Platt, though highly criminal, is not a thousandth part so criminal as these men, who to premeditated bloody-mindedness add a degree of cowardice such as was never before heard of.

"Let me now, before I proceed to other topics, hastily trace the *progress of the developement of the Plot*, as given to us through the channel of these same Papers. When Mr. Watson the elder was taken, the sons of Corruption promised the public a series of grand discoveries. His answers to the questions put to him, appear, however, to have been perfectly open and frank. All that was really found out from him was, that he was a surgeon who had lived in great esteem, and had a family who had been rendered so miserable by want, that 'a lovely daughter of his had died for the want of the things, such as wine, &c. necessary to her recovery.' His story, of the truth of which there appears to be no doubt, would have softened any hearts but those of the sons of Corruption, who, instead of expressing compassion for his calamities, are as loudly vociferating for his blood, as they did for the blood of Marshal Ney. They tell us, that he attributed all the sufferings of himself and others 'to the *Oligarchy*;' but, not a word does he seem to have said, that can justify these detestable writers in imputing to him any share in any Plot or in any Riot.

"The lodgings of himself and his son have been searched, and all their papers seized, amongst the rest, we are told, a *Letter from you* to the younger Watson. Oh! what a *prize*! How the eye must have glistened upon the sight of your name at the bottom of a letter to the 'Chief Conspirator,' as they call him! With what eager haste were the contents run over! With what trembling, what slavering expectation must those contents have been perused! Alas! how the head must have turned slowly away and the Letter have fallen gently upon the table, when those contents became intelligible to the

fluttering senses, now returned to a state of coolness!

"Corruption's darlings confess, that there was nothing in '*this*' letter that showed you to have had any criminal hand in '*the conspiracy*.' How came these newspaper writers to *know* the contents of your letter? *Who* was it that *authorized them* to publish this account of your letter? Either they know its contents, or they do not: if the latter, they have published what they do not know to be true; if the former, why do they not publish the *whole* of those contents? The reason is this: the contents of your letter would convince every man who should see them, that you were not only ignorant of any Plot or Conspiracy; but that, if your correspondent *really had* any such views (which I do not believe) your letter was calculated to *check* any hope that he might have entertained of having your co-operation. This is what, I venture to say, the contents of your letter would have proved to the satisfaction of every well-wisher to the peace and happiness of the country; and *because* they would have proved *this*, these base writers have carefully kept them out of their columns!

"But, Mr. Preston, they tell us, boldly *avows* the intended '*insurrection*,' and *confesses* all that can be wished, except, indeed, the main thing, which is, that *you* had a hand in the said '*insurrection*.' However, this is *all a falsehood*; and, if the *proof* of its falsehood be not made clearly appear before this day month, I will be content to pass for an idiot for the rest of my life. The account of Mr. Preston's '*confessions*,' as the sons of Corruption call them, you shall have in their own words. The Lord Mayor, it seems, went to Mr. Preston's home, and having examined him and his papers, found no grounds for detaining him; but, since that he has been, it appears, taken up and kept in custody, and the following is the account which Corruption's Press gives of his examination: "'The next person of importance who has been apprehended is Thomas Preston, who is called the Secretary to the Spa-fields Committee. This poor wretch lives with his two daughters in a small room in Greystoke-place, Fetter-lane. He has undergone two or three examinations, in all which he has been as communicative as the most zealous could have wished.—The substance of all he related is accurately thus—that a plan of *insurrection* was formed—that it was as *general* as it was *good*, but that precipitancy had injured its progress, though it had not defeated its object. The plan, he asserted, must still be carried into effect—it was too powerful to be resisted when properly undertaken; and the only resource left to the Government, in order to its being averted, was, by the Prince Regent answering the petition of the people, and the immediate adoption of Parliamentary Reform. 'The soldiers,' he added, 'were not firm;' their friends were starving, but *they* having a provision, forgot their pledge and duty. He acknowledged his connection to the fullest extent with the Spa-fields Meetings, to which he was joint Secretary. He knew the two Watsons, and had frequently acted with them upon the Committees, and various other occasions. He denied having taken the slightest part in the riotous proceedings of Monday, and *deprecated in the strongest manner the horrid system of taking away the life of a fellow-creature*. He frequently repeated, that the plan was *constitutional*, and delivered the whole of his account in the most undisguised and enthusiastic manner.' In another examination he is stated to have said, that 'the PLOT had been going on for EIGHT YEARS, and that he himself HAD WRITTEN TO THE LATE MR. PERCEVAL ON THE SUBJECT, urging him to ADOPT it, as the only means of SAVING THE NATION!'

"Now, when your laughing fit is over, let me ask you, whether you ever heard of a *Plot* and *Insurrection* like this before? What! an eight years' Plot! a *good* Insurrection! Dennis, in his criticism upon Addison's silly play of *Cato*, ridicules the idea of the conspirators against Cato's life picking out *Cato's own hall* for the scene of their consultations; but these modern Plotters beat Syphax and his associates hollow; for they, in order to further their view of destroying the government, communicate their Plot to the Prime Minister himself!

"What must the people *in the country* think of all this? What a mass of absurdities and contradictions! What madness it all appears to be! *Good* insurrections; *constitutional* attacks on the government! *Plots* which the prime Minister has been urged to adopt in order to save the nation! What *can* the people at large make out of such a strange medley? The sons of Corruption it is who have made the medley. They wanted a *Plot*. The mad riots in the city afforded them a pretext, and they have put the words PLOT and INSURRECTION *into Mr. Preston's mouth* in order to favour their views. Now, let us see how a plain tale will put them down and expose their malice to the world.

"About sixteen years ago, a Mr. SPENCE, a schoolmaster in Yorkshire, conceived what he called a PLAN for making the nation happy, by taking all the lands into the hands of a just government, and appropriating all the produce or profit to the support of the people, so that there would be no one in want, and all would live in a sort of *Christian Brotherhood*. This plan, accompanied with some political remarks, he published in 1800, for which he was pursued by a Criminal Information Ex-Officio, by the present Chief Justice, who was then Attorney-General. When brought up for trial I was present in the Court of King's Bench. He had no counsel, but defended himself, and insisted that his views were *pure* and *benevolent*, in proof of which, in spite of all exhortations to the contrary, he read his pamphlet through. He was found *guilty* and sentenced to be imprisoned for I forget how long. He was a plain, unaffected, inoffensive looking creature. He did not seem at all afraid of any punishment, and appeared

much more anxious about the success of his *plan* than about the preservation of his life. After he came out of prison, he pursued the inculcation of his *plan*, appearing to have no other care; and this he did, I am assured, to the day of his death, always having been a most virtuous and inoffensive man, and always very much beloved by those who knew him.

"We have all seen, for years past, *written on the walls*, in and near London, these words, "SPENCE'S PLAN:" and I never knew what it meant, until, a little while ago, I received a pamphlet from Mr. Evans, Newcastle-street, Strand, detailing the *Plan* very fully. This Mr. Evans, I understand to be a very worthy man, and his pamphlet, though I do not agree with it in opinion as to many of its propositions, contains some interesting observations, and breathes a spirit of benevolence throughout the whole.

"Mr. Preston and the Watsons appear to have been followers of Mr. Spence; and the '*plan*' of which Mr. Preston is said to have '*confessed*' the existence, is, as you will see, '*Spence's Plan*,' and nothing more; and nothing more, no, not a hair more, will Corruption's sons, with all their torturing and twisting, with all their falsehoods and affected alarms, be able to make of it! Thus, you will clearly perceive, that the '*confessions*,' as they are called, of your correspondent, Mr. Preston, are no confessions at all. You will clearly see, that Corruption's Press has foisted in the words *insurrection* and *plot*; for, unless you see this, what sense is there in the words *good* and *constitutional*? What absurdity to believe, that a man, and a *guilty* man, too, would talk about a *good* insurrection and about a plot that was *constitutional*, and which plot had been going on for *eight years*, and had been *communicated to Mr. Perceval* as the only means of saving the nation! But, strip these lying accounts of the words *insurrection* and *plot*, and leave the word *plan*, and then the whole, however wild in itself, becomes perfectly consistent; and such, you may depend on it, and no other, has been the '*confession*' of Mr. Preston.

"The Courier of Monday last, in pursuance of its endeavours to keep the scent of a *plot* from cooling, has these remarks: 'Whether the *plan* of the *rioters* was to commence in the morning or at night, is not ascertained; but from the declaration of Preston, who charges young Watson with *precipitancy*, it appears *that the operations were not to commence till dark*. Preston still maintains a high and indignant tone; he talks more *enthusiastically* than before of the *extent of the plot*, and adds, that not less than three hundred thousand persons *were enrolled in the cause*. Hooper, who states Preston to be the instigator and great mechanist of the *conspiracy*, has declared that the two Watsons, himself, and Preston, were in concert together in Spa-fields on the morning of Monday.'—Now, I dare say, that it will finally turn out, that Hooper has said no such thing as is here stated. But here again you see, that the words *plot* and *conspiracy* are used instead of the word *plan*, and this is manifestly for the base and diabolical purpose of causing the people to believe, that there has been a *conspiracy* against the government, and that *all the Reformers* are enrolled in this conspiracy! But be you well assured, that these eager efforts to excite alarm will fail of their purpose, and that the workers in them and their abettors will come out of the attempt covered with infamy, though nothing can produce in them any feeling of shame.

"In the meanwhile the Spenceonians are posting up, all about, the prospectus of this plan, and as if for the express purpose of preparing the way for their own everlasting disgrace, the owners of the Corrupt Press are publishing this very document, which I insert here as taken from the Courier of Monday.

"The following hand-bill, it is stated, was circulated through the Metropolis yesterday, and *excited much apprehension*:—

#### 'SPENCE'S PLAN

For Parochial Partnerships in the Land,  
Is the only effectual Remedy for the Distresses and Oppressions of  
the People.  
The Landholders are not Proprietors in Chief; they are but the  
*Stewards* of the Public;  
For the LAND is the PEOPLE'S FARM.  
The Expenses of the Government do not cause the Misery that  
surrounds us, but the enormous exactions of these  
'*Unjust Stewards*.'  
Landed Monopoly is indeed equally contrary to the benign Spirit of  
Christianity, and destructive of  
The Independence and Morality of all Mankind.  
'The Profit of the Earth is for all;'  
Yet how deplorably destitute are the great Mass of the People?  
Nor is it possible for their situations to be radically amended, but by  
the establishment of a system,

Founded on the immutable basis of Nature and Justice.  
Experience demonstrates its necessity; and the rights of mankind  
require it for their preservation.

To obtain this important object, by extending the knowledge of the above system, the Society of Spencean Philanthropists has been instituted. Further information of its principles may be obtained by attending any of its Sectional Meetings, where subjects are discussed calculated to enlighten the human understanding, and where also the regulations of the Society may be procured, containing a complete development of the Spencean system.—Every individual is admitted, free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum.

The Meetings of this Society begin at a quarter past eight in the evening, as under:

First Section, every Wednesday, at the Cock, Grafton-street, Soho.  
Second ..... Thursday, Mulberry Tree, Mulberry-court,  
Wilson-street, Moorfields.  
Third ..... Monday, Nag's Head, Carnaby-market.  
Fourth ..... Tuesday, No. 8, Lumber-street, Mint, Borough.'

"*This is the Plan!* This is the plan, the plot, the conspiracy, and the insurrection scheme! And, what an impudent, what an incorrigible, what a hardened impostor, must this writer be, who can tell the public, that this hand-bill *excited much apprehension!* Apprehension, I believe, indeed, *in him* and his associates and encouragers; for it furnishes the clue to unravel all their falsehoods and to expose them to scorn and to detestation; but, it is calculated to excite '*apprehension*' in nobody else. The public indignation is fast collecting and winding up to a high pitch; and it only waits the result of the present examinations to pour down upon the heads of these corrupt instigators to fury and bloodshed. A gang of spies and informers, in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, who, after long and wearisome contrivances to discover a plot and to get the reward, just at the moment when they are expecting to see their victim swing and to pocket the blood-money, are sent away abashed and confounded by the discovery that it was a *Cod's Head* and not that of the *Sovereign*, against which he had been *plotting*. Not less complete would be the confusion of these corrupt writers, if it were not that they are destitute of every feeling that can lead to shame or remorse.

"Monstrous, however, as are the baseness and malice and cruelty of these men, they are, I think, still exceeded by their folly. The main object of all their endeavours, is, very clearly, to render you odious and to put you down; and, if they had been created for the express purpose of exalting you, it would have been impossible for them to labour to that end with more zeal or more effect. Your manner of conducting the second meeting, the way in which you carried on your communications with the government, the punctuality and decorum of your proceedings, the language and matter of your Resolutions and Petition, and the *effect* of these, very justly entitled you to a large share of public applause; but, the blows which these ferocious writers have aimed at your *life* have excited an interest in your favour such as no human being could have thought possible, and in the tide of which are completely drowned all your momentary errors and indiscretions, which, besides, having arisen from an excess of zeal, were not calculated to be long held in remembrance. Some very good, but very weak and timid people talked of your *violence*, while they seemed to overlook the *violent* thing which you attacked; but in the minds of all good men there is an inherent abhorrence of baseness like that which has aimed its murderous sting against your life, and, in the present case, this abhorrence has overpowered all the alarms of the good and timid people in whose breasts what is called your violence had excited such alarms. "The vipers have the mortification to perceive this, and their rage is increased accordingly. They see your *portrait*, from three different hands, setting them at defiance in the print-shop windows. They hear your *speech* and *resolutions* cried through the streets, and sold out of shops in several separate editions. They hear the taverns and public-houses filled with talk about you. They have contrived by their endeavours to implicate you in a '*treasonable conspiracy*,' to excite a strong feeling of some sort or other respecting you in every human breast. And this is *their way of putting a man down!* They have, even by the use of their own columns, made your *name familiar* to the very water's edge of these islands. They have made you *the only one of your kind*; there is now but one Mr. Hunt in the world. Your ambition must be a cormorant indeed, if this does not satisfy it. No longer ago than Monday, they very seriously announced, that 'Hunt was SEEN, *in his Tandem*, going towards his home on *Thursday last!*' They seem to think that the public is much more interested in your movements than in those of the Prince Regent or of the Queen. I should not wonder if they were to have a '*Court News Writer*' to give an account of all the movements of your body; and, after what I have seen within these ten days, I do not despair of seeing them announce, that 'on Monday, Mr. Hunt took the diversion of shooting till three o'clock. On Tuesday, Mr. Hunt went to inspect his barns, and was graciously pleased to express his high approbation of the ingenious mode of laying the crab-stick on upon the sheaves of wheat. On Wednesday, Mr. Hunt gave audience to several tax-gatherers, to whose

importunities he did not listen with an overstock of complacency.' And so on, day after day. Why should I despair of this, after what I have seen? Your *Tandem* is become far more renowned than the *Bulletproof coach*, and your horse *Bob*, is far more famous already than the charger of old Blucher.

"Oh! the fools! Could not the settled reputation of being the most consummate of *knaves* content them? Was it necessary, in order to satisfy their ambition, to stand unrivalled through the world for folly as well as for knavery?"

"Gratified, however, as you must be by these demonstrations of the impotent malice of such men, I hope, and indeed, I am sure, that a more gratifying consideration with you will be, as it ought to be, that these vile men have added to your power of serving your country, and which you will now be the better able to serve, because, having given such ample proofs of earnestness and resolution, you may safely *moderate your zeal* without risking any imputation of a want of that super-excellent quality. That quality, in which so many men are deficient, you possess to a redundancy. Guard against this excess in future: take in a little sail, and add a little to your ballast: exchange a little of the courage of the lion for a little of the wisdom of the serpent: give up a little, and only a very little, of the stubbornness of the oak, for a little, and only a very little, of the pliancy of the reed: do this, and trust to the folly and knavery of these stupid and malignant wretches to make you a *great man*.

"The situation of the country is becoming day after day more and more perilous, and there can be no relief without a radical cure. The Prince in his answer to the City of London (which I shall fully notice by and by) confesses, as he well may, the existence of national *distress* and *difficulty*. These are important words, and especially the last. This is a great change produced since the beginning of last session of Parliament, when the wondrous *prosperity* of the country was a prominent theme of the Speech, and when your Wiltshire County Member, Mr. Paul Methuen, congratulated the House, that this country had become the pillar of legitimacy all over Europe! Alas! how soon things have changed! Misery is a greater teacher than Messrs. Lancaster and Bell both put together.

"The Spitalfields subscription swells at a great rate, and, as a means of *immediate* relief, I am glad it does, though I shall always contend, that whatever degree of *good* may thereby be done, is due to *you* more than to any other person, and more than to all other persons put together; for, it is impossible that the misery should not have *existed before* the first Meeting in Spa-fields; and why, then, was it not *before* relieved? Mr. Buxton must have long *known* the facts which he so eloquently and so affectingly described; and why did he not then describe them *sooner*? The miserable sailors have long been perishing about the streets with hunger and cold; and why, then, has no measure of relief for them been adopted until *now*? I do not pretend to say, nor do I believe, that the greater part of those who now so freely subscribe, did not before feel for the unhappy sufferers; but, this I am quite sure of, that it was your first meeting and your petition which roused their feelings into immediate action; I do not say, nor do I believe, that the greater part of the subscribers had no real charity in them; but I defy any one to say, that their charity, which before lay dormant, was not quickened by your exertions. One of your flags, or rather of the flags of the Meeting, which had on it 'FEED THE HUNGRY,' 'CLOTHE THE NAKED,' was called by the *Courier* 'a standard of *rebellion*;' but, it is a standard under which the subscribers have hastened to range themselves; for they are serving out *soup* and *old clothes* in all directions! But, this very *Courier*, after the first Meeting, expressly stated, that the people in and near London, *were not in want*. He said, that, though work had fallen off and wages had been lowered *in the country*, it was *not so* in London; and he called the poor starving multitudes *mutinous*, *lazy*, and *rebellious*. He charged them with designs to *overset the Government*, and plainly and distinctly asserted, that they *stood in no need of relief*! How quickly he changed his tone! And how clear is that change to be traced to *you*!

"But, in the general subscription for the poor creatures of Spital-fields, you see only a small part of the effects of your labours. There have been meetings in almost all the parishes of the metropolis for similar purposes. Large subscriptions are going on in every direction. Just as if the poverty and misery were not as great a month ago as they are now! Great indeed they are, and they are producing symptoms so horrible that one sickens but to think of them. Amongst others, take the facts described in a *placard* now sticking against the walls. 'PUBLIC NOTICE.—United Parishes of Saint Andrew, Holborn, above Bar, and St. George the Martyr, Queen's Square. At a meeting of the overseers held this day in consequence of MANY PERSONS DESERTING THEIR FAMILIES,—It was *resolved*, That, in future, all persons, who desert their families, whereby they become chargeable to these parishes, or when the reputed parents of an illegitimate child abscond, *such persons shall be advertised in the public papers*, or in *posting bills*, with a full description of their persons, residence, and calling, and other particulars, and a reward offered for their apprehension. And all inhabitants harbouring persons for the night, for the like purpose, will be *prosecuted* accordingly.'

"To what are we come at last! And this is the age of our *glory*, is it? This is the situation we are in, when immense sums are voted for the erection of monuments to commemorate the deeds of the last 25

years! This is the state which not to be *proud* of, Mr. Vansittart said was proof of baseness in an Englishman! It is in this situation of the country, that Pitt Clubs have the insolence to hold their triumphal carousals!—Shall we *never* see these men in sackcloth? These insolent men, while wallowing in wealth, do not reflect on the pangs which must wring the poor man's heart before he can so far subdue the feelings of the husband and the father as to make him "*desert his family*;" or, if they do reflect on them, they must be more cruel than the storms and the waves. The labouring men in England, generally speaking, are the kindest and most indulgent of husbands and of parents. It has often been observed by me, that they are generally so to a fault. If a boy or girl belonging to them behave ill towards their employers, their father and mother are very hard to be convinced of the fact.—I have often to remonstrate with them upon this subject, and to remind them of how much more indulgent they are to their children than I am to mine. 'Aye, Sir,' said a very good woman to me a little while ago, 'but your children have their belly full of victuals.' The answer was a *silencer*. And this is the true cause of their indulgence, and of their excessive affection too. They see their children in want; they grow up in continual suffering; they are incessantly objects of compassion over and above the love which nature has implanted in the parent's breast. Their obstinate perseverance in justifying the conduct of their children upon all occasions is a fault; but it arises from the most amiable of human weaknesses; and though it may, and often is, injurious in its effects, it is the least censurable of all the frailties of the heart.

"If I have here, as I am sure I have, given the true character of the English labourer, as a parent and a husband, what must that state of things be, which has rendered the *desertion of family* so frequent an offence as to call forth a hand-bill and *placard* such as that which I have quoted above? And, in a state of things like this, are men to be called *promoters of sedition*, because they endeavour to point out the real cause of this horrible evil, and also endeavour to point out the remedy? Aye, but in doing this we point at the same time, to the *weight of taxes*; and we cite Mr. Preston in support of our doctrine, who says, that every poor man, who earns *eighteen pounds* in a year, pays away *ten pounds of it in taxes*. Mr. Preston's words are these:—'Every family, even of the poorest labourer, consisting of five persons, may be considered as paying, in *indirect taxes*, at least *ten pounds a-year*, or more than half his wages at seven shillings a week?' And, in another place he says: 'It should *always be remembered*, that every *eighteen pounds* a-year paid to any *placeman* or *pensioner*, withdraws from the public the means of giving active employment to one individual at the head of a family; *thus depriving five persons* of the means of sustenance from the fruits of *honest industry* and active labour, and rendering them paupers!

"What! is this *rebellious* on the part of Mr. Preston? He is a lawyer of great eminence. A Member of Parliament. A man of great landed estate. Could he write and publish this from *rebellious*, from *treasonable* motives? What he says is certainly true; and is he not to say it, because the saying it may be disagreeable to those who live upon the taxes thus collected? Is it not clear, that, if the money, which the labourer and journeyman now pay in taxes, were to be suffered to remain in their pockets, they would not stand in need of *parish* or *subscription* relief? And, if this be *not true*, why does not some one of the numerous tax-eating tribe attempt to prove it to be false? Have not they their full share of the press at their command? Aye, and more than their share. The sons of corruption are spreading about answers to me at a penny each, and some of them are given away. There must be money, somewhere, found for this. The sums necessary to do it must be very large too. Are they not content with this superiority? I have no means of *giving papers away*. They say that my writing is trash; they call the *Letter to the Luddites* seditious trash; they say that I am an ignorant fellow, a shallow man, and so forth. Why, then, are they in a passion? Why not laugh at me and my trash? Why name me at all? Why break silence after so long a period? They are continually vowing that they will never notice my trash again; but their hatred, like the love of the swain, returns the next hour with more ardour than ever, and scatters their vows to the winds. The most furious amongst them is a *Sinecure Placeman*, who writes in the *Times* newspaper, and upon whom the droppings of my pen seem to have the same effect as the crumbling of blue-stone or lump-sugar on the proud flesh of a galled jade. He winces and dances, and kicks and flings about at a fine rate. Amidst his ravings he swears that he will cause me to be hanged; and if he should not succeed, he would, I am sure, if he had any decency, finish his career by tucking up himself, and that too in his ribbon of the order of St. Lewis.

"The truth is, that these men and their assistants and encouragers see their certain doom in *the enlightening of the people*. They see clearly enough, that conviction must follow facts and arguments like mine rendered familiar. They see that I am uniting the *mind* with the *muscle* of the country; and, above all things, they see, and they tremble at, my incessant, and I hope, successful efforts, to convince the labourers and the journeymen, that they are men who have *rights*, and that the way to obtain those rights is to pursue a *peaceable* and orderly conduct. They hate every one who dwells upon the *miseries* of the country; for, *to them*, it is confusion to acknowledge that misery exists. The *Courier* asserted, only the other day, that there was no suffering in or near London, and abused the people for complaining! Such men would kill you or me or any man who talks of the people's sufferings. They call the complaints of hunger *sedition*. These writers are like the wretch, who, unable to force his poor



worn-out and starved horse to drag his load along any further, took out his knife and cut his throat. And, I have not the least doubt, those men would see one half of the people's throats cut in order to reduce the rest to silent submission. The following case, taken from their own accounts of Wednesday last, will serve as a specimen of what is going on in London. This is *dying quietly*, according to the recommendation of Mr. Jabet's *Old Townsman*, who gave such just offence to the people of Birmingham. 'Between twelve and one o'clock on yesterday morning, a poor fellow was found in a passage in High-street, Bloomsbury, by Sullivan and Hogan, the watchmen of that district; he had taken shelter for the night. They requested him to walk on to his lodgings; he did not answer, but walked towards Monmouth-street, and they walked the contrary road. Between two and three o'clock they again found him *lying upon a step* in the same street; they asked him if he had no lodgings *he tried to answer*, but could only move his lips, which gave no utterance. They raised him upon his feet to assist him to the watch-house; he walked a few yards, and *from weakness fell upon his knees*. They got him upon their shoulders to carry him to the watch-house, but before they arrived with him *he appeared to be dead*. The watchman took him to the workhouse, and called up the house surgeon, who examined the body, and said it was useless to bleed him, or use any method to restore him, as *he was quite dead*. The deceased is apparently *about fifty years of age*, the most *complete picture of human misery*, having *no linen upon his back*, and *his bones almost through his skin*. By his dress he appears to be a workman out of employ. He has not been OWNED.'—Look at this, ye vile miscreants, and then say, whether it was a *crime* to call a *meeting of the distressed* to petition for relief! Hundreds must perish in this way. Only five days ago I saw more than twenty sailors on Westminster Bridge, neither of whom had any linen on, and some neither *shoes, stockings, nor hat*. But, the numbers who have perished and who are perishing from the *diseases* occasioned by want are not to be counted. And yet, it was a crime in you, and the sanguinary sons of corruption called for your instant execution, because you obeyed the call of the *distressed* to hold a meeting of them in Spafields! Not to have obeyed that call would indeed have been a crime; but, it was a crime of which your nature was incapable.

"I now come to the *City Petition* and the *answer of the Prince Regent*. This is a very important matter, and, therefore, I shall insert the documents themselves previous to making any remarks on them.

#### "ADDRESS AND PETITION.

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in Common Council assembled, humbly approach your Royal Highness, to represent our national sufferings and grievances, and respectfully to suggest the adoption of measures which we conceive to be indispensably necessary for the safety, the quiet and prosperity of the Realm.

"We forbear to enter into details of the afflicting scenes of privations and sufferings that every where exist; the distress and misery which for so many years has been progressively accumulating, has at length become insupportable—it is no longer partially felt, nor limited to one portion of the empire—the commercial, the manufacturing, and the agricultural interests are equally sinking under its irresistible pressure; and it has become impossible to find employment for a large mass of the population, much less to bear up against our present enormous burdens.

"We beg to impress upon your Royal Highness, that our present complicated evils have not arisen from a mere transition from war to peace, nor from any sudden or accidental causes—neither can they be removed by any partial or temporary expedients.

"Our grievances are the natural effect of rash and ruinous wars, unjustly commenced and pertinaciously persisted in, when no rational object was to be obtained—of immense subsidies to foreign powers to defend their own territories, or to commit aggressions on those of their neighbours—of a delusive paper currency—of an unconstitutional and unprecedented military force in time of peace—of the unexampled and increasing magnitude of the Civil List—of the enormous sums paid for unmerited pensions and sinecures—and of a long course of the most lavish and improvident expenditure of the public money throughout every branch of the Government, all arising from the corrupt and inadequate state of the representation of the people in Parliament, whereby all constitutional controul over the servants of the Crown has been lost, and Parliaments have become subservient to the will of Ministers.

"We cannot forbear expressing our grief and disappointment, that, notwithstanding your Royal Highness's gracious recommendation of economy at the opening of the last Session of Parliament, your Ministers should have been found opposing every proposition for lessening the national expenditure; and that they should have been able to obtain majorities to support and sanction their conduct, in defiance of your Royal Highness's recommendation and the declared sense of the nation—affording another melancholy proof of the corrupt state of the representation, in addition to those facts so often

stated, and offered to be proved at the bar of the House of Commons, in a petition presented in 1793, by the Honourable Charles, now Lord Grey, whereby it appeared that the great body of the people were excluded from all share in the election of Members, and that the majority of the Honourable House were returned by the proprietors of rotten boroughs, the influence of the Treasury, and a few powerful families.

"We can, Sir, no longer support out of our dilapidated resources, an overwhelming load of taxation; and we humbly submit to your Royal Highness, that nothing but a reformation of these abuses, and restoring to the people their just and constitutional right in the election of Members of Parliament, can afford a security against their recurrence—calm the apprehensions of the people—alleviate their irritated feelings, and prevent those misfortunes in which the nation must inevitably be involved, by an obstinate and infatuated adherence to the present system of corruption and extravagance.

"We therefore humbly pray your Royal Highness to assemble Parliament as early as possible; and that you will be graciously pleased to recommend to their immediate consideration these important matters, and the adoption of measures for abolishing all useless places, pensions, and sinecures; for the reduction of our present enormous military establishment; for making every practicable reduction in the Public Expenditure, and restoring to the people their just share and weight in the Legislature.

"Signed by order of the Court.

"HENRY WOODTHORPE."

\* \* \* \* \*

"PRINCE'S ANSWER.

"It is with strong feelings of *surprise* and *regret*, that I receive this Address and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in Common Council assembled.

"Deeply as I deplore the prevailing *distress* and *difficulties* of the country, I derive consolation from the persuasion, that *the great body* of his Majesty's subjects, notwithstanding the various attempts which have been made to *irritate* and *mislead* them, are well convinced, that the severe trials which they sustain with such exemplary patience and fortitude, are chiefly to be attributed to *unavoidable causes*, and I contemplate with the most cordial satisfaction the efforts of that enlightened benevolence which is so usefully and laudably exerting itself throughout the kingdom.

"I shall resort with the utmost confidence to the TRIED *wisdom* of Parliament, at the time, which upon the fullest consideration, I have thought most advisable, under the present circumstances of the country; and I entertain a perfect conviction, that a firm and temperate administration of the Government, assisted and supported by the good sense, public spirit, and loyalty of the nation, will effectually *counteract those proceedings*, which, from whatever motives they may originate, are *calculated to render* TEMPORARY *difficulties the means of producing* PERMANENT and *irreparable calamity*."

"The *surprise* and *regret*, and the *broad hints* that came after, have nettled the citizens a little. Whether they will shew any *bottom*, remains to be seen; but, as to the *distress* and *difficulties* being TEMPORARY, and as to their having arisen from UNAVOIDABLE *causes*, I differ with his Royal Highness, or, rather with his Ministers who advised this answer. The distress has been visibly proceeding in a regular increase of severity for more than two years; it becomes every day greater and greater; it is deep rooted; it is *destroying the means of resuscitation*; it is ripping up the goose and taking out the golden eggs; in suspending the operations of labour, it is cutting off the possibility of a speedy return of employment. But, what say the Correspondents of the Board of Agriculture? Not one single man of them, except a parson or two, pretends that the *distress* is of a temporary nature; on the contrary, 205 of them, out of 322, attribute the ruin *to the weight of taxes*! And, therefore, to make the distress temporary, the weight of taxes must be temporary; and this is one of the main objects of the prayer of the Citizens of London.

"Oh, no! the distress and difficulties have not arisen from *unavoidable* causes; for the weight of taxes might have been avoided. However, let me ask the Ministers a few questions here. I will not ask them whether it was unavoidable for the Bank to stop payment in cash in 1797; whether it was unavoidable to renew the war in 1813; whether it was unavoidable to persevere in the war with America after the war in England ceased, and, at last, to make peace without attaining any object of war; whether it was unavoidable to renew the war in 1815 for the purpose of compelling the French people to give up Napoleon and submit to the Bourbons; whether it was unavoidable to keep up an army to maintain the Bourbons on the throne of France, at a time when thousands of the Protestants of the country were butchered or burnt by those who called themselves the *loyal*. I will not put any of these questions to the

Ministers; but with the official accounts before me, I will ask them a few questions applicable to the present moment. I ask them, then,

Was it *unavoidable* to keep up an army at the expense, including the Ordnance, of 26,736,067 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* that the expense of the Civil List should, in last year, amount to 1,928,000 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* for as to pay in the same year, on account of the *deficiencies* of the Civil List 584,713 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* that the other additional allowances to the Royal Family, in that year, should amount to 366,660 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* that the Civil List for Scotland should amount to 126,613 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* to give for the *relief of suffering* French and Dutch Emigrants, in that year, after, the *Bourbons* and the '*Orange Boven*' had been restored, the sum of 79,591 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* to expend in that year (including) an arrear of the former year, in SECRET SERVICE Money, the sum of 153,446 pounds?

Was it *unavoidable* to pay *last year*, out of the taxes for the relief of the *Poor* Clergy of the Church of England, the sum of 100,000 pounds?

"I could ask them a great many more questions of a similar nature and tendency; but here are enough for the present; and, if the Citizens of London should happen to be satisfied, that all these expenses were *unavoidable*, all the taxes, of course, are unavoidable, and then it is clear, that the present distress and difficulty of the country are to be attributed to unavoidable causes. But, if the citizens should think, that a very large part, nine-tenths, for instance, of these expenses might have been *avoided*, then they will come to the opposite conclusion, and, if they be not beaten at a single blow, they will not fail to *communicate* that conclusion to his Royal Highness.

"As to the hint about *irritating* and *misleading* the people, the charge can apply only to the enemies of Parliamentary Reform; for we deal in soothing language, in the inspiring of hope, and in the promulgation of useful political truth, and, therefore, the charge cannot apply to us. But, when the Prince is advised to talk of the *TRIED wisdom* of the *Parliament*, he compels us to fix our eyes on those '*distresses and difficulties*,' of which he is graciously pleased to speak at the same time, and which, at any rate, have grown into being under the existence of that '*TRIED wisdom*.'

"I have just received from America the most authentic accounts of the happy state of the people there. *English goods* were selling at auction for a *fourth* of their *prime cost*; and the Americans say, that they are, in this way, *getting back* what they lost by our Orders in Council, under which their ships were seized and condemned. The *ruin*, in America, is wholly confined to the *agents* and *merchants* connected with *England*. The country at large is in the most flourishing state; no beggars, no paupers, no distress, and their newspapers are filled with true accounts of *our* distresses. Still, let us cling to the *Old Ship*, and let us try, in spite of all opposition, to make our own country as happy as America. But, here is another mark of our distresses not being of a *temporary* nature. The market of America is gone *for ever* as to most articles of manufacture. I shall, however, treat more fully of this another time.

"I am, with the greatest respect,

"Sir, "Your most obedient and most humble Servant,

**"WM. COBBETT."**

When the reader has perused this letter, he will be able to form a pretty correct opinion of the state of the public mind in the metropolis upon this occasion; and, as it was written at the time when Mr. Cobbett was divested, of prejudice, it will be read with considerable interest at this period.

The plot that had been laid for the purpose Of SPILLING MY BLOOD, had been completely frustrated. I returned to the country, where I received invitations to attend public meetings for Reform, which the inhabitants of Bath and Bristol wished to hold. I went to spend a fortnight with a friend at Newton, near Bath, and, as I was a freeholder of both those cities, I drew up requisitions and signed them first, to be presented to the Mayors, requesting them to call meetings, to petition for Reform. They both refused to comply with the request of their fellow-citizens, and we, the requisitionists, therefore advertised and

called them ourselves.

The Bristol meeting was advertised to be held upon Brandon-hill, on the 26th of December, the Mayor having refused us the use of the Guildhall. I started from Newton about 11 o'clock, on one of the wettest days that I ever remember. On the road I passed several troops of the Lancers, who had been ordered up from Weymouth, to watch this meeting. When I reached Bristol I met, at Temple-gate, my worthy friend Mr. John Cossens, with Mr. Pimm and a few others. They informed me, that they had been deterred by the corporation from erecting any hustings upon Brandon-hill, and that the City was invested by a regiment of North Somersetsbire Yeomanry Cavalry, which had been arriving from all parts for several hours. Some of my friends strongly urged the propriety of my returning to Bath, and postponing the meeting to some future time, in consequence of the extreme wetness of the day. I had never promised to attend any public meeting of the people and then disappointed them, and I felt extreme reluctance at the base thought of doing so upon this occasion; particularly as such a body of the military were assembled from all quarters, since, to decline holding the meeting under such circumstances, would carry the idea that, because the corrupt knaves of Bristol had called out the military, we were fearful of performing, and that, too, in a perfectly legal and constitutional manner, an imperative public duty. That, however, in order to deter us, some persons, who were not gifted with strong nerves, should hesitate, is not to be wondered at, when we look at the following statement, which was published in the London *Courier*, of the 25th of December, the day previous to the meeting being held: "that the regular soldiers are assembling; that the North Somerset regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry are ready to march to the aid of the Mayor; that a vestry in one parish has been held to collect persons to march to the Mayor's to be sworn in as special constables; that the parties signed a resolution at the said vestry, that they will not distribute any Christmas gifts on Thursday, in order to keep the watchmen to their duty on that day; and that they will *dismiss from their employ all persons who do not work on the day of the meeting.*"

This was all true; the streets were lined with troops, drenched in rain: I never saw such drowned rats in my life! they looked wretched indeed! nevertheless, on I drove, through the City up to Brandon-hill. When I got there not ten persons were present, but as the rain held up, and the day became fine, in less than ten minutes there were as many thousands assembled. I sent my servant with the leader of my tandem to the inn, and I made *my gig the hustings*. A chairman was appointed, and the resolutions and a petition to Parliament were proposed by me, and seconded by Mr. Cossens, and were unanimously adopted by the meeting. The petition, which was for Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot, was left for signatures in the City, and in a very short time it received TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND names. These resolutions and this petition were carried by a meeting of unarmed citizens, assembled upon Brandon-hill, which was surrounded by armed troops, drawn up within sight, and some of them within hearing, of what was said and done by myself and others who took part in the said meeting. The Bath troops were commanded on that day by a person of the name of King, a marble mason of that city. The men were mounted before day-light, when the rain commenced; and this very gallant officer and profound soldier objected to the men wearing their *cloaks*. As they were going upon such a magnanimous errand, such an heroic exploit, he said "he hoped they would not disgrace themselves by wearing their cloaks." The consequence was, that these *feather-bed soldiers* suffered most wretchedly, as they were soaked to the skin before they had got two miles on the road to Bristol. Their being kept in this woeful plight all day caused the death of two or three of them; *Robert Ansty*, a butcher, and *Wilton*, who kept the Bear inn at Holloway, never recovered from the effects of their trip to Bristol. There was, in truth, no more call for soldiers at Bristol on that day than there was for them in the Guildhall at Bath, where there was no meeting to be held. The Mayor of Bristol and other Magistrates had sworn in 800 special constables upon the occasion; in fact, the appearance of the City was more like a besieged fortress than any thing else. But all this parade was intended only for the purpose of intimidating the minds of the weak and silly portion of the people and creating a panic throughout the country. I will venture to say, that the business of the meeting would have been carried on as quietly, and as much without any breach of the peace, and without one window having been broken, had there not been one soldier, or one constable or peace officer present at the time.

Mr. Thomas Cossens, of Castle-street, manfully stood forward to support me, and courageously braved the anger of the corrupt knaves of Bristol. He rode through the city with me to the extremity of it, cheered all the way by the people, unless it was in passing the new reading room, in Clare-street, where a few of those who had been sworn in as special constables were assembled; a little contemptible group of the abject, dependant tools of the corporation, who, as I suppose, from the appearance of their lips, attempted to raise a hiss, but their voices were instantly drowned by the cheers of the multitude; and thus the meeting passed off as peaceably as if there had not been any bustle made by the corporation and police of the city, in order to create a riot.

A few days after this, I got a requisition signed by thirty respectable inhabitants of the City of Bath, the exact number of the corporation who return the members. Having placed my name at the head of

them, I waited upon the Mayor, a Mr. Anderton, an apothecary, I believe; he was better known amongst the citizens by the name of Pump-handle. When I laid the requisition before him, he was presiding at the justice-room at the Guildhall. He read it over, while I kept my eyes fixed upon him, and when he had finished the perusal of it, he hemmed and hawed, and began to make all sorts of excuses, saying that the City of Bath had never been troubled with a public meeting, and he could not see why there should be any meeting there now. I told him that there would certainly be a meeting, whether he called it or not; that we the requisitionists merely wished to pay him the compliment of giving him, as the chief magistrate of the city, an opportunity of convening it; but that, if he felt the least difficulty upon the subject, we would quite as soon call it ourselves. He replied by some foolish observation, which I now forget, but the purport of which was, to leave it doubtful whether he would or would not comply with our wishes. This, however, did not suit me, and I pressed him for a definite answer. At length he gave such a one as, before I waited on him, I was thoroughly convinced that he would give, namely, that he could not think of complying with the request of his fellow-citizens. So thoroughly convinced indeed had I been that he would not call the meeting, that, previous to my waiting on him, I had sent the copy of the placard, calling the meeting ourselves, to the printer's to be set up, only leaving room for the answer of the Mayor; so that, within one hour after he had refused, large broadsides were placarded all over the city, calling the meeting on the following Monday, in the name of myself and the other persons who signed the requisition. The meeting was appointed to be held at 12 o'clock, on my premises, a large yard in Walcot-street, formerly belonging to a brewer, so that we were totally free from any interruption that might have been intended to have been given us.

The circumstances attending the calling of this meeting were rather curious, and deserve notice, to shew how necessary it is upon these occasions to act with promptness and decision. The calling of this meeting had been in contemplation for some time. I had drawn up a requisition, signed it with my own name, and sent it to Mr. John Allen, who, together with Dr. Oliver and Mr. Binns, had undertaken to get it signed. Some names, I knew, had been procured, but the business had been driven off from time to time, and a number of difficulties had been started; but now that I was come into the neighbourhood of Bath the thing was to have been done out of hand. I had, meanwhile, procured and held the meeting at Bristol, and now that it was over I was determined to see after that of Bath, without further delay. I therefore drove over, and found matters quite at a stand, and all sorts of difficulties and impediments appeared to have quite overcome Messrs. Allen, Oliver, and Co. I saw that it was their determination not to call the meeting; as they said it was impossible to carry resolutions and a petition for Reform in a city which was under such a corrupt influence. I requested to have the requisition handed over to me, and I would get it signed myself; but, after a great deal of searching the shop of Mr. Binns, and hunting a long time for the said requisition, IT WAS LOST. To be humbugged in this sort of way did not suit me; I called for pen, ink and paper, instantly drew up another requisition, signed it myself, and sent little Young, my tenant in Walcot-street, and little Hickman, the assistant at Binns' shop, round with the requisition, to get it signed by thirty tradesmen who were housekeepers, which I predicted they would accomplish in half an hour. In the meantime I drew up the copy of a placard, to be posted on the walls, calling the meeting on the following Monday, in the name of the requisitionists; I being, as I have already stated, perfectly convinced that the Mayor would not call the meeting. As I had anticipated, Hickman and Young returned, in less than an hour, with the requisition signed by thirty very respectable tradesmen, and Young and myself carried it instantly and presented it to the Mayor, so that in less than *three hours* after I put my shoulder to the wheel, the requisition was drawn up, signed, presented to the Mayor, and his answer was printed on large placards, which placards were posted all over the city, appointing the meeting to be held on the following Monday. All this was accomplished in less than three hours, though the little clan of pretended Reformers, Messrs. Allen and Co. had been humdrumming about it for three weeks, without even getting the requisition signed. I wish I had a list of the brave men's names who so promptly signed this requisition; I would certainly record them. I remember that Mr. Crisp, the hatter, and Mr. Rolf, the shoemaker, and my tenant, Mr. Young, the builder, in Walcot-street, were three of them; Mr. Hickman, not being a householder, did not sign it. The day came, and a hustings was erected in my yard, and when I arrived, not only was the place full from top to bottom, but all the roofs of the buildings were covered with people. This also I had anticipated, and provided for. I had got two carpenters' benches already loaded in a cart, which, upon a signal being given, were to be taken to the Abbey Grove, to which spot it was my intention to move that the meeting should adjourn. Accordingly as soon as I got upon the hustings, I moved that the meeting should forthwith adjourn to the Abbey-Grove. This was seconded, and, although it came very unexpectedly, yet it was carried by acclamation. The cart with the carpenters' benches reached the Abbey-Grove before we did, and they were placed under the wall of the Abbey-Church. Thither I and my friends walked, the immense multitude, of from twelve to fifteen thousand persons, following us through the Marketplace, where many of the military were drawn up; for, in spite of the example of peaceableness which, in the week before, the people of Bristol had exhibited, the worthy Mayor of Bath had ordered out all the troops, Lancers and Somersetshire Yeomanry; and he had likewise been occupied the whole of the previous days in swearing in a large body of the gentlemen and tradesmen of the city, to act as special constables. These, of course, being present at the meeting, swelled our

numbers very considerably. When we mounted the hustings, the Abbey-Grove was at least one-third of it crammed full, so that, on a moderate calculation, there were from twelve to fifteen thousand persons present. A public meeting of the people for any political purpose had never before been held in Bath, and therefore it attracted greater attention than is usual in other cities.

Resolutions were now proposed and passed, which exposed the glaring injustice of paying away enormous sums of the public money to sinecure placemen and unworthy pensioners, &c. The Marquis of CAMDEN, who held the office of one of the Tellers of the Exchequer, a sinecure of thirty-five thousand a year, being the Recorder of the city of Bath, gave us a fine opportunity of expatiating on the profligate waste of the public money upon that corrupt and knavish corporation. Our resolutions were extremely strong and pointed upon this subject of *our Recorder's* enormous sinecure; and these resolutions were embodied in our petition, which was passed almost unanimously, amidst the cheers of the citizens of Bath. In this petition we forcibly remonstrated against such a wanton and unfeeling waste of the public money, and urged the necessity of the immediate abolition of the Marquis of Camden's sinecure. I wish I had a copy of the resolutions and petition by me, that I might insert them here, as I conceive this to have been the most momentous petition that was ever presented to the House of Commons; and the effect which it produced was more important than that of any other petition that was ever passed at any public meeting, not excepting that which was passed at Spafields. At this, as well as at all the public meetings that I attended, the petition prayed for Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot; but, as it was the first and only petition that ever came from a public meeting of the citizens of Bath, we laid very great stress upon the Marquis of Camden's sinecure, he being the Recorder of the City.

After this petition had been passed unanimously, it was left for signatures in several places in the city, but the rendezvous was at Mr. Young's, who occupied my house and premises in Walcot-street, so that he was totally independent of the corporation. The meeting was held and conducted in the most peaceable and orderly manner, and as soon as it was concluded the people retired to their homes in the same regular and satisfactory way, each individual being conscious of having done his duty to himself, his family, and his country. It is necessary to observe, that Mr. John Allen, a builder, of Bath, who had offered himself as the popular representative for that city in 1812, altogether abstained from taking any part in any of the proceedings of this meeting. He being a mushroom reformer, raised his head for a short season, and was cut off and disappeared from the political world almost as quick as a mushroom disappears after a nipping frost. The effect produced by this meeting did indeed rouse him again for a moment; but it was only that he might fall still lower, and be totally buried in the lap of corruption, mingling with its basest tools and dependants. The petition was signed by upwards of twenty thousand persons, in a few days.

There had, in the meanwhile been meetings held, for the purpose of petitioning for Reform, all over the kingdom, particularly in the North of England and Scotland; which meetings emanated from the first Spafields meeting; and at almost all of these Meetings resolutions and petitions of a similar tendency were passed; Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot, being very generally prayed for. Hampden Clubs had been formed all over the North of England, by Major Cartwright, who had sent an agent round the country for that purpose. The Major had also supplied a copy of a petition for Reform, to be transmitted to the members of these bodies, which prayed for the suffrage, or right of voting, to be extended only to all payers of direct taxes. These petitions being printed upon large paper, were very generally adopted, as this saved the trouble of drawing up others. A circular letter had also been sent round the country, signed by Sir F. Burdett, or rather with the Baronet's fac-simile, which he had authorised the Major to use, for the purpose of inviting the Hampden Clubs, and all other petitioning bodies, to send up delegates or deputies to London, to meet a deputation of the Hampden Club, to decide upon what sort of Reform the reformers would unanimously agree to petition for. Great numbers had followed the example set them at Spafields, Bristol, and Bath; others, who had signed the Major's printed petitions, only prayed for all payers of direct taxation to be admitted to the right of voting.

On the 20th of January, 1817, five persons were tried at the Old Bailey, for rioting in the City of London, on the day of the second Spafields meeting. Cashman, the sailor, was found guilty, and sentenced to be executed in the front of Mr. Beckwith's, the gun-smith's shop, in Skinner-street.

The Parliament was to meet on the 28th of January. About the 24th of that month, the delegates, or deputies, from the Hampden Clubs, and other petitioning bodies, from various parts of the kingdom, arrived in London; and a day was appointed for them to meet at the Crown and Anchor. I was delegated from Bristol, to accompany Mr. Cossens, who brought the petition from that city, signed by twenty-four thousand persons. I was also delegated from Bath, together with Mr. John Allen, who, seeing the spirit displayed by his townsmen, volunteered once more to act the part of a Reformer, and he brought up the Bath petition, containing upwards of 20,000 signatures. The Reformers of Bath and Bristol gave positive instructions to their delegates that they should support Annual Parliaments, Universal

Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot. Mr. Allen brought up the written instructions from Bath which he delivered to me, and he accepted the delegation upon the express condition that he would support and vote for Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot. I met Mr. Hulme from Bolton, Mr. E. Taylor from Norwich, Mr. Warburton from Leicester, and several other delegates from England and Scotland, at Mr. Cobbett's house in Catherine street, in the Strand, which was the general rendezvous; and there I first saw Mr. Fitton and Mr. Kaye of Royton, Mr. Bamford from Middleton, Mr. Benbow and Mr. Mitchell from Manchester, and many others. Major Cartwright had, in the meantime, been down to Brighton, personally to ascertain Sir Francis Burdett's opinion upon the subject; and from him the Major learned that he would not support any petitions that prayed for *Universal Suffrage*; that he would support Householder Suffrage and the payers of direct taxes, but nothing farther. When the Major returned he communicated this to Mr. Cobbett, who was requested to use all his influence to prevail upon me to give up Universal Suffrage, and to adopt the plan of Sir Francis Burdett. I had consulted with Mr. Hulme, whom I found an honest and staunch friend of Liberty, and he had agreed to support me in the motion which I had resolved to make at the delegate meeting, for Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot. The Major, as well as Mr. Cobbett, had already done every thing to prevail upon us to give it up for the householder plan, but we were inflexible. This being the situation of affairs, on the day before the meeting was to take place, the Major was very anxious for Mr. Cobbett to attend as a delegate; but to accomplish this was not quite an easy matter, as Mr. Cobbett had not been elected a delegate by either of the petitioning bodies. The Major, however, was never at a loss for a scheme, and his agent or writer, whom he employed at the time, an Irishman, of the name of Cleary, was set to work privately to assemble some members of the *Union*, which had been formed in London by the Major, previous to the formation of the Hampden Club; in fact, the latter sprung out of the former, which was too democratical for the aristocracy, and they consequently set on foot a select club amongst themselves, called the Hampden Club; although I believe, with the exception of the Major and Mr. Northmore, there was not a member amongst them who was at all disposed to follow the example of John Hampden. But, be this as it may, Cleary was ordered to get together, at the Crown and Anchor, the night before the intended delegate meeting, a chosen number of the members of the *Union*, expressly for the purpose of appointing two delegates for the metropolis. Although we were both members of the *Union*, Cleary was strictly enjoined not to communicate either to me or to Mr. Hulme any intention of holding this conclave, which was to have been a snug junto of Westminster men, nothing more nor less than the Rump Committee, who were to assemble at the request of the Major, to appoint Mr. Cobbett a delegate, that he might attend the meeting the next day, purposely to oppose my motion for *Universal Suffrage*, and to move in its stead, that we, the delegates, should adopt the recommendation of the Hampden Club, and support the *householder suffrage* only.

This good piece of generalship could not, however, be carried completely into effect, as one of the invited party communicated it in confidence to Mr. Hulme and myself. We laughed heartily at the intrigue of the old Major and Mr. Cobbett, and agreed that, being members of the *Union*, we would unexpectedly attend the meeting at seven o'clock, without saying a word to any one. We both dined with Mr. Cobbett, and a little before seven we made an excuse for leaving his table, saying, that we had a particular engagement for an hour or two, after which we would return again. Mr. Cobbett strongly opposed our leaving him; but whether he had any suspicion that we were up to the tricks of the Major and himself, I never ascertained. However, off Mr. Hulme and I started together, and we soon arrived at the Crown and Anchor, and desired to be shown into the room where the members of the *Union* were assembled. At first the waiters did not appear to understand us; at length they asked me if we meant Mr. Brooks and Mr. Cleary's room. We replied, "exactly so," and in we marched, to the great consternation of Mr. Brooks, who sat at the head of the table, with Cleary at his right, and surrounded by some half score of as pretty a picked junto for dishing up a little under-plot of the sort, as could have been selected for the purpose in the whole kingdom.

Our unexpected visit, without any invitation, appeared to create very considerable uneasiness, and even dismay. I informed them that, as we were both old members of the *Union*, and had accidentally heard that there was to be a meeting, we did ourselves the pleasure of attending it, although (no doubt from mistake) we were not summoned. This did not at all relieve them from the dilemma in which they were placed. After looking at each other for some time, they cautiously developed the object of the meeting, and with great timidity and doubt Mr. Brooks proposed Mr. Cobbett as "a proper man to be a delegate to represent the Union, at the delegate meeting to be holden the next day." Instead of throwing any obstacle in the way, which they had expected would be the case, I instantly arose and seconded the motion; adding, that I believed Mr. Cobbett to be one of the most proper men in the kingdom to attend such a meeting, and that I proposed Mr. Brooks as a proper colleague for him; and I moved that those two gentlemen should be appointed as the delegates of the Union Society, to maintain their rights at the approaching meeting. Mr. Hulme seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously; upon which we returned to Mr. Cobbett's, and were the first to communicate the result of that select assembly which was got up privately, and from which it was intended that we should have been totally excluded. He appeared astonished, but carried it off with a laugh.

After this, many, many hours were employed by Mr. Cobbett, in endeavouring to prevail upon us to give up the plan of supporting *Universal Suffrage*. He should, he said, propose to the delegates to agree to the *householder plan*; especially as Sir F. Burdett had declared that he would not support the former. I lamented differing from him, but I declared that I would support Universal Suffrage from principle, in spite of all the policy in the world, and in spite of the opinion or whim of all the baronets in the world.

With this determination we left him, and met at the appointed hour, at the Crown and Anchor, on the next day. Major Cartwright and Mr. Jones Burdett were the deputation from the Hampden Club; and there were, in the whole, about sixty delegates from different parts of the kingdom of England and Scotland; but, with the exception of those from Bath, Bristol, and London, they all came from the North.

Major Cartwright was unanimously called to the chair, and he opened the proceedings by informing us, that the Hampden Club had come to the determination of supporting the *Householder Suffrage*; which plan he strongly recommended to the delegates to adopt, particularly as *Sir Francis Burdett had declared that he would not support any petition that prayed for a more extended right of voting*. In truth, the Major, instead of performing the part of chairman, actually became the strenuous and eloquent advocate of the Hampden Club, and their notable scheme of restricting the right of voting to householders and payers of direct taxes to Church and King; and I must in justice say, that I never saw an advocate labour harder than the Major did to carry this point, which I believe he confidently relied upon accomplishing, as he knew that he would have the support of Mr. Cobbett's great talent and weight of influence amongst the assembled delegates.

Mr. Cobbett then rose, and, in a luminous and artful speech, endeavoured to convince the delegates, or rather to bring them over to the same way of thinking. He, as well as the Major, were heard with great attention, but it was with such silent attention as rendered it very evident to me that their doctrine of *exclusion* was listened to by the delegates without any conviction of its truth. It may easily be supposed that I took good care narrowly to watch the contrivances of those who, by their votes, were to decide the great question; many of whom Mr. Cobbett had previously had an opportunity of communicating with, and using his influence upon, in private. After a most ingenious speech, he concluded by moving, that the present meeting was of opinion, that the right of voting for Members of Parliament could be safely and practicably extended only to *householders paying direct taxes* to Church and State, and that it should be recommended to the Reformers throughout the country to petition for a Reform of the Commons' House of Parliament, upon the plan of householder suffrage. If not the words, this was the substance and meaning of the motion.

The moment that Mr. Cobbett sat down, (sat down with perfect silence round him), to my great astonishment up started John Allen, my brother-delegate from Bath, and *seconded the motion* for the EXCLUSION from the right of voting of all persons *except householders and payers of direct taxes*; that is, except they were payers of church and poor rates, and King's taxes. This was the conduct of the volunteer delegate from Bath, although he had received written instructions, from the committee of Reformers of that city, to support *Universal Suffrage*.

As soon as Mr. Allen was seated, I rose to move an amendment to my friend Cobbett's motion, and, in my address to the delegates, I combatted and successfully controverted the *doctrine of exclusion* which had been so forcibly urged by the chairman, and so ingeniously supported by Mr. Cobbett. I modestly and with great deference called to their recollection the language, the irresistible arguments, in favour of Universal Suffrage, which, in his Register, Mr. Cobbett himself had published, within one short fortnight of the time in which I was addressing them. Almost every sentence that I uttered in favour of Universal Suffrage was hailed by the enthusiastic cheers of the great body of the delegates. Mr. Cobbett rose to order, and protested in strong language against my quoting his own words, or any thing he had previously published, in order to controvert his present proposition. I therefore forbore to do so again; not from any conviction of its impropriety or unfairness, but because I wished to conciliate, and because I was quite clear that my amendment would be carried. I concluded by asserting the right of every freeman to be represented in the Commons' House of Parliament, which could only be done by Universal Suffrage; and on this ground I moved that the word *universal* should be substituted for *householder*.

Mr. Hulme seconded the motion, and Mr. Bamford was about to support him, by refuting Mr. Cobbett's arguments with respect to Universal Suffrage being impracticable; but before he had concluded his sentence, Mr. Cobbett rose and said, that what Mr. Bamford had stated had convinced him of the practicability of Universal Suffrage, and consequently he should withdraw his motion, and support Mr. Hunt's amendment. The fact was, that Cobbett plainly saw that his motion would be lost by a large majority, and he had the policy not to press it to a division. I, however, insisted upon having the question put, and it was carried in favour of Universal Suffrage by a majority of twenty to one. The question of Annual Parliaments was also carried unanimously. Mr. Mitchell then moved, that votes should be taken by ballot; this was opposed also by Mr. Cobbett and others, but on a division it was



carried by a majority of more than two to one. When I held my hand up for it, Mr. Cobbett turned to me and said very earnestly, "What! do you support the ballot too?" I answered "Yes, most certainly, to its fullest extent."

These points being decided, and some minor resolutions being passed, the meeting was adjourned; but, as I afterwards found, only to assemble again the next day, where the Major was at his post in the chair, passing various resolutions, which of course I expected would be finally settled that evening. We were, however, surprised to find that the meeting was adjourned to the King's Arms, Palace Yard, opposite Westminster Hall, where it was expected they (the delegates) would assemble from day to day till the Parliament met. This was thought by Mr. Cobbett, as well as by myself, to be not only a useless but a dangerous proceeding; useless, because the main question upon which the delegates met was settled; and dangerous, because it would be taken advantage of by the Government, which would construe such meetings, so continued, into an attempt to overawe the Parliament. Mr. Cobbett declared he would not go near them again; in fact, he had not attended the second day; and he added, that they would all be apprehended, for holding their meetings for an illegal purpose. He and I and Mr. Hulme all agreed, therefore, that as we had arranged those points to deliberate upon which we had been assembled, it was very desirable to dissolve the meeting, but to stir a single step to accomplish this end, Mr. Cobbett positively refused. Mr. Hulme and myself, however, attended, and after the Major had got some of his resolutions passed, I moved that the meeting should be dissolved, and urged my reasons for the measure. Mr. Hulme seconded my motion, and a warm debate ensued, which was maintained with great spirit on both sides, for the dissolution was strongly opposed. However, when the question was put, my motion was carried by a very considerable majority, and the far-famed delegate-meeting was dissolved. It is a curious fact that Mr. Cobbett never noticed these proceedings in his Register.

In the evenings of these meetings, many of the delegates assembled at the Cock, in Grafton-street, by invitation, to meet Dr. Watson, Pendrill, and others of the Spenceans. It appears that they were taken there by ONE CLEARY, an Irishman, who had been an attorney's clerk in Dublin, and who had contrived to be employed as the secretary of the Hampden Club, and who, as private secretary of Major Cartwright, attended the delegate meetings. These private meetings, at the Cock in Grafton-street, took place unknown to me, and were afterwards made a pretence for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act; and, strange to relate, warrants were issued out, by the Secretary of State, against every one of the persons who attended those meetings, *except* the said *Cleary*.

The delegates, as we have already seen, were in town; they had brought up with them petitions, signed by half a million of men, and they were anxious to place them in the hands of some Member of Parliament, who would present them and support the prayer of their petitions. But such a man was not easily to be found. Sir Francis Burdett had promised the Major to come to town in time to present these petitions, or at least some of them, as soon as Parliament met; but when he found that the delegates who had been assembled in his name had declared for Universal Suffrage, and that the petitions in London likewise mostly prayed for Reform upon the principle of Universal Suffrage, he declared that he would not support the prayer of them, neither had he arrived in town on the day previous to the meeting of Parliament.

On the failure of Sir Francis to come forward, Lord Cochrane had been applied to by the Major and Mr. Cobbett, to present these petitions; but he had declined to act in opposition to his colleague, Sir Francis Burdett; every effort had been tried to induce him to do so, but they had been tried in vain. At length I hit upon a plan, which I proposed to Mr. Cobbett. It was this—that on the day when the Parliament met, I would collect ten or twenty thousand people in the front of Lord Cochrane's house, which was in Old Palace Yard, and thus cut off his Lordship's access to the House, unless he would take in some of the petitions. I shall never forget Cobbett's look. "What!" said he, "would you besiege the man in his own house?" I answered, that desperate cases required desperate remedies. "Aye! aye!" said he, "that is very pretty talking, it is like belling the cat. Suppose such a thing likely to succeed with his Lordship, how the devil would you contrive to collect such a number of people there, without his knowing it, so as to avoid them, if he pleased?" I replied, "leave that to me. If you will go to his Lordship's house about one o'clock, and detain him at home, by endeavouring to persuade him to present the petitions, I will undertake to bring ten thousand people to the front of his house by two o'clock,"—the House of Commons being to assemble at three. In fact, there appeared no other alternative; for on the next day the Parliament was to meet, and we had not yet one single Member of Parliament who would present our petitions, all being unwilling, because they prayed for *Universal Suffrage*. After making a hundred excuses, Lord Cochrane had absolutely refused to present them; at least he refused to support the prayer of the petitioners. There being no other chance of accomplishing our purpose, Mr. Cobbett at length adopted my plan, and agreed to make the attempt as a sort of forlorn hope, and accordingly he promised to be at his Lordship's house at the time appointed.

I knew that great numbers of people would be collected, in and about Parliament-street, at that time,

to see the Prince Regent go down to the House, to open the Session of Parliament. I therefore made an arrangement with all the delegates in town, to meet me at the Golden-Cross, Charing-Cross, a quarter before two o'clock, and requested that each man would bring with him his rolls of parchment, containing the petitions. This they all complied with, and met me at the time appointed, in number about twenty; it might be more or less. I informed them that I wished them to march, two and two, down Parliament-street, into Palace-yard, to the door of Lord Cochrane's house, who I had reason to hope would present their petitions, and I begged them to follow me. I then requested my friend Cossens to unroll a few yards of the Bristol petition, which I took in my hand, and proceeded down Parliament-street, at the head of the delegates. The people stared at such an exhibition; and I announced that the delegates were going down to Palace-yard, to get Lord Cochrane to present their petitions. This information was received with huzzas, and the people ran forward to communicate the intelligence to others, so that before we had got opposite the Horse Guards, we were attended by several thousand people, cheering us as they went along. When we arrived at the front of Lord Cochrane's house, there was the largest assembly that I ever saw in Palace-yard, all believing that his Lordship had undertaken to present our petitions.

I knocked at the door, and gained immediate access to his Lordship, with whom, as I expected, I found Mr. Cobbett. He asked what was the matter? I told him that the people had accompanied the delegates, to request his Lordship to present their petitions; to which he replied, "that Mr. Cobbett had been using every argument in his power to prevail upon him to do it, but he could not take such a step without consulting his colleague, Sir Francis Burdett." A great deal was now urged by us to induce him to comply, in which we were most heartily joined by his lady, but all was to little purpose. At length, I led him to the window, and requested him to address twenty thousand of his fellow-countrymen, and tell them himself that he refused to present their petitions; for that I certainly would never inform them of any such thing. Our appearance at the window drew forth some tremendous cheers. "There," said I, "my Lord, refuse their request, if you please; but if you do, I am sure that you will regret it as long as you live. Besides," added I, "I deny the possibility of your getting from your house, without your previously consenting to present their petitions." At length we carried our point, and his Lordship agreed that he would take in the Bristol petition, which was the largest, the roll of parchment being neatly the size of a sack of wheat, and containing twenty-five thousand signatures. It was rolled upon a *bundle of sticks*, tightly bound together, as an emblem of the strength of an united people. His Lordship also now agreed to move an amendment to the address, which had been previously drawn up, in hopes that he might be prevailed on to do so. The moment that his Lordship yielded to our entreaties, I flew down stairs to the door, and announced the intelligence to the assembled multitude, who received it with loud and long continued acclamations, which made Old Palace-yard and Westminster-Hall ring again. I then proposed that the delegates should carry his Lordship in a chair, from his house to the door of Westminster-Hall, if the people would make a passage to allow him to proceed thither in that way. This suggestion was instantly adopted; an arm chair was provided and placed at the door, in which his Lordship was seated, with the Bristol petition and the bundle of sticks rolled up in it. In this manner he was carried by the delegates across Palace-yard, myself leading the way; and he was set down at the door of the House, amidst the deafening cheers of the people, who, at my request, immediately dispersed in peace and quietness to their homes.

As the Prince Regent returned from opening the Session of Parliament, some gravel or a potatoe was thrown at his carriage, the window of which was cracked. This the *Courier* and the venal press made a great noise about the next day; and Lord James Murray, who was in the carriage with the Prince Regent, attended in his seat in the House of Commons, in the evening, and stated that the Prince Regent had been fired at, on his way from the House; and the ball had passed through the window of his coach. This caused a great sensation in the House, and the outrage was attributed to the Reformers, not one of whom do I believe was present; at any rate not one of the delegates was there. This greatly assisted the Ministers to carry their intended measures through both Houses; that of suspending the Habeas-Corpus Act, and that of passing the Seditious Meetings Bill.

Lord Cochrane presented the Bristol petition, and moved the following amendment to the address, which, as a vindication of the conduct of the Reformers, I will here record.

"That this House has taken a view of the public proceedings throughout the country, by those persons who have met to petition for a Reform of this House, and that, in justice to those persons, as well as to the people at large, and for the purpose of convincing the people that this House wishes to entertain and encourage no misrepresentation of their honest intentions, this House, with great humility, beg leave to assure his Royal Highness, that they have not been able to discover one single instance, in which meetings to petition for Parliamentary Reform have been accompanied with any attempt to disturb the public tranquillity; and this House further beg leave to assure his Royal Highness, that in order to prevent the necessity of those rigorous measures, which are contemplated in the latter part of the speech of his Royal Highness, this House will take into their early

consideration the propriety of abolishing sinecures and unmerited pensions and grants, the reduction of the civil list, and of all salaries which are now disproportionate to the services, and especially, that they will take into their consideration the Reform of this House, agreeably to the laws and constitution of the land, this House being decidedly of opinion that justice and humanity, as well as policy, call at this time of universal distress, for measures of conciliation, and not of rigour, towards a people who have made so many and such great sacrifices, and who are now suffering, in consequence of those sacrifices, all the calamities with which a nation can be afflicted."

It is a melancholy subject for reflection, that there was not ONE man to be found in the House that would even SECOND this amendment, which was neither more nor less than a true account of the proceedings of the Reformers throughout the country; and in consequence of this, the motion fell to the ground without a division. Lord Cochrane continued night after night to present these petitions, brought up by the delegates; and the most remarkable event of these times was, that the very night that Lord Cochrane presented the petition from Bath, which especially pointed out the enormous sums annually received by their Recorder, Lord Camden, and which prayed for the abolition of his enormous sinecures; that very night a message was brought down to the House, and it was announced by one of the Ministers *that Lord Camden had actually resigned his enormous sinecure of Teller of the Exchequer*, which did not amount to less than thirty-five thousand pounds a year. No one will doubt that this act of his Lordship was occasioned solely by the resolutions and the petition passed at the Bath meeting. He well knew that Lord Cochrane had presented the Bristol petition, and had stated in the House that he had several other petitions to present; and amongst the number that from Bath, signed by upwards of twenty thousand persons. To prevent, therefore, the discussion which was likely to arise from the presentation of this petition, he anticipated the prayer of it, by resigning his sinecure of Teller of the Exchequer. How often have we been asked by the tools of corruption, what good was there in holding public meetings! We have been everlastingly told that these great public meetings, and the violent petitions passed at them, did a great deal of harm, but that they never produced any good. What these knaves mean by this is, that the House of Commons never attended to the prayers and petitions of the people, and that therefore it was of no use to persevere in petitioning. This, as far as it goes, is very true; the House of Commons never did attend to the petitions of the people for Reform; but yet I boldly answer, that petitioning *has* done some good; that the petition of the first Spafields meeting obtained *four thousand pounds* from the droits of the Admiralty, for the suffering poor of Spital-fields and the metropolis. This was some good. Again, I say, that the petition and the resolutions passed at the Bath meeting, caused Lord Camden to surrender thirty-five thousand a year to the public. This alone was some good. Nor must we stop here. Almost all the petitions in which I was ever concerned, petitioned for the abolition of all sinecure and useless places, and unmerited pensions; and I always particularly denounced the sinecures of the late Marquis of Buckingham, the other Teller of the Exchequer, and prayed and petitioned for its abolition. At the death of the old Marquis *it was abolished*. Does any man of sense and candour believe, for a moment, that this would have ever been done to this hour, if it had not been for the prayers, petitions, and remonstrances of the people? Here, then, is another saving of upwards of thirty thousand pounds a year.—Therefore, I say, that the great public meetings *have* done a great deal of good; and those who promoted them have rendered very considerable service to the country, although they have themselves been the victims of that system of tyranny and oppression, which, in these two instances alone, has had its plunder curtailed in more than *sixty thousand pounds a year*. Add to all this, that the Prince Regent surrendered fifty thousand pounds per annum to the public exigencies. Will any man say that the Regent would have done this, had it not been for the great public meetings held in Spafields and other places? and was this nothing? Again, Mr. Ponsonby resigned his Chancellor's pension of *four thousand pounds a year*. Is this nothing? Here I have shown that, within *three months* of the great meeting first held in Spafields, and between the second and third meeting which was advertised, no less a sum than NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR was surrendered for the public exigencies; and was this doing nothing? To be sure, five persons had been found guilty of rioting on the day of the second Spafields meeting, and Cashman was sentenced to death; but this had nothing to do with the meeting itself, which met only for the purpose of petitioning Parliament, and peaceably separated, after agreeing to a petition, which was signed by *twenty-four thousand persons*, praying for Reform, and the abolition of all sinecures, and a reduction of the public expenditure; which petition had been presented, and received by the House of Commons, before these *surrenders* and resignations of these large sums were made. To be sure, Lord Sidmouth had delivered in the House of Lords a message from the Prince Regent, laying before Parliament the famous green bag, full of precious documents, got up to prove that sedition, conspiracy, and rebellion were close at hand; and that treasonable practices existed in London, and in various parts of the kingdom: upon which a committee was appointed by the Ministers, in both Houses of Parliament, to examine and report upon the contents of the said bag. The result of this was, that Mr. Evans, of Newcastle-street, the Spencean, and his son, were arrested on a charge of high treason!

About this time I received a letter from the Reformers of Portsmouth, requesting me to attend and preside at a public meeting, which they wished to hold in or near that town, to petition for Reform. I

showed this letter to Mr. Cobbett, who said, "I know these people; I will answer that letter for you, and arrange with them all about their meeting. As you are so much engaged in other matters at this time, I will take this trouble off your hands, and you will have nothing to do but to attend the meeting when the day is appointed." This offer I cheerfully accepted, and I thought no more of the business till I saw it publicly announced that a meeting would be held on Portsdown-Hill, on the 10th day of February, *the very day that was fixed for holding the third Spafields meeting*; and that was done without consulting or saying a word to me upon the subject, although I was the only person written to by the people of Portsmouth. It did certainly strike me at the time, that there appeared to be a good deal of trickery and management made use of to keep me from this meeting. As, however, I was never jealous of any one myself, I had no suspicion that my friends were jealous of me, and I took no notice of it, though I was sorry to find that to the people who met on Portsdown, *no apology or explanation* was made for my absence, or at least for the meeting being held on the day that I was at Spafields; and I have reason to think that the people of Portsmouth, who first invited me, were very much disappointed at my not being present, and that they felt themselves slighted by me, which, I assure them, was the farthest thing in the world from my wish or intention.

While my *friends* were acting in this manner, my enemies were not idle, and the agents of Government, in order to injure me in the opinion of the public, not only vilified and abused and libelled me from day to day, in the public newspapers, but they actually caused a placard to be printed and posted all over the metropolis, which was headed "*Mr. Hunt hissed out of the City of Bristol*," and contained all sorts of infamous falsehoods and scurrilous abuse. It appeared from the newspapers that a boy, of the name of Thomas Dugood, had been committed to prison, by a Police Magistrate, for having pulled down one of these posting-bills. I immediately set about an inquiry, to find out the poor boy, to endeavour to relieve him from his imprisonment, and to gain him some redress for the persecution which he had suffered. To discover where the boy was, I went to the Police Office, and, after a great deal of shuffling, I was directed to Coldbath-fields Prison, which, as I subsequently found, was the wrong gaol, the boy having been committed to the New Prison. In the mean time, however, finding that I was resolved to go to the bottom of the business, they had released the boy. At length I found him out at his lodgings, and learned from him that he had been confined for several days among the vilest felons. I took him to the Police Office, to identify the Magistrate that committed him, and there I caused the police officer, Limbrick, to be placed at the bar, for robbing the boy of his books and money at the time he was apprehended. The inquiry ended in the said police officer returning the boy his books and money, and confessing that he was ordered to attend the posting of the said bills, and to protect them from being pulled down after they were posted. The bills were printed at the office of the Hue and Cry, near Temple-bar, and an agent of the Government paid the bill-sticker a large sum for the posting of them in the night. Finding that I could get no redress for the boy at the Police Office, I took him into the Court of King's Bench, and appealed to the Judges. But Lord Ellenborough could do nothing for him. By the stir which I made, however, the case got into all the papers, and the conduct of the Government was completely exposed. I then caused a petition from Dugood to be presented to the House by Lord Folkestone, and another petition of my own, by Lord Cochrane. The Under Secretary of State, Mr. Hiley Addington, promised that the conduct of the Police Magistrate should be inquired into; but ultimately it was ascertained that Lord Sidmouth had no power to interfere. The Magistrate, Mr. Sellon, who had committed the boy, was not a Police Magistrate, but a Magistrate of the county of Middlesex; therefore his Lordship could not interfere, and the boy must, forsooth, proceed *at law* against the Magistrate. I shall here insert the petitions that were presented to the House, which will place this transaction in a clear point of view before my readers, and will show them to what meanness the Government submitted, in order to injure my character with the public, and to destroy the influence which they discovered that I had over the people. This transaction will speak for itself without any further comment of mine. "To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

"The Petition of Thomas Dugood, of the Parish of St. Paul, Covent-Garden, in the City of Westminster,

**"HUMBLY SHEWETH,**

"That your petitioner is a parentless and friendless boy, seventeen years of age, who, until lately seized by two Police Officers and sent to prison by the police, obtained the honest means of living by the sale of Religious and Moral Tracts, which he used to purchase of Mr. Collins, of Paternoster-row.

"That your petitioner has, for more than four months last past, lodged, and he still lodges, at the house of Keeran Shields, who lives at No. 13, Gee's-court, Oxford-street, and who is a carter to Mr. White, of Mortimer-street, and who is also a watchman in Marybone parish.

"That your petitioner has never in his life lived as a vagrant, but has always had a settled home, has always pursued an honest and visible means of getting his living, has always been, and is ready to

prove that he always has been an industrious, a peaceable, sober, honest, and orderly person.

"That, on the 10th of January, 1817, your petitioner, for having pulled down a posting bill, entitled, "*Mr. Hunt hissed out of the City of Bristol*," was committed by Mr. Sellon to the New Prison, Clerkenwell, where he was kept on bread and water and compelled to lie on the bare boards until the twenty-second of the same month, when he was tied, with about fifty others, to a long rope, or cable, and marched to Hicks's Hall, and there let loose.

"That your petitioner has often heard it said, that the law affords protection to the poor as well as to the rich, and that, if unable to obtain redress any where else, every subject of his Majesty has the road of petition open to him; therefore your petitioner, being unable to obtain redress in any other manner for the grievous wrongs done him by the Magistrate of the police, most humbly implores your Honourable House to afford him protection and redress, and to that end he prays your Honourable House to permit him to prove at the bar of your Honourable House all and several the allegations contained in this his most humble petition.

"And your petitioner will ever pray.

"THOMAS DUGOOD." "To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

"The Petition of Henry Hunt, of Middleton Cottage, in the County of Southampton,

**"HUMBLY SHEWETH,**

"That your petitioner, being ready to prove at the bar of your Honourable House, that there has been carried on a conspiracy against his character, and eventually aimed at his life, by certain persons, receiving salaries out of the public money, and acting in their public capacity, and expending for this vile purpose a portion of the taxes; and there being, as appears to him, no mode of his obtaining a chance of security, other than those which may be afforded him by Parliament, he humbly sues to your Honourable House to yield him your protection.

"That your petitioner has always been a loyal and faithful subject, and a sincere and zealous friend of his country. That, at a time, during the first war against France, when there were great apprehensions of invasion, and when circular letters were sent round to farmers and others to ascertain what sort and degree of aid each would be willing to afford to the Government in case of such emergency, your petitioner, who was then a farmer in Wiltshire, did not, as others did, make an offer of a small part of his moveable property, but that, really believing his country to be in danger, he, in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Pembroke, freely offered his all, consisting of several thousands of sheep, a large stock of horned cattle, upwards of twenty horses, seven or eight waggons and carts with able and active drivers, several hundreds of quarters of corn and grain, and his own person besides, all to be at the entire disposal of the Lord Lieutenant; and this your petitioner did without any reserved claim to compensation, it being a principle deeply rooted in his heart, that all property, and even life itself, ought to be considered as nothing, when put in competition with the safety and honour of our country. And your petitioner further begs leave to state to your Honourable House, that, at a subsequent period, namely, in the year 1803, when an invasion of the country was again apprehended, and when it was proposed to call out volunteers to serve within certain limits of their houses, your petitioner called around him the people of the village of Enford, in which he lived, and that all the men in that parish (with the exception of three) capable of bearing arms, amounting to more than two hundred in number, immediately enrolled themselves, and offered to serve, not only within the district, but in any part of the kingdom where the enemy might land, or be expected to land, and this offer was by your petitioner transmitted to Lord Pembroke, who expressed to your petitioner his great satisfaction at the said offer, and informed him, that he, would make a point of communicating the same to his Majesty's Ministers.

"That your petitioner, still actuated by a sincere desire to see his country free and happy, and holding a high character in the world, has lately been using his humble endeavours to assist peaceably and legally in promoting applications to Parliament for a Reform in your Honourable House, that measure appearing to your petitioner to be the only effectual remedy for the great and notorious evils under which the country now groans, and for which evils, as no one attempts to deny their existence, so no one, as far as your petitioner has heard, has attempted to suggest any *other* remedy.

"That your petitioner, in pursuit of this constitutional, and, as he hopes and believes, laudable object (an object for which, if need be, he is resolved to risk his life against unlawful violence)

lately took part in a public meeting of the City of Bristol, of which he is a freeholder; and that though a large body of regular troops and of yeomanry cavalry were placed in a menacing attitude near the place of our meeting, the meeting was conducted and concluded in the most peaceable and orderly manner, and the result of it was a petition to your Honourable House, voluntarily signed by upwards of twenty thousand men, which petition has been presented to, and received by, your Honourable House.

"That your petitioner, who had met with every demonstration of public good-will and approbation in the said city, was surprised to see in the public newspapers an account of a boy having been sent to gaol by certain Police Officers and Justices, for having pulled down a posting-bill, which alleged your petitioner to have been hissed out of the City of Bristol, and containing other gross falsehoods and infamous calumnies on the character of your petitioner, calculated to excite great hatred against your petitioner, and to prepare the way for his ruin and destruction.

"That your petitioner, who trusts that he has himself always acted an open and manly part, and who has never been so base as to make an attack upon any one, who had not the fair means of defence, feeling indignant at this act of partiality and oppression, came to London with a view of investigating the matter, and this investigation having taken place, he now alleges to your Honourable House, that the aforesaid posting-bills, containing the infamous calumnies aforesaid, were printed by *J. Downes*, who is the printer to the Police; that the bill-sticker received the bills from the said Downes, who paid him for sticking them up; that the bill-sticker was told by the said *Downes*, that there would be somebody *to watch him* to see that he stuck them up; that Police Officers were set to watch to prevent the said bills from being pulled down; that some of these Bills were carried to the Police-office at Hatton Garden, and there kept by the officers, to be produced in proof against persons who should be taken up for pulling them down; that Thomas Dugood was seized, sent to gaol, kept on bread and water, and made to lie on the bare boards from the tenth to the twenty-second of January, 1817, when he was taken out with about fifty other persons, tied to a long rope or cable, and marched to Hicks's Hall, where he was let loose, and that his only offence was pulling down one of those bills; that a copy of Dugood's commitment was refused to your petitioner; that your petitioner was intentionally directed to a wrong prison to see the boy Dugood; that the Magistrate, William Marmaduke Sellon, who had committed Dugood, denied repeatedly that he knew any thing of the matter, and positively asserted that Dugood had been committed by another Magistrate, a Mr. Turton, who Mr. Sellon said, was at his house very ill, and not likely to come to the office for some time.

"That your Honourable House is besought by your petitioner, to bear in mind the recently exposed atrocious conspiracies carried on by officers of the Police against the lives of innocent men, and your petitioner is confident that your Honourable House will, in these transactions, see the clear proofs of a foul conspiracy against the character and life of your petitioner, carried on by persons in the public employ, appointed by the Crown, and removable at its pleasure, and that this conspiracy has been also carried on by means of public money.

"And, therefore, as the only mode of doing justice to the petitioner and to the public in a case of such singular atrocity, your petitioner prays your Honourable House that he may be permitted to prove (as he is ready to do) all and singular the aforesaid allegations at the Bar of your Honourable House, and that if your Honourable House shall find the allegations to be true, you will be pleased to address his Royal Highness to cause the aforesaid Magistrate to be dismissed from his office.

"And your petitioner shall ever pray.

**"H. HUNT."**

The day of the third Spafields meeting arrived, and I drove to town in my tandem, and put up at the British Coffee-house livery-stables, in Cockspur-street, where I had for several years before gone with my horses. My trunk was, as usual, taken into a bedroom, where I meant to change my dress previously to my going to the meeting. I had first to walk into Fleet-street on business, and when I got there, I saw *nine pieces of artillery* drawn over Blackfriars-bridge, which proceeded up Fleet-market towards Spafields, attended by a regular company of artillery men from Woolwich. I had called on Major Cartwright as I drove into town, and he informed me that he had heard, from good authority, that a Cabinet Council had been held on Saturday, and that LORD CASTLEREAGH *had proposed to disperse the intended meeting by military force*, but that the other Cabinet Ministers had opposed this measure, and that at length CASTLEREAGH retired, muttering vengeance, and adding that he would take the responsibility upon himself. The Major spoke with great earnestness and feeling, while, if I recollect right, I treated his information rather lightly, saying, that if they killed me I hoped the Major would write my epitaph. When, however, I saw the artillery pass up Fleet-market, in a direction for Spafields, the place of meeting, I began to think more seriously of the matter; but, as I was about to do that which

my conscience approved of, and as I knew that I should not violate any law, I returned towards my inn, certainly in a serious mood, yet determined to do my duty. Not one man that I knew in the whole metropolis would or did accompany me. I called at Cobbett's lodgings, in Catherine-street, and asked the young ones, rather sarcastically, if they meant to attend the meeting? to which they answered, that their father had left positive orders that they should not go over the threshold of the door that day. When I got to my inn, in Cockspur-street, I ordered my servant to get my horses ready, and I went to my bedroom to put on a clean shirt, but I was surprised to find that my trunk had been removed. I rung the bell several times before any one came; at length the *Boots* appeared, instead of the chambermaid, and I demanded the reason of my trunk being removed. He either knew or pretended to know nothing of the matter, but said he would inquire. After he had been absent for some time, I rung again, upon which a stranger appeared, a person whom I had never seen before. He said he was the master of the house, and he had ordered my trunk to be removed; to which he added, that I should not sleep in his house, as it would drive away his best customers. I told him I had slept there occasionally for many years, and was always treated with civility; and drawing out my purse, I said that as he was a stranger I would immediately pay him whatever he might demand for the use of the room. He still, however, persisted that I should leave his house. I demanded my trunk, and declared I would dress there first; he swore I should not, and made an effort to hustle me out of the room. I then told him to keep his hands off, or I would thrash him; upon which he put himself into a boxing attitude, and offered to fight me. He was a little insignificant creature, and I was just upon the point of kicking him out of the room, when I saw a fellow peeping round the corner of the door. It immediately struck me that this was a trap to get me into a scrape, and I paused and drew back in consequence. I told the little gentleman, who said his name was Morley, that I would meet him and talk over the matter at any other time; but, as I was at present engaged, I asked him as a *favour* to let me have my trunk to dress, and I would leave his house in ten minutes. It was agreed that we should meet at Mr. Jackson's rooms, some day in the following week. Thither I went at the time appointed, with perhaps the worst second in the world, Mr. Cobbett. When I got there each told his story, and Jackson proposed that we should go into the fields to settle the dispute, but this was not assented to by either Mr. Morley or myself, and Mr. Cobbett was vehement against my having any thing to do with my antagonist. The affair, therefore, terminated with some smart words, without either of us offering to fight. This affair was, however, blazoned forth in all the morning papers, which, in utter defiance of truth, asserted that I had behaved ill to a man of the name of Morley, who kept the British Coffee-house in Cockspur-street; that we had met by appointment at Jackson's, and that I had refused to fight him. Supposing that I had done so, I should, under all the circumstances, have been perfectly justified; but it was no such thing, the fellow never offered to fight me at any other time but in his own house, where, if I had struck him, I am thoroughly convinced that a police-officer was in attendance, to take me into custody for assaulting a man in his own house; consequently, I should have been detained till the time of the meeting in Spafields had passed; and it would have been made a pretty handle of in the papers the next day, when the public would have been told that, instead of my attending the meeting in Spafields, I had been taken to Bow-street, and detained in custody, for assaulting the landlord of the inn at which I had put up. All that I shall add upon the subject is, that on no occasion in my life did I ever turn my back upon *two* such men as Mr. Morley.

At the time appointed I arrived at the meeting, which was much larger than either of the former meetings. Resolutions were passed, and a petition was unanimously agreed to, praying for Reform, &c. which petition was placed the same evening in the hands of Lord Folkestone, by Mr. Clarke, who had been for the third time our chairman; and which petition was presented to the House of Commons the same night, by his Lordship. I was accompanied by the people to Hyde-Park Corner, where I took my leave of them, and returned to my house at Middleton Cottage; the whole of these three meetings in Spafields having been held in the most peaceable and orderly manner, without the least disturbance, or one single breach of the peace having been committed by any person that attended it, notwithstanding all the infamous falsehoods that were published in the newspapers to the contrary. The truth is, that I have seen ten times more disturbance, disorder, and tumult, at one Common-Hall, in the city of London, where the Lord Mayor presided, than there was at all these meetings put together.

While these things were going peaceably on out of doors, and petitions were daily and numerously pouring in from all parts of the kingdom, particularly from the North of England, and from Scotland, the two Houses of Parliament were in their way not inactive. The committees that were appointed made their report, and bills were immediately brought in to suspend the Habeas-Corpus Act, and to prevent seditious meetings; which bills were, with very faint opposition, agreed to. It ought not to be forgotten, that on this occasion the Whigs took a most prominent part against the people, and that they were quite as loud and as violent against the Reformers as the Ministers were. To be sure the people had committed one inexpiable crime. They had by their steady, peaceable, and persevering conduct, frightened the Whig leader, Mr. Ponsonby, out of his sinecure of 4,000 l. per annum, which he held in consequence of his having been Lord Chancellor of Ireland, during the Whig administration, in the year 1807. The cunning Scotchman, Erskine, who had been for the same short period Lord Chancellor of

England, was also pressed very hard to follow the example of his Irish friend; but Sawney was of a more tenaciously grasping nature, and he *stuck to the ship*, determined to partake of the plunder as long as she would swim. It was for this that the Whigs wreaked their malice upon the Reformers, and that Mr. Brougham and his confederates appeared to run a race every night which should most abuse and calumniate them.

The plot being ripe, Watson, Thistlewood, Preston, and Hooper, were committed to the Tower for high treason. On the other hand, meetings were held in Westminster, and in the city of London, to petition against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. The following petition of mine was also presented to the House of Lords, by Lord Holland. I was below the bar at the time his Lordship presented it, immediately before Lord Sidmouth rose to move the passing of the Seditious Meetings Bill, and I shall never forget the look that his Lordship, the Secretary of State, gave me; for I stood right in front of the bar, and within a few yards of him.

"To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

"The Petition of Henry Hunt, of Middleton Cottage, in the County of Southampton,  
"HUMBLY SHEWETH,

"That your petitioner, who had the honour to be the mover of the petitions at the recent meetings held in Spafields, one of which petitions has been received by his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and two of which petitions have been presented to, and received by, the Honourable the House of Commons, has read, in the public prints, a paper entitled a Report of the Secret Committee of your Right Honourable House, and which Report appears to your petitioner, as far as his humble powers of disentanglement have enabled him to analyse the same, to submit to your Right Honourable House, as solemn truths, the following assertions; to wit:

"That the first public meeting in Spafields, which had for its ostensible object a petition for relief and Reform, was closely connected with, and formed part of, a Conspiracy to produce an insurrection for the purpose of overthrowing the Government.

"2. That Spafields was fixed upon as the place of assembling, on account of its vicinity to the Bank and the Tower; and that, for this same reason, *'care was taken* to adjourn the meeting to the 2d of December, by which time it was hoped that preparations for the surrection would be fully matured.'

"3. That, at this second meeting, flags, banners, and all the ensigns of insurrection, were displayed, and that, finally, an insurrection was begun by *persons collected in the Spafields*, and that notwithstanding the ultimate object was then frustrated, *the same designs still continue to be prosecuted with sanguine hopes of success*.

"4. That a large quantity of Pike-heads had been ordered of one individual, and that 250 had actually been made and paid for.

"5. That *Delegates from Hampden Clubs in the Country* have met in London, and that they are *expected* to meet again in March.

"That, as to the FIRST of these assertions, as your petitioner possesses no means of ascertaining the secret thoughts of men, he cannot pretend to assert, that none of the persons, with whom the calling of the first Spafields meeting originated, had no views of a riotous or revolutionary kind; but he humbly conceives, that a simple narrative of facts will be more than sufficient to satisfy your Right Honourable House, that no such dangerous projects ever entered the minds of those who constituted almost the entire mass of that most numerous meeting. Therefore, in the hope of producing this conviction in the mind of your Right Honourable House, your petitioner begs leave to proceed to state: that he, who was then at his house in the country, received, a short time before the 16th of November last, a letter from Thomas Preston, Secretary of a Committee, requesting your petitioner to attend a public meeting of the distressed inhabitants of the metropolis, intended to be held in Spafields on the day just mentioned; that your petitioner thereupon wrote to Thomas Preston to know what was the object of the intended meeting; that he received, in the way of answer, a newspaper called the Independent Whig, of November 10th, 1816, containing an advertisement in these words; to wit: 'At a meeting held at the Carlisle, Shoreditch, on Thursday evening, it was determined to call a meeting of the distressed Manufacturers, Mariners, Artizans, and others of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and parts adjacent,



in Spafields, on Friday, the 15th instant, precisely at 12 o'clock, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning the Prince Regent and Legislature, to adopt immediately such measures as will relieve the sufferers from the misery which now overwhelms them. (*Signed*) JOHN DYALL, Chairman, THOMAS PRESTON, Secretary.' That your petitioner, upon seeing this advertisement, hesitated not to accept of the invitation; that he attended at the said meeting; that he there found, ready prepared, a paper, called, to the best of his recollection, a *memorial*, which some persons, then utter strangers to him, proposed to move for the adoption of the meeting; that your petitioner, perceiving in this paper, propositions of a nature which he did not approve of, and especially a proposition for the meeting going in a body to Carlton House, declared that he would have nothing to do with the said memorial; that your petitioner then brought forward an humble petition to the Prince Regent, which petition was passed by the meeting unanimously, and which petition, having been by your petitioner delivered to Lord Sidmouth, that Noble Lord has, by letter, informed your petitioner was immediately laid before his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. And your petitioner here begs leave further to state, upon the subject of the aforementioned memorial, that *John Dyall*, whose name, as *Chairman* of the Committee who called the meeting (and of which Committee Thomas Preston was Secretary), having, *before the meeting took place*, been called before Mr. Gifford, one of the Police Magistrates, had *furnished Mr. Gifford with a copy of the said memorial*, and that that copy was *in the hands of Lord Sidmouth at the moment when the meeting was about to assemble*, though (from an oversight, no doubt) neither the Police Magistrates nor any other person whatever gave your petitioner the smallest intimation of the dangerous tendency or even of the existence of such memorial, or of any improper views being entertained by any of the parties calling the meeting, though it now appears, that the written placards, entitled "*Britons to Arms*," are imputed to those same parties, though it is notorious that that paper appeared in all the *public prints* so far back as the month of *October*, and though, when your petitioner waited on Lord Sidmouth with the petition of the Prince Regent, that Noble Lord himself informed your petitioner, that the Government were fully apprized before-hand of the propositions *intended* to be brought forward at the meeting. So that your petitioner humbly begs leave to express his confidence that your Honourable House will clearly perceive, that if any insurrection had taken place on the day of the first Spafields meeting, it would have been entirely owing to the neglect, if not connivance, of those persons who possessed a previous knowledge of the principles and views of the parties with whom that meeting originated.

"With regard to the SECOND assertion, namely, that '*care* was taken to adjourn the meeting to the 2d of December,' your petitioner begs leave to state, that it will appear upon the face of the proceedings of that day, that there was nothing like previous *concert* or *care* in this matter; for, that a resolution first proposed to adjourn the meeting to the day of the meeting of Parliament, and then to meet in *Palace-yard*, of course *not so much in the vicinity of the Bank and the Tower*, and that when this resolution was awarded so as to provide for a meeting on the 2d of December on the same spot, it was merely grounded on the *uncertainty* as to the time when the Parliament might meet. Your petitioner further begs leave to state here, as being, in a most interested manner, connected with this adjournment of the meeting, that, when your petitioner waited on Lord Sidmouth with the petition to the Prince Regent, *he informed his Lordship that the meeting was to re-assemble on the 2d of December*, when your petitioner had engaged to carry his Lordship's answer and deliver it to the adjourned meeting, and that his Lordship, so far from advising your petitioner not to go to the said meeting, so far from saying any thing to discourage the said meeting, distinctly told your petitioner, that your petitioner's presence and conduct appeared to his Lordship to have prevented great possible mischief. Whence your petitioner humbly conceives, that he is warranted in concluding, that there did, at the time here referred to, exist in his Lordship no desire to prevent the said meeting from taking place.

"Your petitioner, in adverting humbly to the THIRD assertion of your Secret Committee, begs to be permitted to state, that the persons who went from Spafields to engage in riot on the 2d of December, formed no part of the meeting called for that day; that these persons came into the fields full two hours before the time of meeting; that they left the fields full an hour before that time; that they did not consist, at the time of leaving the fields, of more than forty or fifty individuals; that they were joined by sailors and others, persons going from witnessing the execution of four men in the Old Bailey; that your petitioner, who had come up from Essex in the morning, met the rioters in Cheapside; that he proceeded directly to the meeting, which he found to be very numerous; that there a resolution was immediately proposed by your petitioner, strongly condemning all rioting and violence, which resolution passed with the most unanimous acclamations; that a petition, which has since been signed by upwards of 24 thousand names, and received by the House of Commons, was then passed; and that the meeting, though immense as to numbers, finally separated, without the commission of any single act of riot, outrage, or violence. And here your petitioner humbly begs leave to beseech the attention of your Right Hon. House to the very important fact of a *third* meeting having taken place on the 10th instant, on the same spot,

more numerously attended than either of the former; and that, after having agreed to a petition, which has since been received by your Hon. House, the said meeting separated in the most peaceable and orderly manner, which your petitioner trusts is quite sufficient to convince your Honourable House that if, as your Secret Committee reported, *designs of riot do still continue to be prosecuted with sanguine hopes of success*, these designs can have no connection whatever with the meetings for retrenchment, relief, and Reform, held in Spafields.

"That as to the *pike-heads*, your petitioner begs leave to state to your Right Honourable House, that while he was at the last Spafields meeting, an anonymous letter was put into the hands of your petitioner's servant, who afterwards gave it to your petitioner; that this letter stated that one Bentley, a smith, of Hart-street, Covent-Garden, had been employed by a man, in the dress of a *game-keeper*, to make some spikes to put round a fish-pond; that the game-keeper came and took a parcel away and paid for them; that he came soon afterwards and said the things answered very well, and ordered more to be made; that, in a little while after this, the said Bentley was *sent for to the Bow-street Office*, and, after a private examination, was desired to make a pike, or spike, of the same sort, and to carry it to the office, which he did. That your petitioner perceives that the information which it contains may possibly be of the utmost importance in giving a clue to the strict investigation, which he humbly presumes to hope will be instituted by your Honourable House into this very interesting matter.

"That as to the FIFTH assertion, that *Delegates* have assembled in London, from *Hampden Clubs* in the country, your petitioner has first to observe, that these persons never called *themselves* Delegates, and were not called *Delegates* by any body connected with them; that they were called, and were, '*Deputies from Petitioning Bodies*' for Parliamentary Reform; that your petitioner was one of them, having been deputed by the petitioners at Bristol and Bath; that these Deputies met three times, and always in an open room, to which newspaper reporters were admitted; that an account of all their proceedings was published; that they separated at the end of three days, *not* upon a motion of *adjournment*, but of absolute *dissolution*, which motion was made by your petitioner, who is ready to prove that your Committee has been imposed upon as to the tact that these Delegates, or Deputies, are expected to meet again in March.

"That your petitioner is ready to prove at the Bar of your Right Honourable House, all the facts and allegations contained in this petition, and that he humbly prays so to be permitted there to prove them accordingly.

"And your petitioner will ever pray.

"HENRY HUNT."

As soon as this petition was read, Lord Sidmouth rose, apparently very much disconcerted, another petition having been presented previously from Cleary, the secretary of the Hampden Club, denying, and *offering to prove the falsehood* of, many of the statements in the Report of the Committee. His Lordship made a long and violent speech against the measures and views of the Reformers, and called upon the House to put them down, or the Constitution and Government of the country would be soon overthrown. He never attempted to controvert or deny one word that was contained in my petition, just presented; but he said, that the Government of this country had often to contend with discontented and turbulent men; "*but those who took the lead in these meetings, although their steps were directed with caution, yet* (turning round and looking me full in the face) *THEY WERE MEN OF MOST EXTRAORDINARY ENERGY, and PURSUED THEIR COURSE WITH AN INFLEXIBLE PERSEVERANCE AND COURAGE that was worthy a better cause.*" This was said in the most lofty tone, and so evidently directed to me, that it drew all the eyes in the House upon me; and it was with considerable difficulty that I could resist the inclination I felt to declare, that it was impossible there could be a *better cause* than that of contending for the freedom of the whole people. His Lordship, in alluding to cheap seditious publications, such as *Cobbett's* and *Sherwin's Registers*, and *Wooler's Dwarf*, which at this time were published at twopence each, in great numbers, lamented that the law officers of the Crown could find nothing in them that they could prosecute with any chance of success. *Cobbett's Register* alone, at this period, attained a sale of fifty thousand copies a week. The Bill was passed, with very little opposition, to prevent any public meeting being held to petition for Reform, or any alteration in the government or constitution of the country, without its being called with the concurrence of the magistrates, &c. &c.; which was nothing more or less than prohibiting all public meetings, except such as the corrupt tools of Government chose to sanction. While the Acts were in progress, a public county meeting was called by the Sheriff of Hampshire, upon a requisition, signed by the Marquis of Winchester, the Marquis of Buckingham, old George Rose, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Sturges Bourne, Lord Malmsbury, Lord Fitzharris, and all the great Tory leaders of the county, "to consider of an address to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, on the outrageous and treasonable attack made upon his Royal

Highness, on his return from opening the session of Parliament." The meeting was held on the 11th of March. Sir Charles Ogle moved an address, which was seconded by Mr. Asheton Smith; both did this in dumb show, for not one word that they said could be heard. Lord Cochrane moved an amendment, which was opposed by Mr. Lockhart; and as the Sheriff refused to put his Lordship's amendment, declaring it to be irregular, Mr. Cobbett addressed the assembled thousands, and moved an amendment, which I seconded. This amendment merely proposed to add, after the word *Constitution*, in the original address, "as established by Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Habeas Corpus, for which our forefathers fought and bled." This amendment Mr. Lockhart and his gang declared to be most seditious and wicked, and the Sheriff, a little whipper-snapper fellow, of the name of Fleming, absolutely refused to put it to the meeting. A show of hands took place upon the original ministerial address, and, as far as my judgment went, it was lost by a considerable majority. The Sheriff, however, decided that the address was carried by *three to one*; but when a division was called for, the Sheriff retired in haste from the meeting, amidst the yells and groans of the multitude, and the Under-Sheriff actually threatened to take Lord Cochrane and myself into custody, if we offered to address the meeting any more.

The Seditious Meeting Act had not yet received the Royal Assent, but these worthies knew the clauses which it contained, and the perpetual Under-Sheriff, a Mr. Hollis, appeared determined to act upon it by anticipation. Perhaps there never was such a disgraceful scene before exhibited at a public meeting in England. The most foul, the most unfair, the most outrageous, and most blackguard conduct was resorted to by the ministerial tools and dependants of the county, amongst whom were all the parsons, all the half-pay officers, and all the dependants of the corrupt corporations of Andover and Winchester. A person of the name of Loscomb, and another, Feston, of Andover, the former one of the Andover corporation, the latter a half-pay lieutenant, were eminently conspicuous as the brazen tools of those who called the meeting. Such a scene of riot, confusion, and uproar had never, I believe, disgraced a county meeting. These ministerial dependants appeared determined to carry every thing with a high hand, now that they found laws were passing to justify and protect arbitrary and corrupt power.

On the 12th of this month, the sailor Cashman was executed at the front of Beckwith's, the gunmaker's, shop, on Snow-hill. Nothing will show the distressed situation of the poor and friendless better than the answer which Cashman made to the Judge, after he was found guilty, upon being asked "why sentence of death should not be passed upon him." His memorable words were:—

"My Lord—I hope you will excuse a poor friendless sailor for occupying your time. Had I died fighting the battles of my country I should have gloried in it: but I confess that it grieves me to think of suffering like a robber, when I can call God to witness that *I have passed days together without even a morsel of bread rather than violate the laws*. I have served my King for many years, and often fought for my country. I have received *nine wounds in the service*, and never before have been charged with any offence. I have been at sea *all my life*, and *my father was killed on board the Diana frigate*. I came to London, my Lord, *to endeavour to recover my pay and prize-money*, but being *unsuccessful*, I was reduced to the greatest distress, and being poor and pennyless, I have not been able to bring forward witnesses to prove my innocence, nor even to acquaint my brave officers, or I am sure they would all have come forward in my behalf. The gentlemen who have sworn against me must have mistook me for some other person (there being *many sailors in the mob*); but I freely forgive them, and I hope God will also forgive them, for I solemnly declare that I committed no act of violence whatever."

Cashman, who had been accustomed to witness scenes of death, met his fate with determined courage, exclaiming, "Huzza, my boys, I'll die like a man!" Calling to the executioner, he said, "Come, Jack, let go the jib-boom." "Now, my lads, give me three cheers when I trip." The few remaining seconds of his existence he employed in similar addresses, and at the instant when the fatal board fell from beneath his feet, he was cheering. This exhibition was calculated to harden the distressed inhabitants of the metropolis who witnessed his execution, and thousands felt and exclaimed that it was much better and easier to encounter death in such a way than to endure the lingering torture of being starved to death. The multitude did not fail to shower down their deepest execrations against all those who were concerned in this affair, and the public were so exasperated at what was justly called the murder of this man, that, had the poor fellow shewn any disposition to avoid that death which he appeared rather to court, there is little doubt but he would have been rescued, in spite of the host of constables and police officers that attended the execution.

A system of terror was now the order of the day. The reader will bear in mind that a Bill had passed both Houses of Parliament, and only waited for the Royal Assent, to make it death to attend any seditious meeting; at least to make it death not to disperse when ordered by any Magistrate or public officer. It was under such auspices that a public county meeting for Wiltshire was called, and appointed to be held at Devizes. This meeting was called, as in Hampshire, by the great aristocratical leaders of

both the Whig and Tory factions. It will be remembered that I had given Mr. Cobbett a freehold, to enable him to take part in the Wiltshire county meetings, all of which, that had been subsequently held, he had attended with me, and at all these Wiltshire county meetings the resolutions and petitions proposed by myself and Mr. Cobbett had been invariably carried. The meeting now in question was to be convened the latter end of March, or the beginning of April. On my leaving London, Mr. Cobbett had promised to meet me at Devizes, on the day appointed. I went to Devizes, with my friend Mr. William Akerman, of Potney, at whose house I had slept the preceding night. When we arrived at the Castle Inn, the place of rendezvous, I was surprised to find that, though it was rather late, my friend Cobbett had not arrived; yet, so thoroughly convinced was I that he would not disappoint me, that I was determined to wait at the inn for him, and not to go to the Town-hall, the place of meeting, till he joined me. As I wished to know what time the business was to commence, Mr. Akerman, at my request, went down to the Bear Inn, where the Sheriff and my Lord Pembroke, with all those who had called this meeting to address the Prince Regent upon his miraculous escape from the potatoe (which I had now ascertained was thrown by Mr. JOHN CASTLES), had assembled. He very soon came back, almost out of breath, to inform me, that the party, with the Sheriff at their head, were just proceeding to the Hall; and with a loud laugh he informed me that the *Courier* newspaper, which had just arrived in the coffee-room of the Bear Inn, had an article in it which stated that "COBBETT WAS ARRIVED AT LIVERPOOL, AND HAD TAKEN HIS PASSAGE FOR AMERICA" "I at once," said he, "declared this to be an infamous lie, and I offered to bet any of the party 50\_l., which I put on the table, that Mr. Cobbett would be in Devizes, and attend the meeting, within one hour from that time." Fortunately for my friend Akerman, not one of the gang assembled had confidence enough in the rascally *Courier* to induce them to take the bet; had they done so, my friend would have lost his 50\_l. note.

*I was thunderstruck* for a moment, as Mr. Cobbett had never given me the slightest intimation of his intention, and till I saw the *Courier* I could not believe it possible that any man could act so treacherously towards one for whom he had expressed, not only in public but in private, the most unbounded confidence. For the first time it now occurred to me, that there was something *mysterious* in Mr. Cobbett's conduct when I last saw him, which was a few days before in London. It was, however, of no use to ponder or to despair, and therefore, I jumped up out of my chair, in which I had been almost riveted by the unexpected intelligence, and earnestly inquired of Mr. Akerman if he had actually made the bet. He replied, "no one would accept it, or I should most willingly have made it." "Well," said I, "I am glad that none of the villains had confidence in the rascally Editor of the *Courier*, but whether it be true or false, I will go to the meeting." It is much more easy for the reader to imagine what were the sensations which I felt as I walked to the meeting, than it is for me to describe them. I had for many years acted in strict union with Mr. Cobbett, both in Wiltshire and Hampshire, at all the public meetings that had been held in these counties; I had placed implicit and unbounded confidence in him, and I thought that on his part such feelings had been reciprocal; but a thousand occurrences which hitherto had made no impression on me now rushed upon my mind, and half convinced me that I had been deceived.

We reached the Town-hall soon after the business of the day was begun; it was crammed to suffocation, and a great many persons who could not gain admission, were standing at the outside. By the assistance of my friend Akerman, I contrived to get near enough to the entrance of the hall, to expostulate with the Sheriff, for attempting to hold a county meeting in such a confined situation; adding, that a great number of people were totally excluded, and amongst that number was Mr. Richard Long, one of the Members for the county. Upon this, Mr. Long replied, that he was very well off, and that he did not wish to gain admittance. This, to be sure, caused a great laugh, but I persevered by moving an adjournment, and after a great deal of noise and squabbling, the Sheriff agreed to adjourn the meeting to the Market-place, whither we proceeded, and Mr. Sheriff Penruddock took his station upon the steps of the Market-cross, where he was surrounded by such a gang of desperadoes as never disgraced a meeting of highwaymen and pickpockets in the purlieu of St. Giles's. This gang was headed by the notorious John Benett, of Pyt-House, from whom they took the word of command, when to be silent and when to bellow, hoot, hallow, and make all sorts of discordant vulgar noises, such as would have degraded and lowered the character of a horde of drunken prostitutes and pickpockets, in the most abandoned brothel in the universe.—The plan of operations had been previously arranged, and a set of wretches had hired themselves, to play the most disgraceful and disgusting part. Lord Pembroke, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, had ordered and commanded all his tenantry, and even his tradesmen, to attend the meeting to oppose HUNT. A butcher at Wilton, who served his Lordship's family with meat, pleaded his previous engagements on business of importance, as an excuse for his non-attendance; but he was informed by his Lordship's agent, that if he did not appear at Devizes, to oppose any proposition that was made by *Hunt*, he should never serve the family at Wilton-house with another joint of meat. The gang thus raked together was led on by regular leaders; Black Jack, alias the Devil's Knitting Needle, was commander in chief; Bob Reynolds, a scamping currier of Devizes, who was a sort of lickspittle to Old Salmon, the attorney, was bully major; and a jolter-headed farmer, of the name of Chandler, who lived on the Green, was captain of a gang of little dirty toad-eaters of the

corporation; in fact, every scamp who lived upon the taxes—every scrub who had an eye to a place—and every lickspittle of the corrupt knaves of the corrupt and vile rotten-borough of Devizes, took a part in these un-Englishman-like, partial, cowardly, and disgraceful proceedings. Every expectant underling, every dirty, petty-fogging scoundrel showed his teeth, opened his vulgar mouth, and sent forth the most nauseous and disgusting ribaldry. A time-serving, place-hunting, fawning address to the Prince Regent was moved by some person. It was stuffed with all sorts of falsehoods, and was supported by John Benett, of Pyt-House, in an address to the people, which contained nothing but a violent, dastardly, and unmanly attack upon me, attributing to me all the disturbances that had taken place in London, and roundly asserting that I was the cause of Cashman's being brought to the gallows. By the independent portion of the meeting, this harangue was listened to with considerable impatience; but he had, nevertheless, every sort of fair-play shown him, from their natural conviction, that, as I was present, I should have an opportunity of replying to these infamous charges: it was this conviction alone that procured him a hearing, and gave him an opportunity of uttering such diabolical and premeditated falsehoods. But the fellow knew that he was safe, and that he could lie and abuse with impunity. He knew that his dirty hirelings would protect him against a reply from me, and he, therefore, gave a-loose to a most malignant spirit. The moment that I attempted to speak, the yell began. About fifty or sixty, or perhaps one hundred, out of two or three thousand persons assembled, commenced a bellowing and braying like so many of their four-legged brethren, and they were so well marshalled, and acted so well in concert, that it was impossible for the great majority of the people to gain me a hearing. At length the Sheriff, Hungerford Penruddock, Esq. who looked ready to faint with shame at what he was about to do, dissolved the meeting, and ordered the Riot Act to be read, which, I believe, little whiffing Mr. Salmon made a sort of dumb-show or pretence to do, and then immediately gave orders to have me taken into custody. Now began such a contest as was seldom if ever seen; the descendants of a *petty-fogging attorney*, a *bankrupt tailor*, a *usurious splitfig*, &c. &c. &c. *William H—s*, *William S—n*, *Stephen N—t & Co.* who were members of the corporation, and now become *great men*, (good Lord, what would their forefathers have said to have heard this?) aided by Reynolds, Chandler, and Co. made a desperate effort to seize me, but all their attempts were in vain; the gallant, brave, and kind-hearted people of Wiltshire surrounded me with an impenetrable phalanx; they formed an irresistible bulwark with their persons, which proved an impregnable barrier against all the assaults of the constables, bullies, and blackguards, that were urged on by the Mayor and his myrmidons—a "*matchless crew*." I was hoisted upon the shoulders of those who stood in the centre of this brave phalanx, and had a perfect view of all their operations. The gang repeatedly returned to the charge upon the people, with staves and clubs, but the people stood as firm as rocks, upon whom they never made the slightest impression, the people all the while acting solely on the defensive. At length, two ruffians, Reynolds and Chandler, seized my brother by the collar, one on each side; he was standing as a spectator, taking no part but that of looking on. My brother smiled at first, but finding them in earnest, and being surrounded by the whole gang, who began to drag him off, he let fly right and left, and, as if they had been shot, the two bullies fell like slaughtered calves upon the ground, and before the people could get to his assistance, the whole cowardly gang had taken flight. This all occurred in the Market-place, in the front of the Bear-inn, where the Sheriff and the notable founders and supporters of the infamous time-serving petition were assembled, and from the windows of which they had the mortification of witnessing the defeat, the disgrace, and the complete routing of their hirelings, and the victory of the people, who, instead of taking advantage of their success; instead of inflicting summary vengeance upon those who had assaulted them in such a cowardly manner; instead of chastising those who had conducted themselves in such a partial, corrupt, unmanly, and disgraceful way; they peaceably bore me off to my inn. The pot-valiant Jack-in-office, Mr. Mayor, soon after followed us, with a fresh posse of constables, and repeated the reading of the Riot Act under my window, amidst the jeers, the scoffs, the hootings, and the execrations of the people, who had committed no act of riot, or breach of the peace, to justify such a measure. From the window of the Castle-inn, where I was dining with some friends, I addressed the people, and they peaceably dispersed, although they kept a good look-out to see that there was no attempt made to annoy or interrupt me. Had any attempt of that sort been made, I believe, from what I have since heard, that the consequences might have proved very serious to those who had been concerned in it.

One circumstance that occurred in the evening afterwards is worth recording. One of my tenants, Mr. George Jones, who keeps the George Inn, in Walcot-street, Bath, had driven his niece up to Devizes in the morning, for the purpose of seeing me on some business, and also to attend the meeting. As an Englishman, he of course wished for a fair hearing of both parties, and standing near the bullies Bob Reynolds and his brother, at the time they were conducting themselves so foully towards me, he admonished them in a way which they did not appear to relish. Mr. Jones drove home in his gig, in the evening, with his niece, and just as they were entering Melksham, they passed Reynolds's brother, who resided there at the time, in the capacity of a paid serjeant of the Melksham troop of yeomanry. As soon as Mr. Jones had passed him, Reynolds rode up to the back of the gig, and, without giving him any notice, coward and assassin like, he struck him a heavy blow on the back of his head, with a thick bludgeon. Fortunately Mr. Jones wore a high-crowned stout beaver, which saved his head, but the

crown of the hat was severed in two by the blow. Jones no sooner recovered himself, than he turned-to, and with his gig whip he gave a sound flogging to the dastardly ruffian, who sued in vain for mercy, till the whip was completely demolished. Some gentlemen, who happened to be passing at the time, and saw the whole transaction, offered to give Mr. Jones their address, and recommended him to take legal proceedings against the villain, they volunteering their services as witnesses. But Mr. Jones very coolly replied, "I have taken summary redress, and paid the fellow in his own coin; therefore it will be only necessary to give such a scoundrel '*rope enough and he will hang himself.*'" Mr. Jones's observation was not only very just, but most prophetic. *The loyal and the worthy Mr. Reynolds, a few months afterwards, to save Jack Ketch the trouble, put an end to his own existence, by hanging himself in a malt-house.* If what I hear of another of them be true, it is not very improbable that he may soon follow his example.

As I drove home in the evening from this meeting, I could not avoid seriously reflecting upon the critical situation in which I was placed by my friend Mr. Cobbett having deserted me, and stolen away to America. I had been constantly and faithfully acting with him for many years, up to the very hour of his flight, for I had now no doubt in my mind that the report in the *Courier* was true. I felt indignant and mortified in the extreme, at this desertion on the part of my friend, at such a moment, and without his ever having given me the slightest reason to suspect him of any such intention. My first resolve was this:—let what will come I will never fly my country, never desert my countrymen in the hour of peril. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, the Seditious Meetings Bill had been passed and received the Royal Assent. Many of the brave Reformers of Lancashire had, in consequence, been arrested and thrown into dungeons, particularly those who had attended in London at the delegate meeting; therefore I expected to share the same fate, but still I made up my mind to this, that I would never run from the danger; and, as I never secreted myself, but was always to be met with any day, and every day, I was also resolved that no one should with impunity treat me in the way in which Messrs. Knight, Bamford, Healy, and others had been treated. They had not merely been arrested, but their houses had been broken into, and they had been dragged out of their beds in the dead of the night, and hurried away in irons to the dungeons of the Boroughmongers.

When I reached home I informed my family of what it was possible might happen, and this I did, not to alarm them, but to put them upon their guard, that they might not lose presence of mind in case of any nocturnal assault being made upon my house. In my own mind I had firmly settled how to act: if any messenger from the Secretary of State's office came to apprehend me in the *day time*, I should attend him very quietly and peaceably; but if any nocturnal visit was intended me by the officers of the ministers, I was determined to resist and to defend my house to the last moment; because by so doing they would leave themselves without the shadow of an excuse, as they always knew when and where I was to be found in the face of day. Desperate as this plan may appear in the eyes of many, it was that on which I was determined to act. I took with me every night into my bed-room a brace of loaded pistols, that never missed fire, and my double-barrelled gun, charged and fresh primed; and any number of men less than four would not have gained admittance alive into my house in the *night time*. I had violated no law, I had committed no breach of the peace, and I was resolved that I would maintain the right of an Englishman's house being his own castle, in spite of Seditious Meeting Bills, or the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Fortunately, my coolness and determination were never put to the test. I, however, never went to bed for many weeks without expecting the enemy, and cautioning my family not to be alarmed in case of any nocturnal visit being paid me.

Mr. Cobbett's leave-taking address was published, in which he pretty clearly intimated what would be the fate of every man that remained in the country, who had been an active leader of the people in promoting petitions for Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot; and he avowed the dread of a dungeon to be the cause of his leaving the country! As he had never communicated the slightest hint to me of his intention, so he never made the slightest allusion to me in his leave-taking address, any more than as if he never had such a friend. This, at the moment, I considered as most unkind, unfeeling, and treacherous. But, upon reflection, I esteem it the highest compliment that he could have paid me; for it clearly proves that he knew the honesty of my nature too well, to expect that I should have ever sanctioned so dastardly, so thoroughly unmanly a proceeding as that of flying from my country, and abandoning the Reformers to the uncontrolled malice of their enemies, and that, too, at such a moment of difficulty and danger.

Yet, doubly wounded as I was by the conduct of Mr. Cobbett, wounded both personally and as a friend of the people, I, nevertheless, soon endeavoured to find at least some excuse for him, and I made up my mind not to act the same part towards him which he had done towards me. Real friendship is not easily alienated from its object. On the very first opportunity, therefore, I rode over to Botley, to make inquiries about his circumstances, and, if possible, to serve my friend, notwithstanding his desertion of me. I found that Mr. Tunno, the mortgagee, had taken possession of his estate, and that the landlord of the farm which he occupied, and of the house in which he had lived, had seized for rent; and, as might

naturally be expected under such circumstances, every thing was going, or rather gone, to rack; all his family had abandoned the place, and were in London. I called upon the only person in Botley that used to be intimate with him, from whom I received such an account as made me form a worse opinion of mankind than I had ever before entertained. He spoke in opprobrious terms of his former acquaintance, saying that he, Cobbett, had run away in every one's debt, and, with an oath, (most brutally, as I felt it) he declared "hanging was too good for him." I never spoke to this man afterwards; neither was I deterred by his language from proceeding in my endeavours to serve my absent friend. I therefore rode on to Mr. Hinxman's, of Chilling, near Titchfield, who had been for some time a friend of Mr. Cobbett's; and when I got there I was much delighted to find him as zealous for him as he had been. He was not merely a professing friend, but he wished to show his friendship by deeds as well as words, and he had been devising the best means of showing his friendship. As the result of his reflections, he put into my hands an address, which he had drawn up, to the people of England, proposing a subscription of one shilling each person, to pay off the debts of Mr. Cobbett, and thus to enable him to return to his country, free from pecuniary embarrassments. This address was penned in a masterly style, and in every sentiment which it contained, I fully concurred. I promised to do every thing that lay in my power to promote its object, and to attend a public meeting, which was to be called at the Crown and Anchor, for the purpose of promulgating it; and I agreed to take the chair upon the occasion, provided that Major Cartwright and Lord Folkestone declined the offer of it, which was, in the first instance, to be made to them. With the firm impression on my mind that this plan would be carried into full effect, I left Mr. Hinxman, perfectly satisfied with the result of my journey of three days to serve my friend. Mr. Hinxman sent his address to London, as proposed; but the parties applied to immediately put a negative on the proposition, assigning as a reason, that it would be establishing a very bad precedent, to raise a subscription amongst the Reformers to pay the debts of a man who had deserted the cause of the people, by flying from the country at a moment of peril and difficulty; and thus at once was a stop put to the laudable intentions of Mr. Hinxman. There was, indeed, no possibility of giving any satisfactory answer to such a reason, and the project was in consequence altogether abandoned. By this time upwards of SIX HUNDRED PETITIONS had been presented to the House of Commons, praying for retrenchment, a reduction of the army, and for a RADICAL REFORM IN PARLIAMENT. These petitions were signed by nearly a million and a half of people. The only answer that was given to them was, as the reader has already seen, passing the Seditious Meetings Bill, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. These petitions were suffered silently to be laid upon the table of the House; nothing that they prayed for was ever granted, and so far from the Honourable House, or any of its members, ever answering the allegations contained in them, they never even condescended to discuss any of the matters contained in them.

Although Mr. Cobbett, the great literary champion of the Radical Reformers, had deserted and fled to America, yet others sprung up. About this period Mr. Wooler began to publish his Black Dwarf, and Mr. Sherwin published his Weekly Register. These were two bold and powerful advocates of Reform, and Mr. Wooler, as well as Mr. White, of the Independent Whig, lashed Mr. Cobbett most unmercifully for his cowardice in flying his country, and abandoning the Reformers at such a critical moment. Mr. Wooler was excessively severe, and he laid it on with an unsparing hand. I lost no opportunity to vindicate the character of my absent friend, and in doing this I attacked Mr. Wooler as violently as he attacked Mr. Cobbett, for which Mr. Wooler denounced me as a spy of the Government!

Some time in May, 1817, a Count Maubrueil was tried at Paris for robbing the Queen of Westphalia, when it came out that he had been hired by an accredited agent to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon, on his journey to Elba. Maubrueil afterwards published in London the details of this transaction. On the 17th of May, Messrs. Watson, Thistlewood, Hooper, and Preston, were brought into the Court of King's Bench, to plead to charges of high treason. Mr. Hone also appeared, and complained of the illegality of his arrest on Lord Ellenborough's warrant. On the 30th of May, the Right Honourable Charles Abbott resigned the situation of Speaker of the House of Commons, and Mr. Manners Sutton was chosen in his place. On the 6th of June, Mr. Wooler was tried for a libel on Ministers; he was acquitted in consequence of doubts having arisen respecting the validity of the verdict of guilty delivered in by the foreman of the jury, although some of them were not agreed in the verdict.

On the 9th of June, Messrs. Watson, Thistlewood, Preston, and Hooper, were conveyed from the Tower, where they had been confined, to the Court of King's Bench to be tried for high treason. Watson was tried first. His trial lasted *seven days*, at the end of which he was acquitted. The Attorney-General then gave up the prosecution against the others. The principal witness called by the Crown was the famous Mr. *John Castles*, the worthy gentleman who feigned asleep in my room at the Black Lion, Waterlane, on the evening after the first Spafields meeting, and the same worthy who met me in Cheapside, as I was driving to the second meeting on the second of December, and who kindly invited me to go to the Tower with him, which he assured me was in the possession of young Watson. What follows is curious and worthy of notice. It was publicly known that *Castles* was to be the principal witness against his former associates. I therefore sent a gentleman, to inform the attorney for the

prisoners, that I had become acquainted with certain circumstances, relating to this Mr. Castles, which would be of infinite service to his clients. This message was sent a fortnight before the time fixed upon for their trial; but the 9th of June approached without my having received any answer. I sent a second message, by another person; but, as no notice was taken of it, I sent a third person, on the 8th, to say that I was in town, and unless it was intended to hang the prisoners, I expected that I should be subpoenaed, and that I was come to town on purpose to give my evidence. In fact, this third message rather conveyed a demand than a request, and I was next morning subpoenaed.

Another very extraordinary circumstance made up part of this transaction. Mr. Brougham had been applied to, and I understood had positively refused to become counsel for the prisoners, and Mr. Wetherell and Mr. Copley were retained; the former a most decided rank thick and thin supporter of the Ministers; the latter, as I was informed, not only a decided opponent of the Ministers, but an avowed Republican in principle. Mr. Samuel Shepherd was Attorney, and Mr. Gifford Solicitor-General; and they of course were counsel for the prosecution. When I saw Mr. Wetherell at his chambers, which was in the evening of the 9th, after the first day's proceedings were over, and stated to him what I knew of Castles, he at once declared that my testimony would be most important, and would most likely save the lives of the prisoners; and he expressed great astonishment that this had never been communicated to him before. From what I stated to him, he was enabled to draw out of Mr. Castles' own mouth, in cross-examination, the full proof of his own infamy, which he never could have done without it. After I had given my testimony in court, I saw plainly that the jury had made up their minds to acquit the doctor, who was the first and only one put upon his trial. At the end of seven days, the time Watson's trial lasted, the jury returned a verdict of *not guilty*, and the Attorney-General then gave up the prosecution against the other three prisoners. It is very curious that it was never communicated to the prisoners that I was in attendance to give evidence on their behalf; but when they saw me in court, they actually thought that I was subpoenaed as an evidence for the Crown against them.

Lord Sidmouth now brought in a Bill for the further suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act. In the House of Commons, Sir Francis Burdett called the attention of its Members to the conduct of *Oliver, the spy*, and of others who had been employed by Government, and who had excited distressed persons to riot in the North. The county of Middlesex petitioned in vain against the renewal of the Habeas-Corpus Act. The Bill passed, and Parliament was prorogued by the Prince Regent on the 12th of July.

On the 31st of July, a public dinner was given at the Crown and Anchor, to celebrate the acquittal of Watson, Thistlewood, Preston and Hooper, at which dinner I was in the chair, and upwards of a hundred persons sat down to it. Hooper very shortly after died; he fell a victim to a cold which he caught in prison.

Such was the increasing distress of the people in the metropolis, that the Old Bailey Calendar contained above 400 prisoners for trial; forty-five more than were ever before known. In this year, 1817, the Bank of England prosecuted *one hundred and twenty-four* persons for forgery, or uttering forged notes. This speaks for itself, and shews the state of society produced by the Pitt system. On the 22d of September the Bank of England announced their intention of paying in cash all their small notes issued before the first of January 1817. This was a beginning of calling in one pound Bank of England notes.

In this year the Common Hall of the City of London had petitioned against the passing of the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act, and they had instructed their members to support the prayer of their petitions, by opposing the measure. As usual, their members set the prayers of the Livery at defiance, and supported the Bill; at least Curtis and Atkins did; and as for Alderman Combe, the Whig Member, he was not in the House during any of the debates. When the Common Hall assembled the next time, the Waithmanite faction intended to move a vote of censure against Curtis and Atkins, for not attending to the instructions of their constituents; and of course they contrived to procure from Alderman Combe a letter to be read in the Hall, apologising for his non-attendance in his place in the House of Commons, in consequence of very ill health, which had prevented his attendance there ever since he had been last elected, and which, in all probability, would prevent his attending there any more. This game had been carried on for a long time by the Waithmanites, and I had made up my mind, whenever an occasion should offer, to enter my protest against the City of London being represented by a person who never attended the House, and who was rendered incapable of doing so from ill health. I had several times carried some resolutions in my pocket, to the meetings of the Livery, but no opportunity had offered for me to bring the subject forward before. As soon as this letter was read from Alderman Combe, which stated his inability to attend in his place, &c. &c., I told Sir Richard Phillips, who was standing near me upon the hustings, that, as soon as the usual vote of thanks was moved to Alderman Combe, I should move some short resolutions, which I shewed him, as an amendment: "1st, thanking the Alderman for his past honourable services: 2nd, sympathizing with him on his illness, and lamenting the cause of his incapacity to attend the House of Commons: and 3rd, respectfully calling upon him to resign his seat, to give the Livery an opportunity of electing an efficient Member of



Parliament as their representative, in his stead." I asked Sir Richard if he would second these resolutions; he replied no, he could not, but he would ask Mr. Waithman to do it; and away he went in the honesty of his heart, and told Mr. Waithman that I was going to move such resolutions as an amendment to the usual vote of thanks to Alderman Combe, and he very innocently asked him if he would second them? I shall never forget the city hero's look; he turned round as if he would have bit Sir Richard's nose off, and in a *whisper* that I could hear all across the hustings, replied, "NO *it is meant to cut my throat.*" Sir Richard, surprised and mortified at the mistake which he had unintentionally made, returned me the resolutions, without saying a word, as he saw that I had heard Waithman's answer, which I was laughing at most heartily. I knew that Mr. Waithman would not have joined me in any measure, even if it had been to save the City of London from an earthquake, or its citizens from the greatest of all calamities, a famine; but at the first view of the thing, I did not perceive how this amendment was calculated to injure or cut the throat of Mr. Waithman. The dread of this mighty sacrifice did not, however, deter me from doing my duty. The vote of thanks having been moved to Alderman Combe, I stepped forward and proposed my resolutions as an amendment; this I did in the most respectful and handsome manner towards the Alderman, giving him much greater credit for his past exertions, as our City Member, than he in fact ever merited.

I had never consulted one single individual as to the propriety or the policy of this measure, and it was by mere accident that I mentioned it upon the hustings to Sir Richard Phillips; therefore, I was not prepared with any one to second my proposition, but it was, nevertheless, received by the Livery with strong marks of approbation. Never were resolutions more appropriate, or that came more pat to suit the occasion. I saw that this was a happy opportunity to appeal to the honest sentiments of the Livery, and I seized it, as an act of justice to them and to the public, without the slightest intention to annoy or injure Mr. Waithman, and without the slightest intention of gratifying the factious views of any party. It certainly struck me, and it had all along struck me, that if Mr. Alderman Combe could be prevailed upon to resign during the second mayoralty of my worthy friend Alderman Wood, the latter would be selected by the citizens of London as his successor, without the chance of a successful opposition against him; but I had never given him the most remote hint of my thoughts or designs, neither did I expect that the friends of Waithman, amongst the Livery, would be prevailed upon to do any thing that was likely to promote the election of Alderman Wood. All that under such circumstances I ever considered was, how best to perform my duty, when I was before the public, either at a meeting of the people in Spafields, or in Palace-yard, or at a meeting of my fellow Liverymen in the Guildhall. I never personally cared whether my motions were carried, or whether they were rejected, my main object, being to perform my duty boldly and conscientiously. This I did on the occasion to which I have alluded, without knowing whether any one would second my proposition or not.

Before, however, any one could come forward as my supporter, Mr. Waithman presented himself to the Livery, and endeavoured, by every art that he was master of, to prevail upon the citizens not to countenance my proposition. His own little gang attempted to get him cheered, but all their efforts proved fruitless. He coaxed, he wheedled, he begged, and he prayed; when that did not take, he blustered, bullied, and threatened them, but all would not do; he bullied one moment, and cringed the next, with equal ill success. He and his friends began to feel for once that the force of truth was likely to prevail over fraud, trickery, and cunning. At last, when he found that none of these had a chance of prevailing, he turned about and resorted to tactics. He declared that the proposition was irrelevant, that the Livery were taken by surprise, that they were not assembled for any such purpose, and that another Common-Hall ought to be convened, on purpose to take my resolutions into consideration; and he boldly called upon the Lord Mayor, Wood, to prohibit the resolutions being put to the Livery. I never saw Mr. Waithman labour so hard in my life; if his existence had been at stake, he could not have shown more anxiety.

The Lord Mayor now came forward, and in the most unequivocal manner declared that the resolutions were not only perfectly in order, but that he considered them most proper to be submitted to the consideration of the committee upon that occasion. I thought Waithman would have bursted a blood-vessel with rage and mortification at this decision of the Lord Mayor, who was not to be bullied out of doing his duty honestly, particularly when he saw that it received the sanction of so great a portion of his fellow-citizens. The question was at length put, and the resolutions were carried by a very large majority, amidst such a round of cheers as I seldom ever heard in the Common-Hall. I then moved that the Lord Mayor be requested to convey the resolutions of the Livery to Mr. Alderman Combe, as soon as he could conveniently do so, and also to call another Common-Hall, to communicate the answer of the worthy Alderman to his constituents. This likewise was carried, with a faint opposition from the puny faction that surrounded the mortified and discomfited great little man. The Lord Mayor then stepped forward, and promised that the wishes of the Livery should be promptly executed; and, after he had given this promise, the meeting broke up.

The Lord Mayor kept his word, and waited upon Mr. Alderman Combe with the resolutions, the same

night, before the faction had time to plan any scheme to frustrate the wishes of the Livery. The result was, that the Alderman was glad of an opportunity of sending in his resignation of an office which he was totally incompetent to fill, and, in the most honourable and patriotic manner, he wrote his formal compliance with the wishes of his constituents, and delivered it into the hands of the Lord Mayor, who immediately offered his services to his fellow-citizens, to supply the vacancy. They estimated correctly the value of those services, and, in spite of the most pitiful arts, the most diabolical misrepresentations, and the most unblushing falsehoods of the Waithmanite faction to prevent it, the worthy Alderman Wood was unanimously elected, during his second Mayoralty, one of the Representatives in Parliament for the City of London. I must own that I gloried more in this successful single-handed effort of mine, spontaneously made, and so honourably carried into execution, than I ever did in any public act of my life. When the Alderman was elected, I addressed my brother Liverymen, and I boldly predicted that he was elected for life; that his conduct in the House of Commons would be such as would secure him a seat for the City of London, as long as human nature would enable him to attend his duty in Parliament. This was more than five years ago, and I believe that the prediction has not only been made good up to this time, but that it is more likely to be confirmed than ever it was. Such, however, was the prejudice of a certain party in the city against Radicals, and particularly against me, that the worthy Alderman never dared to thank me publicly for what I had done to serve him. In truth I never looked for any such thing; I only did my duty; and I had full confidence, whenever the worthy Alderman was called upon, he would not fail to do his duty. My confidence was not misplaced, as has been fully proved by the conduct of the Alderman, in the case of the persecuted Caroline, the injured Queen of England. Nor has the worthy Alderman ever flinched from his duty during the persecutions of the "Captive of Ilchester."

In consequence of the diabolical machinations of the villain Oliver, the spy, who was imprudently introduced to the Reformers in the North by Mr. Mitchell, one of the delegates who had attended the Major's meetings in London—in consequence of this infamous fellow's hellish plots, a number of the distressed inhabitants of Derbyshire and Nottingham were instigated to acts of violence and riot, which, although of a most contemptible nature, were magnified by the Government into acts of treason and rebellion. In pursuance of what had been planned by the villain Oliver and his employers, these deluded men were immediately made prisoners, and committed to Derby Gaol; upon a charge of high treason. Unfortunately, one Jeremiah Brandreth, who was at the head of those rioters, very wantonly fired a shot at random through the back window of a farm-house, where the inmates had refused to admit them, or to deliver them any arms, which the rioters, scarcely one hundred in number, had demanded. It so happened that a boy was killed by this random shot, which gave a colouring to the proceedings of the Ministers, and created a great prejudice against these deluded men; and therefore, instead of indicting some of them for a foolish and contemptible riot, and prosecuting Brandreth for murder or manslaughter, the Government proceeded against them for high treason. This petty riot, which was put down without any military force, was consequently blazoned forth and proclaimed through the country as an insurrection and open rebellion, and great preparations were making to bring the prisoners to trial for high treason, and a special commission was appointed to be held at Derby to try them. The Ministers had failed in their attempt, in London, to spill the blood of Watson, Thistlewood, & Co. whose lives were saved by the honesty of a Middlesex Jury. The despicable riot in London, ridiculous and contemptible as it was, yet it was ten times more like a premeditated insurrection than the Derbyshire riot; yet an honest Middlesex Jury, with Mr. Richardson, of the Lottery-office, as their foreman, refused to find the instigators of it guilty of high treason. This having been the case, the Ministers were determined to try their hands at a trial for high treason in the country. It was, in fact, necessary to bring forward at least some shadow of a pretext for the infamous measures which had been passed by the Parliament, and for the still worse conduct of the Secretary of State, who had thrown such a number of the Reformers into dungeons, the secret dungeons of the Boroughmongers, where they were lingering under the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act, without any charge being brought against them, and without being brought to trial, there being nothing to prove against them. I repeat, that it was necessary to make a show, a pretence, a sort of justification, for these proceedings; and the riot which had taken place at Pentridge, in Derbyshire, was the thing fixed upon for that purpose, as they could not trump up a better.

Brandreth, Turner, Ludlam, and thirty-five or six others, were accordingly thrown into prison, and indicted for high treason. These poor fellows, thus assailed and immured in a gaol, were without a friend to protect them, and to see that they had a fair trial, and in fact were without the means of paying counsel and witnesses, to enable them to stand any chance of having a fair trial. In this forlorn and wretched situation, their attention, as a *dernier resort*, was directed to *me*. I was a perfect stranger to every one of them, but they had heard of my exertions in the cause of the people, and they prevailed upon their attorney, Mr. Wragg, of Belper, to write to me, and inform me of their deplorable and forlorn situation, and to request that I would endeavour to raise a public subscription, to enable them to fee counsel, and to pay for bringing their witnesses to the trial, which Mr. Wragg assured me they were totally incompetent to do, they being all poor men, without any money or friends to help them.

I received this letter at Middleton Cottage, where I had been for some time peaceably enjoying the sports of the field. I showed it to a friend, who was visiting me at the time, and he at once pronounced it to be a trap, to inveigle me into a participation of their crimes. At any rate, he thought my only prudent course would be, either to take no notice of the letter, or to reply that I knew nothing of the parties, and would have nothing to do with them. I put the letter into my pocket, and said no more to him upon the subject, as his cold, calculating, prudent advice did not correspond with the feelings of my heart. My visitors and my family had retired to rest, when I deliberately sat down, and answered the letter of Mr. Wragg by the return of post. Those who are of the same opinion with my prudent friend will ask, why did you do so? I will tell them *why*. I said to myself, here are some fellow-creatures in distress, they have not a living soul to aid them; the whole power and weight of the Government are mustered against them; and although they are totally unknown to me, and although I cannot countenance or approve of their foolish and wanton proceedings; yet, as the law of England presumes every man to be innocent till he is convicted of guilt, and as they have appealed to ME in their distressing situation, as the only man to whom they can look up for assistance; shall I, because there appears to be personal danger and difficulty in the undertaking, shall I refuse or neglect to do my best to enable them to obtain a fair trial? shall I abandon them, and refuse to obey the call of humanity, and, because they are poor and defenceless, turn a deaf ear to the prayer of those that are in trouble and in prison? I asked myself these questions, and without a moment's pause, my tongue obeyed the impulse of my heart, and I exclaimed "forbid it, Heaven, rather let me perish this instant, than harbour a thought so base, so unfeeling, and so opposite to every act of my life!" I therefore acknowledged Mr. Wragg's letter, and told him that, although he was a perfect stranger to me, and although the prisoners were all strangers to me, yet my heart would not allow me to entertain any unworthy suspicions of him; and as the lives of our fellow-creatures were at stake, I would do every thing in my power to enable them to obtain a fair trial. With this view I would, by the same post, write to London, and endeavour to procure a public meeting, for the purpose of raising a subscription to assist them, lamenting, at the same time, my own want of the means to assist them.

Before I went to bed I wrote to Mr. Cleary, who was secretary to Major Cartwright and the Hampden Club, and also a sort of general secretary to the Westminster committee. I desired him to lay a copy of Mr. Wragg's letter before some of the patriotic friends of liberty, justice, and humanity, in London, and to get them to call a public meeting, at the Crown and Anchor, on the following Monday, to raise a subscription, to enable the prisoners to fee counsel before their trial, which was to take place at Derby, in the following week. I added, "if there should be any *hitch* or difficulty, still by all means to call the meeting, and I will pay for the room and the advertisements, and take the chair myself, if no other person more eligible offers." I wrote also to Mr. West, the wire-worker, in Wych-street, to the same effect, and to inform him of what I had written to Cleary. Mr. West was the person who had taken a very decisive, active, and manly part in assisting Dr. Watson and Thistlewood, in getting up their defence, when they were imprisoned under a similar charge; therefore, I thought him the most likely man I knew in London or Westminster to promote such a measure.

The reader will bear in mind that I did not get Mr. Wragg's letter, urging me to come forward in behalf of these poor fellows, till five o'clock in the afternoon, when I returned home to dinner from shooting; that before I went to bed, I wrote an answer to the attorney of the prisoners, unhesitatingly promising to do all that lay in my power to serve them; and that I also wrote to Mr. Cleary and Mr. West, to procure a public meeting, and, without any reservation on my part, to call it in *my name*, in the metropolis; and the reader will not fail to recollect, that the HABEAS CORPUS ACT was still suspended, and that the Seditious Meeting Act was in full force.

I received an answer from Mr. Cleary, to say that he had seen the friends of liberty in Westminster, and that the meeting would be appointed, to be held at the Crown and Anchor, as I wished it, on the following Monday, and he would take care to have it advertised, &c. I also received a letter from Mr. West, who said he had seen Cleary, and that the meeting would take place, according to my request, on the Monday. I wrote by return of post, to Mr. Wragg, to inform the prisoners what I had done, and how far I had succeeded and I promised to be at the meeting, and to proceed to Derby in the mail, as soon as the result was known.

On the Sunday, just as I was preparing to set off to London to attend this meeting, I received a letter from Mr. Cleary, to say that he had consulted the friends of liberty in Westminster, who were unanimously of opinion, that it would be highly impolitic to call a public meeting upon such an occasion, in which opinion he fully concurred; and that the worthy Major Cartwright also thought it extremely improper for the Reformers to identify themselves with HOUSE-BREAKERS AND MURDERERS. Mr. Cleary also added, that the Derby rioters had by their conduct done the greatest injury to the cause of Reform, and that he felt so indignant at them, that, instead of assisting there by a subscription, he could almost GO DOWN AND HANG THEM HIMSELF. I have not the letter at hand, but this was the substance of it. I must do Mr. West the justice to say, that he did every thing in his

power to procure a meeting, and if he had not, as well as myself, been *tricked* into the idea that the meeting would be held, he would have called it himself.

I was extremely mortified at being thus defeated in my plan, at being thus swindled out of the meeting. Cleary's first letter was evidently written with a view to prevent my going to London, and personally convening the meeting; because he saw, from the manner of my first letter, that I was in earnest, therefore it was necessary to deceive me into a belief that what I was desirous of would be done, as, otherwise, he knew that I would be instantly on the spot to carry it myself into execution. Well, it was too late now to think of going to London to get a meeting, and, as I had been thus disappointed, it might by most people have been thought sufficient for me to have written a letter to Mr. Wragg, to inform him of the circumstance, and there would have been at once an end to all trouble or expense on my part. Now I beg the reader to mark what was my conduct. Instead of abandoning these poor fellows to their fate, and merely writing a letter to say how I had been disappointed by the Westminster patriots, or rather pretended patriots, I ordered my servant to get my horses and gig ready immediately, and I started off the same evening across the country to Newbury, on my road through Abingdon and Oxford, towards Derby. I arrived at Leicester on the Tuesday evening, previous to the trials commencing on the Thursday following; and what was very curious, Judge Dallas and myself were shown into the same room, at Bishop's, at the Three Crowns. Although we did not appear to know each other, great marks of civility were mutually exchanged, and if I had not been otherwise engaged, it is possible we might have spent the evening together; and I have often thought how very curious the conversation might have proved, if we had compared notes. We were both going the next day to Derby, both going to attend the trials of Brandreth and Co.; but how widely different would it have been found was the object of our journey. He, a judge, going to hang the prisoners; I, an humble individual, going to do all that lay in my power to save their lives, by procuring for them a fair trial. We, however, did not remain in company; the fact was, it soon got wind at Leicester who I was; one of the waiters knew me, and to my surprise, as I was sitting with Mr. Thompson, of the *Chronicle* office, and Mr. Warburton, who had been one of the delegates at the London meeting, a deputation waited upon me, to request that I would spend the evening with a number of gentlemen of Leicester, who had assembled in a public room in the inn, to receive me. This invitation I accepted, and, accompanied by my two friends, I spent a few hours very pleasantly, amongst an assemblage composed of the most respectable men belonging to all parties in Leicester.

On the following day I reached Derby, where I found out Messrs. Wragg, of Belper, and Bond, of Leicester, the attorneys for the prisoners, and communicated my ill success as to collecting any subscriptions in London, by means of the public meeting which was proposed. I, however, offered my services in any way in which they might think that I could be useful; but I soon learnt from them that it was a hopeless case, that the men had been led into a disgraceful riot, urged on by the villain Oliver, and his accomplices; that they were worthy, poor men; Brandreth, their captain, a mere helpless pauper, and that there was no chance of saving them. Those who had a little property, had sold their *little all*, even to their beds, as had also their relations, to raise money enough to pay for the expenses, of the witnesses, who had been subpoenaed on their behalf; but the whole did not amount to enough to include the fees of counsel. For the fees, however, we calculated that might be raised at some future time, as it was hoped that, under such circumstances, the gentlemen of the long robe would not press for their immediate payment.

I saw some of the witnesses, and amongst others one who had been acting in concert with Oliver, a regular hired spy, who described to us what passed between them and Lord Sidmouth, when he and Oliver presented their bill of expenses, after they had performed their job. It appeared that his Lordship abused Oliver for a great fool, for being detected by the people in his communications with Sir John Byng, who had the military command of the district. O, it was a horrible plot, to entrap a few distressed, poor creatures to commit some acts of violence and riot, in order that the Government might hang a few of them for high treason! The projectors of it had been frustrated in London, by a Middlesex Jury, who had refused to find Dr. Watson guilty of high treason, although what was proved against him was ten thousand times more like high treason than that which was proved against these poor deluded men. But it was thought necessary to sanction the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act, and the other infamous encroachments that had been made upon the liberties of the people, by the sacrifice of some lives for high treason, and the Government paid the freeholders of the county of Derby, the disgraceful compliment of selecting that county as the scene of their diabolical operations; and, as it will be hereafter seen, they were correct in their calculations.

The next morning I waited upon the attorneys, previous to their going into Court, when I found them in rather an awkward dilemma. Mr. COUNSELLOR CROSS, who, by some unaccountable means or other, had been sent for from Manchester, to take the *lead* of Mr. *Denman*, who was the other counsel employed, had just sent to the attorneys to demand ONE HUNDRED POUNDS as his fee, before he went into Court, declaring, that he would not stir a peg till he received it. I knew nothing of this fellow

at the time, and as the attorneys, particularly Mr. Bond, appeared to place great confidence in him, *Mister Cross* had the one hundred pounds paid into his hands immediately. Thus, by the cupidity of Mr. Cross, were these poor fellows deprived at once of those means which ought to have been spent in procuring them witnesses for their defence. I immediately waited upon Mr. Denman at his lodgings, and sent up my name, to say that I had some particular information to communicate that might be of service to the prisoners; but I could gain no access to Mr. Denman. I had this information from the brother of Turner, who was afterwards executed. I returned to the attorneys, and I soon found that my interference was considered officious. They refused to take me into Court with them, or at least they pretended that it was against the rules for attorneys to take any person with them into the Court. I was, therefore, obliged to find another mode of admittance; and I ultimately, by dint of perseverance, got in with considerable difficulty, after having been violently assaulted and grossly insulted by the officers of the Court, under the direction of a Jack-in-office, who acted as Under Sheriff, the real Under Sheriff having resigned, *pro tempore*, on purpose to become Solicitor for the Crown, in the prosecution against the prisoners. I, however, at length succeeded in getting a seat in the front of the body of the Court, and I heard the whole of the trial of Brandreth. The whole of the evidence merely went to establish the fact, that one of the most contemptible riots took place that ever deserved the name of a riot, whether with respect to the numbers engaged, or the total want of influence of those who took a lead in it. As for poor Brandreth, who was called the Captain of the Insurrection, he was nothing more nor less than a contemptible pauper, without power, or talent, or courage; and it was distinctly sworn that the whole gang *fled* upon the appearance of *one* soldier!

The means taken to procure tractable juries were the most barefaced and abominable, and as the jurors were mostly selected from amongst the tenantry of the Duke of Devonshire, the prisoners had not the slightest chance of escape, even if Mr. Cross had done his duty; but, so far was he from doing it, that he actually confessed the guilt of his clients, and urged as a palliation, that they were led into the insurrection by reading the writings of Cobbett. The principal witnesses, in my opinion, for the prisoners, were never examined; and, although Mr. Denman made an eloquent appeal to the jury, yet he could not remove the impression which had been left upon the minds of the jurors and of the whole Court by the *precious pleadings* of Mr. Cross. Brandreth and four others were found guilty of high treason. Brandreth, Turner, and Ludlam, were executed shortly afterwards, and Mr. Cross was speedily promoted to a silk gown, as a King's Sergeant at Law.

The avenging hand of Providence, however, caused the announcement of the *execution of these men*, and *the Death of the PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF SAXE-COBURG AND HER INFANT SON*, to appear in the newspapers of the day at one and the same time. The death of this Princess was so mysterious, and attended with such singular circumstances, that I dare not trust myself to write upon the subject. The whole nation appeared to mourn her loss, much more, I believe, in consequence of her having always espoused the cause of her unhappy and persecuted mother, than from any conviction or well-grounded hope that any public good would ever be derived from her being our future Queen. A certain party at Court could not disguise the satisfaction which they felt at being released from a most persevering and troublesome advocate of the Princess of Wales, her mother. But the nation had this delightful comfort, that the gallant PRINCE OF SAXE-COBURG bore his loss with great fortitude, and was likely to survive his wife for many, many years, to enjoy the spending of FIFTY-THOUSAND POUNDS A-YEAR, which had been settled upon him for life, in case the Princess should *pop off*.

I have omitted one circumstance which occurred in the spring of the year, and which I shall now briefly notice. Mr. Sergeant BEST, who was one of the Members for Bridport, was appointed Chief Justice of Chester, a post which he had been long seeking for in vain. His client, Colonel Despard, had been executed for nearly fifteen years, yet Mr. Sergeant had only been promoted to a silk gown; and in spite of every effort to become a Judge, he had been frustrated, it is understood, by the objections raised by the Lord Chancellor. He, therefore, procured a seat in Parliament, and became a violent oppositionist to the Government. At length, the Prince Regent, it is said, demanded his promotion, and he was appointed to the Chief Justiceship of Chester, which is the stepping stone to the Bench. He vacated his seat for Bridport, as a matter of course; and, as it was expected he would be returned again for that borough without any opposition, I thought it would be a good opportunity to remind him of the fate of Despard, and of his own apostacy, in quitting his pretended opposition as soon as he was offered a place of profit under the Crown. Without further ceremony, therefore, I drove to Bridport, about three days before the election commenced, and announced my intention of opposing the election of the Welch Judge, and former counsel for Despard. Though I was not known to a single person in the town of Bridport, yet I was received with great kindness by a considerable portion of the electors, and was at once promised the support of some of the most respectable of them. The Welch Judge, however, did not make his appearance; but in his stead came a young 'Squire Sturt, the son of BEST'S former patron. As I had avowedly attended only for the purpose of opposing and exposing the Chief Justice of Chester, I now, at the request of some of those whose support against Best I chiefly relied upon, declined to offer myself in opposition to the young 'Squire, who possessed a majority of the houses in which the small

voters lived, and whose father had always been a great favourite in the borough. I gained great credit for the manner in which I did this, in an address to the electors from the hustings, declaring that my only object was to expose the delinquency of their former Member, the new Welch Judge. The reader will observe that I had no acquaintance with Mr. Sergeant Best, nor had even in the remotest degree ever had any connection with him, or come in contact with him, either in the way of his profession or otherwise. I was solely actuated by public duty, without the slightest cause for personal dislike to the lawyer. Perhaps those who have read what I have written since I came here, will not now be at a loss to account for the vindictive hostility of the venerable Judge towards me, when I was brought up for judgment, and since I have been here. They may now account for that Judge's voting for my having SIX YEARS imprisonment, and for his having afterwards come the western circuit, and signed an order, drawn up by the junto of Somersetshire Magistrates, for placing and keeping me in solitary confinement for the last *ten months* of my incarceration.

The people of Bridport will never forget my visit, particularly *Mr. Denzelo*, the printer, who refused to print my address to the electors, after having taken the copy, and given his promise to do it, and a *Mr. Nicholets*, an attorney. I shall forbear to relate the circumstances, and the ridiculous figure which they cut, especially the latter, upon being detected and exposed before his own townsmen in their public hall. This exposure was ample punishment for such men, without my placing the particulars of their disgrace upon record. I was invited to remain in Bridport after the election, which invitation I accepted, and before I left the town I waited upon every voter to thank him for his civility; and, with only one or two exceptions, I received the most polite attention and kind welcome; nearly two-thirds of the electors voluntarily promised to give me their votes at the next election, whenever it might happen. If I had gone there again I should have certainly had a considerable majority of votes, without making any promise whatever; but, as I learnt that it was expected that an after-bribe would be given, I declined the honour of deceiving them and disgracing myself.

One curious fact which occurred I cannot avoid relating. I have since ascertained, that the person whom I took from Salisbury with me to Bridport, treacherously communicated all my plans and movements to my opponents, every night before he went to bed; and, what is still more curious, I have learnt that he was actually in correspondence with my LORD CASTLEREAGH. I very soon afterwards obtained the knowledge of this latter fact, and of course as soon declined the honour of any farther connection with a person who had such high acquaintance.

On the 18th of December, Mr. Hone, the bookseller, was tried in the Court of King's Bench, before Mr. Justice Abbott (who sat for the Chief Justice Ellenborough) and a London special jury. The offence which he was charged with was that of publishing a parody. After an animated and eloquent defence, made by Mr. Hone in person, which lasted seven hours, the jury returned a verdict of acquittal. The Chief Justice Ellenborough, who was ill at the time, was so enraged at this verdict, that he came into Court the next morning, and presided when Mr. Hone was tried for a second parody. His Lordship did every thing to intimidate, to interrupt, and to browbeat Mr. Hone, who, however, proved himself much the bravest as well as the most able man, and after a defence, similar to that of the day previous, which lasted eight hours, another jury of the city of London acquitted him. On the day following, the 20th of December, he was tried before the Chief Justice and another special jury of the city of London, for a third parody, and after another defence, which lasted nine hours, he was a third time acquitted. What enhances the merit of Mr. Hone's courageous defence is, that during the whole of the time he was labouring under indisposition. There is not the least doubt but these verdicts of acquittal, added to that of the acquittal of Dr. Watson, were the cause of Lord Ellenborough's death; at any rate, his decease was greatly hastened by the irritation arising from such repeated disappointments; for in all these cases his Lordship strongly charged the jury for a verdict of guilty, and no agent of the Government ever worked harder to obtain a verdict than his Lordship did. Ultimately this great lawyer became an idiot, and I have understood from pretty good authority, that for some time before his death he was in the constant habit of repeating the names of *Watson* and *Hone*, with the most evident symptoms of horror and dismay, which he continued to do till the very last, as long, at least, as he was capable of utterance.

Thus ended the year 1817, one of the most eventful of British history. The prospect was most gloomy: the poor were greatly distressed for want of employment: provisions were dear, the quartern loaf averaged about thirteen pence, and there was a general depression of trade. At the same time, every honest man in the kingdom considered himself as being injured and insulted by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and, indeed, a general feeling of disgust prevailed as to the proceedings adopted by the Government. As for the moral state of the country, and the wretchedness of the people, it is only necessary to record three or four facts: at Manchester, in the year 1797, the poor-rates were 16,941 1., but this year, 1817, they amounted to 65,212 1.. The number of forged notes stopped by the Bank of England, since the year 1814, that is, during the space of two years, amounted to 113,361 1., and in the year 1817, the Bank prosecuted ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-TWO PERSONS *for forgery*, or

*uttering forged notes*; and to support such a system as this, the peace establishment of the standing army, the land forces, for this year, amounted to ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINE MEN! Bravo, John Gull!

I never heard of more than one public meeting being held by the people, under the provisions of the Seditious Meetings Bill, and that was advertised to be held in Palace Yard, on the 7th of September, 1817. This advertisement was signed by seven householders, and a copy of it was delivered to the Clerk of the Peace, and the neighbouring Magistrates, agreeable to the Act. I was invited to preside at the meeting, which invitation I accepted, and attended accordingly. The Seditious Meeting Act being still in force, and the Habeas Corpus Act being still suspended, it was thought a very daring and hazardous proceeding, but I took care that the laws, rigid as they were, should not be violated, and all the provisions of the Act were strictly complied with. This meeting was held within hearing, and almost in sight of the Secretary of State's office. But, as we acted according to law, not the slightest interruption was offered to the proceedings, or to those who attended the meeting. The persons who signed the requisition or advertisement, which was delivered to the Clerk of the Peace, were friends of Dr. Watson; he it was, in fact, that got up the meeting. The doctor proposed the resolutions, which were seconded by Mr. Gast, and carried unanimously: they protested in strong terms against petitioning the House of Commons any more for Reform, as being proved to be useless by the total disregard which that body had manifested to the prayers and the petitions of the people during the previous session of Parliament, when upwards of six hundred petitions, praying for Reform, had been presented to the Honourable House. A strong declaration and remonstrance, addressed to the Prince Regent, was read and unanimously agreed to at the meeting; which remonstrance I carried and delivered to Lord Sidmouth, at the Secretary of State's office, the moment the meeting was dissolved; and I was attended to the doors of the office by five or six thousand of the multitude who had composed a part of the meeting. When I entered the office, which I did alone, I was instantly conducted to his Lordship, amidst the deafening cheers of the throng without. I gave the declaration to him, and requested he would lay it before his Royal Master, as early as it was convenient. He promised me that he would read it carefully over, and if there was nothing improper, that he would present it the next day to the Prince Regent, and that he would write to apprise me of the result.

This was the first time, if I recollect right, that a public remonstrance to the throne was ever agreed to by the people; and, as might naturally have been expected, his Lordship found much in it that he thought objectionable, as well as the manner in which it was conveyed; it being in the shape of a firm though respectful remonstrance, instead of a creeping, cringing petition. I have not a copy of this document by me, but as it was agreed to at the great meeting held at Manchester, as well as at the Smithfield meeting, I will, if I can procure it, publish it hereafter; but I recollect, that, after having recited a mass of atrocities committed upon the rights and liberties, and lives of the people, by the Ministers of the Crown, it demanded that they the said Ministers, of whom his Lordship was one, should be surrendered up to justice, and brought to condign punishment. It is, therefore, almost needless to say that my Lord Sidmouth not only discovered very improper matter in the remonstrance, but that he consequently declined to communicate it to his Royal Master.

The year 1818 commenced with a great public dinner at the City of London Tavern, to celebrate the third centenary of the Reformation, at which dinner one thousand five hundred persons attended. On the 27th of January the Parliament was opened by commission, and the usual speech was made, and its echo, the address, was voted without any opposition: a bill was now brought into the House to restore the Habeas Corpus Act. A great meeting took place at the City of London Tavern, Alderman Waithman in the chair, where a subscription was opened for Mr. Hone, which ultimately amounted to more than three thousand pounds. Than this measure, nothing can more clearly show the character of the city patriot, and those who took a lead in political matters in the metropolis. While Mr. Hone was under persecution, and even up to the day of his trial, he was totally neglected and deserted; neither Mr. Waithman, nor any of those who afterwards came forwards to assist him in such a liberal way, gave him then the slightest countenance or support; nay, they even shunned and abandoned him, and he actually went into court almost alone, and probably without the means of hiring counsel, which was, in fact, a most fortunate circumstance for him, as, had he placed his case in the hands of counsel, I will warrant that he would have been found guilty upon each of the charges preferred against him; however, as soon as Mr. Hone had obtained a verdict of *not guilty*, these fair-weather patriots began to flock round him in order to share the honour and popularity which they now saw he was likely to obtain. This is too much the way of the world; and if Mr. Hone's jury had said guilty, instead of not guilty, if he had been tried by a country instead of a London special jury, he might have gone quickly to gaol, abandoned and ruined, before any of the above gentry would have stirred one inch to have saved him from rotting there.

A bill of indemnity was now brought in, to protect the Ministers against the legal consequences of their horrid abuses of power, during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Most of those who had

been incarcerated were now released upon their own recognizance; but Mr. Benbow, of Manchester, bravely refused to enter into any recognizance, and he was liberated without it. The Messrs. Evans followed his example, and were also liberated without bail.

While the indemnity bill was pending, the Livery of the city of London met in Common Hall, and passed some strong resolutions, and petitioned the House of Commons not to indemnify the Ministers against prosecutions at law for their illegal and cruel conduct during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. This petition was presented by Alderman Wood, our worthy representative, but without producing any effect, for, on the 10th of March, the bill was carried through both Houses by large majorities. In the Commons, Sir Samuel Romilly made a brilliant effort to resist the passing of this Act, but there was, nevertheless, a majority of 190 for it, and only 64 against it. In the Lords it was sanctioned by 93 for it, while there were only 27 against it; but 10 Peers entered a firm and spirited protest against the iniquitous measure. On the 23d of March, a meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster was held in Palace Yard, when a petition to the House of Commons was adopted, praying for a Reform of Parliament. About this period, the case of appeal of murder, *Ashford* against *Thornton*, excited considerable interest all over the country. The case was argued in the Court of King's Bench, which decided that the law gave to the defendant a right to his wager of battle; but the appellant, the brother of Mary Ashford, the young woman who had been murdered, not choosing to risk his life by accepting the challenge, Thornton was discharged.

On the first of May, the Monthly Magazine, a work of great celebrity, for the talent displayed in its pages, as well as for the philanthropic character of the gentleman who has so ably and successfully conducted it for so many years, published some interesting facts relative to the cruel and illiberal treatment of Napoleon, and his brave and faithful adherents at St. Helena. The same number contained a most interesting analysis of the progress of crime during the last seven years, by which it appears that 56,308 persons had in that time been committed to the gaols of England and Wales, for criminal offences; that 4,952 had received sentence of death; 6,512 had been sentenced to transportation; and 23,795 had been subjected to minor punishments, while no bills were found against 9,287. In the same period 584 had been executed, *and every number was tripled in the last year*. Let the philanthropist read this—let the friends of humanity read this—and then say whether we do not want a Reform in every department of the State, particularly in the House of Commons, where the system has been so long acted upon, which has brought England to such a degraded state.

On the second of June, Sir Francis Burdett moved resolutions in the House of Commons, for Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments. They were negatived by a majority of 106 to 2; the minority being Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane, the two Members for Westminster. When, during the preceding session of Parliament, that of 1817, there were petitions, signed by a million and a half of names, praying for Universal Suffrage, Sir Francis Burdett unfortunately refused to support Universal Suffrage; but now that the people had declined to appeal to the House, and consequently there was not a single petition lying upon the table, to support the Hon. Baronet's motion, it was negatived, as I have stated above, by an overwhelming majority.

On the tenth of June, the most infamous and servile Parliament that ever sat in England, after having passed a Bill to continue the restriction upon cash payments at the Bank; after having passed a Bill for building New Churches, and appropriating one million of the public money to carry it into effect; after having passed a Bill to add 6,000 1 . a year to the incomes of the Royal Dukes, who had been married; after having passed a Bill to continue the Alien Act; after having done all this, and far more, this servile, corrupt Parliament was DISSOLVED.

I will mention one curious fact, with respect to this precious Parliament. My friend, Mr. William Akerman, of Patney, in Wiltshire, was upon a visit to me in London, and, as he was very anxious to go and have a peep at the proceedings of the House of Commons, I was prevailed upon to accompany him thither one evening, although I went rather reluctantly, as all the interest which I had formerly felt in hearing the debates had long since been banished from my breast. However, I went thither to gratify the curiosity of my friend, little thinking that I should hear or see any thing to amuse or gratify myself. The Hon. House was exceedingly thin, there not being more than about a score of our honourable representatives present: these careful trustees had voted away, as a matter of course, some hundreds of thousands of the public money. The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the last reading of the Bill for building the New Churches. The Bill was passed, and *one million* of the money raised in taxes from the sweat of the brow of John Gull was voted away, by the Members of the Honourable House, with as little ceremony as an old washerwoman would toss off a glass of gin, or take a pinch of snuff; there being no debate, no more present than THIRTEEN of the Honourable Members of the Honourable House. But the best joke was what followed: a bungling, hacking, and stammering gentleman got up, on the Ministerial side of the House—for, if I recollect right, among the honourable guardians of our lives, our liberties, and our property, there were none present belonging to the Whig or Opposition side of the House)—and after a considerable deal of beating about the bush, which I saw made the Chancellor



of the Exchequer rather uneasy in his seat, I discovered that the prosing gentleman, whose name was Littleton or Thornton, was prattling about the *Savings' Banks*, into which it appeared that he had been inquiring rather more inquisitively than the little Chancellor approved of. The result of his inquiry, he stated to be a discovery, that *three-fourths* of the money placed in the banks belonged to persons of property, who placed it there for the sake of obtaining better interest than they could get elsewhere; and that the poor, such as servants and persons of small income, whose property it was intended by the legislature should be invested in these Savings Banks, scarcely made up a quarter of the number, and not a tenth of the amount. The gentleman was going on, when Mr. Vansittart jumped up, and in an under-tone pretty plainly intimated to him, that although the benches on the opposite side were empty, yet there might probably be some of the reporters left in the House, and if what had been stated should get abroad, it would do incalculable mischief, by exposing the humbug. These were not the words of the Honourable Chancellor, but I have described their import. Whether the gentlemen reporters were all absent, as well as the Whig Members, or whether they took the hint of the worthy Chancellor, or whether they did not hear what he said, I do not know; but the next morning I looked in vain in the newspapers for what had transpired, which appeared to me so curious, and which had appeared to the Chancellor a matter of so much importance; not a word of the sort was, however, to be found in any of the papers.

Perhaps it was not observed by my readers, but it is a fact, that my friend, Mr. Cobbett, who had continued to write his Register, and had sent it home from America to be published in England, seemed to have almost entirely forgotten that there was such a person as myself in existence; for more than five months, from the 8th of May, the date of his first Register written in America, till that dated the 10th of October, he scarcely ever mentioned the name of *his friend*, even accidentally. However, in the Register of the 10th of October, 1817, it appears that he had at length discovered that I was neither literally nor politically dead; for in a letter to Mr. Hallett, of Denford, in Berkshire, dated Long Island, 10th of October, 1817, my name was again brought fully upon the carpet, relative to my opinion of Sir Francis Burdett, as it has been frequently expressed by me in confidence to him. Very soon afterwards I received a private letter from him, full of professions of friendship, which correspondence was continued up to the period of his return from America. He also addressed to me, in the Register, twelve public letters, beginning with "My dear Hunt," and ending with "*your faithful friend*," occasionally complimenting my zeal, courage, and fidelity in the cause of Reform, and declaring that he was "in no fear as to the rectitude of my conduct, but always in anxiety for my health!" How faithful his friendship is, he has admirably proved! About the second or third letter which I had from him, he strongly urged me to oppose Sir Francis Burdett, for the city of Westminster; at any rate to offer myself as a candidate for that city, which would give me an opportunity of exposing the Baronet's desertion of the cause of Reform. I wrote for answer, that I dreaded the expense of the hustings; and the exorbitant charges of the High Bailiff, &c. These difficulties, however, he made light of, and assured me that, if it was not done before, he would take care to have me remunerated by a public subscription, as soon as he returned from America.

With this assurance, and from a conviction in my own mind that Sir Francis had deserted, or at least neglected, the cause of Radical Reform, I sent an advertisement to be inserted in the London papers, offering myself as a candidate for the representation of the city of Westminster. A meeting was called by my friends, in the great room of the Crown and Anchor, when my name was put in nomination, as a proper person to be one of the representatives of that city; it having been publicly announced that Lord Cochrane, who was preparing to sail to the assistance of the Patriots in South America, certainly meant to resign all pretension to sit again as the Member for Westminster. At this meeting a very large majority voted that I was a proper person to represent that city. I believe it was nearly a fortnight before any other person was put in nomination by any of the electors of Westminster, and it was thought by many of my friends that Sir Francis Burdett and myself would be returned, without any opposition. I firmly believe that this would have, indeed, been the case, had not the friends of Sir Francis Burdett, the Rump, proposed Mr. Douglas Kinnaird as his colleague. Major Cartwright was then put in nomination by some of his friends. The Whigs and Tories of Westminster perceiving that there was likely to be a great division amongst the Reformers, and that Mr. Douglas Kinnaird and Major Cartwright had been both started as it were in opposition to me, Sir Samuel Romilly was proposed as a candidate by the Whigs, and Sir Murray Maxwell by the Ministerial interest. There was a little band of very worthy and independent men, who stood forward as my supporters, namely, Mr. West, Mr. Dolby, and Mr. Giles, who were electors, and Mr. Carlile, Mr. Gale Jones, and Mr. Sherwin, who were not electors. Although at the outset I saw that, under such circumstances, there was no chance of my success, yet I was determined to keep open the poll to the last moment allowed by law, which is fifteen days. At a public dinner that was held at the Crown and Anchor, my colours were produced, and consisted of a scarlet flag, with UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE as a motto, surmounted by a Cap of Liberty, surrounded with the inscription of Hunt and Liberty. This flag was provided by Mr. Carlile; and I had the honour of being the first and only man who ever offered himself as a candidate for a seat in Parliament upon the avowed principles of Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments, and

The day at length arrived for the commencement of the election in Covent-Garden. I had proclaimed that I would not, either by myself or by any of my friends, canvass or solicit a single vote—that I should go to the hustings, and act upon the constitutional principle of neither soliciting votes nor going to any expense. The High Bailiff opened the proceedings, and the following candidates were proposed by their separate friends:—Sir Francis Burdett, Sir Murray Maxwell, Sir Samuel Romilly, Major Cartwright, Mr. Douglas Kinnaird, and myself. Upon the show of hands being taken, the High Bailiff declared it to be in favour of Henry Hunt, Esq. and Sir Samuel Romilly. Sir Francis Burdett's friends appeared dissatisfied with this decision of the High Bailiff, and urged that a greater number had held up their hands for Sir Francis than for Sir Samuel; but no one disputed my having had a majority, of at least ten to one, in my favour. The reader will see that this speaks volumes as to the opinion of the people. Though the people assembled could hold up their hands, yet when it came to the vote, the result clearly showed that the people had no share in electing those who were chosen as their representatives.

During this contest I was baited like a bull; it was very different from any election that ever took place before, for I tore the mask from all parties, and all factions; in doing which I exposed myself to a combination of the whole press of England, all the managers of which were leagued together to abuse, to misrepresent, and belie me. The *Tory, the Whig, and the Burdettite* press attacked me not only without mercy, but also without the slightest regard to truth or fair play; and that portion of the press which was either under the influence or in the pay of these three parties consisted of more than nineteen twentieths of the press of the whole kingdom!

After the election had proceeded for a few days, it was found that upon the poll Sir Francis Burdett was left considerably behind Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir Murray Maxwell. Major Cartwright's and Mr. Douglas Kinnaird's names were, therefore, withdrawn from the contest, and the friends of both those gentlemen joined to support Sir Francis's election, which appeared to be in great danger. As, however, I had no such views as they had, my exertions being daily and solely directed to open the eyes of the electors of Westminster to what I conceived to be the gross negligence of Sir Francis Burdett with respect to the cause of the people, it was determined to stand out the contest, especially as I had made an affidavit, before the Lord Mayor of London, previous to the commencement of the election, binding myself to keep the poll open to the last hour allowed by law. Notwithstanding this affidavit, which had been printed, and posted all over London, a little impudent Irishman, of the name of Cleary, whom I have mentioned before, as a sort of writer or clerk, hired as such by Major Cartwright, came forward upon the hustings, and in a broad Irish brogue called upon me to tender my resignation, and to render all the assistance in my power to promote the election of Sir Francis Burdett, and took the liberty of insinuating that I could be no friend of the people if I did not do so. Nothing could equal the impudence of this upstart, paid secretary, this hireling of the Major's; he was no elector of Westminster, and had no legal business whatever upon the hustings in Westminster. However, I treated this proposition with the silent contempt that it merited; and this drew down the malevolence of the Rump, of which this Cleary now formed a part. They denounced me as a *spy of the Government*, and every thing that was base; and they put no bounds to their abuse. In the evening, as I was addressing the electors, and defending myself against these assassin-like attacks from the Rump, I stated the circumstance of their having prevented the holding of a public meeting in the metropolis, which meeting I had proposed for the purpose of raising a subscription, to enable Brandreth, Turner, Ludlam, and others, who had been indicted for high treason at Derby, to fee counsel, and pay the expenses of their witnesses, so as to obtain a fair trial; and I of course alluded to the dirty trick which had been played me, in order to prevent the meeting, by writing me a letter, in the first instance, to say that a meeting would be called, and then putting it off when it was too late for me to come to London to call the meeting myself. I did this in general terms, without mentioning any names; upon which Cleary came forward, and unblushingly declared that what I had said was false, and that there was no letter whatever of the sort written to me. On this, there was a general call "produce the letter, name, name." In reply I asserted, that not only was such a letter written, but Cleary himself was the writer, and that he had gone so far as to say, in the letter, that he was so offended with the prisoners who were charged with high treason, *that he could almost find it in his heart to go down and hang them himself*. Cleary again presented himself, and, in the most solemn manner, called God to witness, that what I had said was totally devoid of truth. The clamour of the party of the Rump committee, now became excessive, they one and all bawled out, "produce the letter!—you cannot, Hunt!—it is all false!" At length I vociferated that I would produce it the next day. I thought I had the said letter amongst some others in my trunk, but, upon looking them over, I found that it was left at Middleton Cottage, with my other papers. I therefore dispatched one of my family into the country, a distance of sixty-one miles, to enable me to perform my promise, and the demand of the party. The next day I was obliged to state the fact, that the letter was in the country, but that I had sent an express for it, and it should be produced as soon as that messenger returned. Upon this the whole gang burst out into a forced horse laugh, swearing that it was all false, that I had no such letter, and that I never could produce it.

On the following day, which was Sunday, I received the letter from the country. In the meantime all the London papers had misrepresented this affair in the most scandalous and unprincipled manner, and every one of them agreeing that I had made a groundless charge against Cleary, and intimating that the story of the letter was a fabrication. The gang had, in reality, contrived to raise a general outcry against me. Monday, however, came, too soon for *them*, and on the hustings I then produced the letter, and offered to read it; but the tumult raised by the party, totally prevented it from being heard. This being the case, I promised to have it printed the next day. I kept my word, and one thousand copies were circulated; upon which Cleary produced a letter from Mr. Cobbett, said to have been addressed to a person of the name of Wright. In this letter, written, I believe, ten years previous to this epoch, Mr. Cobbett grossly abused me, and represented me as a *sad* fellow, and recommended to the *Westminster committee* to have nothing to do with me. As on the face of it this epistle appeared to have been written some years before I knew Mr. Cobbett, I felt no anger or resentment against him; although it certainly showed that he possessed a bad heart, to be capable of writing such gross and palpable falsehoods and malignant calumny against a man whom he knew only by report; which man, report must at the same time have convinced him, was a zealous and persevering friend of Liberty. The former cry was now dropped, and in its place was substituted another. It was impudently pretended that I had behaved very unhandsomely, in producing and publishing a private letter of Cleary's; though the fact was, that it was a *public* letter written upon public business, by a man who was a sort of public general secretary for all public matters debated on and meetings held in Westminster, and who was also the paid secretary to Major Cartwright and the Hampden Club! To bring forward a charge of this kind against me, was stretching impudence and falsehood as far as they could possibly go.

The next morning a note was put into my hands, which had been delivered open at my lodgings, on the preceding night, after I had retired to bed. This detestable composition contained a challenge from Mister Cleary, together with a great deal of vulgar Billingsgate abuse. I inquired who delivered it, and I was informed that between twelve and one o'clock, about two hours after I was in bed and asleep, some one knocked at the door, which was opened by my female servant, upon which three fellows rushed into the passage, and demanded to see me. The servant, however, informed them that I was gone to bed, and could not be disturbed. After behaving in a very boisterous and bullying manner, they gave her a letter, and informed her that it was a challenge for her master to fight a duel, and they desired, or rather ordered her to give it me as soon as I rose in the morning. All three of them refused to leave their names. When I rose, rather late in the morning, I found that this famous challenge had not only been read by all the females of my family, but that all the people in Norfolk-street, in which I lodged, had been informed of it, and the intelligence had also been communicated to the Magistrates at Bow-street. Two Bow-street officers were likewise observed parading the street, apparently to watch me out. Now, I will candidly appeal to my readers, and ask if ever they heard of a challenge to fight a duel having been delivered in such a way before? A challenge, avowed as such, and delivered *unsealed*, to a female, by three drunken Irishmen (for such my servant described them), between twelve and one o'clock at night, after the person challenged had been in bed and asleep for hours, and not one of the party consenting to leave his name! To suppose that this poor creature meant to fight, or that those who brought his challenge, and gave it *open* to my female servant, ever intended that he should fight a duel, would be the height of credulity. Yet, to crown the joke, this very fellow, Cleary, was put forward upon the hustings, the next day, and actually *read* a copy of his blackguard challenge, which he said he had sent to me the night before. This was done in the presence and bearing of Mr. the present Sir Richard Birnie, and other police magistrates. Was ever the like of this performed before in England, or any other country? The reader will perceive that this was a trick, and a very clumsy one, to endeavour to get me taken into custody, and bound over to keep the peace. Yet the venal hireling press blazoned it forth to the world, that I had injured and behaved very unhandsomely to Mr. Cleary, by publishing his letter, and that I had refused to give him the satisfaction of a gentleman, when he demanded it!! Everyone knows this was done to create effect. If Cleary had ever meant to fight me, he would have taken a very different course; he would have sent some confidential friend to communicate with me in private.

This stratagem, however, clumsy as it was, had the desired effect, and such was the beastly and scandalous misrepresentation of the whole London press, that many very worthy and honourable men think to this day that I ill used Mr. Cleary. They say it was *unhandsome* to produce his letter. It is difficult to conceive on what moral ground they come to such a conclusion. Now, let us see what others, who were impartial, disinterested eye-witnesses of the affair, let us hear what they say upon the subject; for no one, perhaps, can be a thoroughly fair judge of the question who was not present. I will here insert an extract from a letter, signed "Leonidas," and published in *Sherwin's Register*, on the 26th of December, 1818. After stating that the only apology which was ever offered by any of the Rump for Cleary's conduct was, that I had behaved *unhandsomely* in divulging Cleary's letter about the prisoners at Derby, he says—

"But this unhandsomeness, what was it? The present writer was near the hustings on that

occasion, and a plain tale, uninfluenced except by principle, will put the whole thing down.

"Mr. Hunt, whose elocution, though bad, is not attended with any embarrassment, a token either of a clouded intellect, or of conscious finesse, spoke, in order to set himself and those who so nearly and furiously persecuted him in a clear point of view before the people assembled at the hustings, which he had a right to do, of the prisoners at Derby, of his own conduct towards them, which was most courageous and humane, and of the conduct of *the party* at Westminster on the same occasion, which was assuredly supine to a frightful degree, to speak in no stronger language. In the midst of the most horrid yelling of the *party*, from whom he was continually obliged to appeal to the *mob* below, as Mr. Kinnaird, unused to his new nomenclature, called them, Mr. Hunt mentioned that *the party* in Westminster had done less than nothing to save the lives of the Derby prisoners. So far from aiding them, *one* had written to him that *nothing could be done*, and the writer had declared his own indignation against the unhappy men for disgracing the cause to be such, that he *could almost go down and hang them himself*.

"This was all fair, quite unobjectionable. Whether it was judicious to introduce this topic, is quite another question. While Mr. Hunt was speaking in half sentences, on account of the clamour from the hustings, and from the stages in front of them, where *the party* usually took their station, there was an evident feeling of uneasiness prevailing, a consciousness that Mr. Hunt had more to say than it was pleasant to hear; and this feeling broke out in one burst of foolish interruption when he arrived at this point, and a din was raised of '*name, name; it is all a lie, the scoundrel, the villain, name, name.*' Mr. Hunt seemed to pause. The present writer had not the least suspicion of *whom* he had to *name*. When the demand was often repeated, and the noise had somewhat abated, he came forward, and, with evident reluctance, pronounced, 'It was Mr. —,' who by this time had placed himself in front of the hustings, and with writhing contortions uttered some most passionate exclamations.

"Well, this was not sufficient. The cry now was, 'produce the letter, produce the letter; you cannot, you blackguard; it is a lie,' &c. &c. Mr. Hunt could not, at the instant, produce the letter; but said it should be forthcoming the next day. It was not produced the next day, when the grossest abuse was poured on him from the usual quarter. The party would not hear his explanation, that it was left in the country, and scarcely could this assurance reach the ears of the more indifferent spectators. An express was sent for it, who could not return without some delay. In the interval, Mr. Hunt was assailed with every opprobrious epithet of *liar, scoundrel, base slanderer*, and exclamations, 'He cannot produce it, it is all a fabrication,' &c. &c. At last, the letter came, and an attempt was made to read it, without effect. Mr. Hunt was obliged to say, 'Well, you shall have it printed to-morrow.'

"I am not conscious that I misrepresent a tittle of this most abominable scene, such as I hope never to witness again among human beings. This was the unhandsome way that is said to justify the production of a private letter of Mr. Cobbett, even if it had been written by him; a letter now however *proved* to be a forgery, and of the genuineness of which no evidence was sought even at the time, except that it was furnished by Mr. Place, the tailor.

"Now, nothing could be more justifiable than Mr. Hunt's conduct. It was absolutely forced on him. He could not avoid producing the letter. Those who complain of *unhandsomeness* themselves laid on him the disagreeable necessity. What did they say of his not having the letter ready to produce? Why, that it was a proof of his being a *liar, and a scoundrel*. Of what *was* it a proof? Simply that Mr. Hunt had no previous intention to disclose that letter, that he was forcibly obliged to produce it to satisfy the clamour of the complaining party. If, after he had alluded to it, which might not be discreet, but which was not at all criminal because it was not on private, but *public* business—if after alluding to the letter, he had refused to produce it, let any man judge what would have been his treatment from the *party*. Their character demonstrates, to a certainty, that they would not have allowed the existence of such a letter, though fully conscious of it, and would have suffered Mr. Hunt to the end of time to be considered, what they called him, *a liar, a Scoundrel, and a slanderer*.

"This subject, which I had not anticipated when my last letter was written, and did not mean, before the appearance of the confused and timid letter in Cobbett's *Register*, to advert to, has occupied too much time to permit me to comprehend, in this communication, all the remarks which I announced. It must be granted me, who am of no party but that of truth, to pursue my way, at leisure, and as free as possible from the mere forms of detail. Meaning to resume my pen, I am, for the present, Sir, &c.

"LEONIDAS."

The reader will observe, that this letter was written in December, six months after the election; and I beg here to observe, that I never knew or spoke to the writer till some time after this letter was written; but I am proud to say, when I was introduced to him, that this fair advocate of truth, proved to be a gentleman and a man of the strictest honour, bred up and associating with the higher ranks of society, and who was a doctor (of divinity, I believe). He was altogether just such a man as I should have selected as an arbitrator to decide any dispute, a man of strict veracity and unimpeachable character. I have said thus much upon this affair, in order to clear myself from the imputation of unhandsome conduct, and the charge of cowardice which was so lavishly bestowed upon me by the whole of the corrupt, hireling, partial London press, the falsehoods vomited forth by which were echoed from shore to shore, by all the dastardly local press of the kingdom. This virulence arose from the following fact. In consequence of my exposure of the conduct of Sir Francis Burdett, not more than 500 hands were held up for him out of 20,000 persons present, when his name was put in nomination; and now, on the eighth or ninth day of the election, Sir Francis stood *THIRD* upon the poll, and ultimately he was returned only *SECOND* upon it—Sir Samuel Romilly standing several hundreds (three hundred) above him, and Sir Murray Maxwell only about four hundred below him. In fact, nothing but the foul play shown towards Sir Murray and his friends, together with the very bad management of his committee, prevented his being returned with Sir Samuel Romilly, and Sir Francis being rejected and thrown out altogether. This was what made the party so outrageously clamorous and vindictive against me. Independent of the wound which their pride suffered, from the dread of being defeated, they had another reason to abominate me. They were compelled to make no trifling sacrifices of a certain kind. About the eighth or ninth day of the election, a dreadful effort was made by the *party*, and *money* flew about in all directions; poor electors had their taxes paid up, others were paid for voting, public-houses were opened, and all the sources of corruption and bribery were resorted to, by the friends and supporters of Sir Francis Burdett, which were employed by the Ministerial faction for Sir Murray Maxwell. By these means there was at length an apparent spirit of enthusiasm revived for the Baronet. Hundreds, who had viewed his conduct in a similar light to that in which I had viewed it, and who had condemned him, and given him up, and who had actually stood neuter hitherto, not meaning to vote at all at the election, as their votes could not have rendered me any service, now came forward and voted for *him*, under the impression that it would be better to return him, bad and indolent as he was, than to return the rank Ministerial tool, Sir Murray Maxwell.

At the end of the election, the numbers were declared by the High Bailiff to be as follow:—Romilly 5,538, Burdett 5,239, Maxwell 4,808, Hunt 84. Upon the show of hands at the nomination by the High Bailiff, when the election commenced, Sir Francis stood *third*, below myself and Sir Samuel; at the end of the election Sir Francis stood *second* upon the poll, 300 *below* Sir Samuel Romilly. This was a sad blow to the Baronet's popularity, and a still more severe blow to the upstart gentry who formed the Rump Committee. When Lord Cochrane resigned his seat, at the dissolution of the Parliament, and I publicly offered myself as a candidate, if Sir Francis and the Committee had stood neuter, even I should have been returned with him without any opposition; but this did not suit him, or the Committee; they opposed me, and no one doubted their power to prevent my being elected, though, at the same time, they little dreamt that I had the power to endanger the election of their idol, Sir Francis, and by my exertions to cause the Whig candidate, Romilly, to be placed at the head of the poll 300 above him. Even all that, however, was easier to be borne than to have me in Parliament. Whether I acted right, or whether I acted wrong, in thus opposing and bringing down that man, who had but a few years before been returned at the head of the poll for Westminster (2,000 above all the other candidates), is a matter of great doubt with a number of good men; I can only say, if I erred, I erred from public and not from private motives. Sir Francis Burdett has, since I have been here, acted the most noble part towards me, and I have no doubt but he is convinced that I was actuated in my opposition to him solely by public views; and if I was then deceived and mistaken as to his public conduct, he has shown that he has the nobleness of soul that knows how to forgive my hostility to him, because he believes that I was his opponent, not to serve any selfish end, but from a sense of public duty.

A few days after I had been so grossly misrepresented by the press, with respect to Cleary's affair, another circumstance occurred. One of the gents belonging to the *Observer* newspaper, was a Mr. Spectacle Dowling, who appears to have written so many falsehoods upon the subject, that he actually believed at last that what he had written was true. I had, in one of my speeches, alluded to the evidence which this person had given, on behalf of the Crown, upon the trial of Watson. The next morning, when I entered the hustings, a person at the door spoke to me, and while I was looking back to answer him, I felt the stroke of a small whip upon my hat, and, on turning hastily round to see what it meant, there was Mr. Spectacle Dowling flourishing a small jockey whip in a violent manner. I dashed up to him, and had just reached him a slight blow in the chin, when I was seized by the constables; but in his flight he received a blow in the mouth from my brother, and another from my son Henry, a lad of eighteen. We were all three held by the constables, who were all prepared to favour his escape.

Mr. Dowling immediately summoned my brother before Sir Richard, then Mr. Birnie, for the assault. I

attended to give bail for him, and I certainly never saw a person who more resembled "raw head and bloody bones" than Mr. Dowling did, for he was bleeding at every pore; the marks of the three blows he had received were very evident upon his forehead, his mouth, and his chin. It appeared that Mr. Dowling's object was, not so much to get my brother held to bail, as it was to get *himself* bound over to keep the peace towards me; and Mr. Birnie, who had learned that Mr. Dowling was the first aggressor, urged me to prefer the complaint, and he would hold him to bail for the assault, as Dowling bravely protested before the Magistrates that he should have given me a *good horsewhipping* if the constables had not interfered. I, however, positively declined to make any charge against the gentleman, as I had resolved that the first time I met him I would give him an opportunity of taking a belly-full. I own that I walked the streets many an hour afterwards, in hopes of meeting him, and I carried a good cane in my hand, in order to lay it smartly about his shoulders. It was, however, many months before I met the gentleman. At length, one day, I was standing in Mr. Clement's shop, talking with Mr. Egan, the gentleman who at that time was the fashionable slang reporter of all the pitched battles and prize fights of the day, and who has since produced from his pen those characters which have made such a noise at the Adelphi and other theatres, namely, *Tom and Jerry*. While I was conversing with Mr. Egan, Mr. Dowling opened the door and walked in. I immediately addressed him, and said, "The last time I had the honour to meet you, Mr. Dowling, I believe was at Bow-street, when you stated to Mr. Birnie that you had struck me upon the Westminster hustings with a whip, and if you had not been prevented by the constables you would have given me a good horsewhipping." "Sir, (said he) I do not wish to have anything to say to you." "But, (replied I) there is a little account to settle between us; you struck me a blow with a whip, and I gave you a slap on the chin, so far we were equal; but you informed the Magistrates, that, if you had not been prevented by the constables, you would have given me a good thrashing; now, Sir, there are no constables present to interfere, and I will give you an opportunity to carry your threat into execution." "Sir, (he again repeated) I do not wish to have any thing to say to you;" and he was making out of the shop as fast as he could shuffle; but as soon as he opened the door, and stepped upon the pavement, I said, "Protect yourself," and at the same time I gave him a slight blow in the face with my *flat hand*, which knocked off his spectacles. The gallant reporter picked them up very coolly, and putting both hands before his face, he sued for mercy, saying, that if I persisted he should take the law of me. He kept his word, and I was indicted at the Middlesex sessions, and fined five pounds.

So ended the horse-whipping affair and the Westminster election, with the exception of a *trifling* after-clap or two, such as the High Bailiff sending me in a bill for my third share of the hustings, amounting to upwards of two hundred and fifty pounds (I think that was the sum). I refused the payment of it, and he commenced an action for the amount, and obtained a verdict for a great part of his charge. This brought me for the first time in contact with Mr. Counsellor Scarlett, he having been employed by the High Bailiff against me. I at once discovered, that this worthy Barrister, although a very clever fellow, was cursed with a very irritable, waspish disposition, of which I always took advantage afterwards, as often as we met in the Courts, which, unfortunately for me, was much too frequently for my pocket.

About this time an action had been brought against me, in the name of my landlord, Parson Williams, of Whitchurch, of whom I had rented Cold Henly Farm for three years, at a loss of about two thousand pounds, which I sunk in cleaning and improving the estate. When Mr Cobbett fled from England to go to America, in 1817, some of the Winchester attorneys and parsons openly said that they "had driven Cobbett out of the country, and they would try hard to make me follow him." They were as good as their words, for they tried all sorts of ways to injure my credit, and not succeeding to their wishes, an action was commenced against me, by a man who is clerk to the Magistrates, a Mr. Woodham, an attorney at Winchester, in the name of Mr. Williams, for breaches of covenants while I occupied Cold Henly Farm. I called on Mr. Williams, who denied having ever given any orders to Woodham to commence the action; he said that Woodham had urged him to do it, but that he refused to do so, and he wished every thing to be settled amicably. I relied upon the word of the old parson, who said he would write and stop any further proceedings; but my confidence was very soon betrayed, as I had notice that I had suffered judgment to pass by default, and a writ of inquiry was to be held at the next assizes to assess the damages. The writ of inquiry was executed at Winchester, and a verdict was obtained against me for, I believe, 2501. The breaches of covenant were easily proved, although they had been assented to by the parson, which assent I had carelessly and confidingly neglected to obtain from him, either in writing or before witnesses. Mr. ABRAHAM MORE, an eminent barrister upon the Western Circuit, was employed, and conducted the inquiry for Mr. Attorney Woodham. Mr. More was esteemed the best special pleader, and, after Mr. Sergeant Pell, he was certainly the best advocate upon the Western Circuit. But I take leave to ask, what is become of Mr. More? Mr. More has quitted the circuit and the bar, and fled from his country, since I came to this Bastile. I believe Mr. More was the Recorder of Lord Grosvenor's rotten borough of Shaftesbury, and he was, I am told, his lordship's steward, and suddenly left England under such circumstances as would have been blazoned forth in every newspaper in England, if he had been a poor Radical. I bear no personal hostility to Mr. More, therefore I shall not

say any thing to wound the feelings of those of his relatives and friends who are left behind. But it is a remarkable fact, that the learned barrister, the Recorder of Shaftesbury, and the once learned and honest attorney, Mr. Richard Messiter, of Shaftesbury, should have left their country, and both have fled to America, under such *peculiar circumstances*.

On the 22d of July the son of Napoleon was created Duke of Reichstadt by his grandfather, the Emperor of Austria. On the 15th of August, very considerable disturbances took place at Manchester, amongst the manufacturing poor, who were suffering great privations and misery, in consequence of the high price of provisions, and the ruinous low prices given for manufacturing labour. On the 29th of September, the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and the King of Prussia, held a congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, assisted by ministers from England and France. On the 2d of October, the convention of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed. At the same period it was publicly announced by the Americans, that their navy consisted of six ships of the line, eleven frigates, and twenty-two sloops. On the 21st, Lord Ellenborough resigned the office of Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench.

On the 2d of November, Sir Samuel Romilly put an end to his existence, by cutting his own throat with a razor. This event excited a very considerable sensation throughout the whole kingdom. Sir Samuel Romilly, although a lawyer, was very generally beloved and respected. By his death, a vacancy occurred for the representation of the city of Westminster, and, within ten minutes after I heard of the deed which had been committed by Sir Samuel, I determined upon an opposition against whoever might be nominated by Sir Francis and the Westminster Committee. I did not, indeed, myself, choose to encounter a repetition of the expenses which I had recently incurred, by standing a contested election for Westminster, but I was, nevertheless, determined to have some one put in nomination, to prevent, as far as lay in my power, the great and powerful city of Westminster from being made a rotten borough, under the influence of Sir Francis Burdett. But I found all the little staunch phalanx who had supported me during my own contest, now declined supporting an opposition in favour of Mr. Cobbett, whom I proposed to put in nomination. In fact, I could not get a single elector of Westminster either to propose or second the measure.

I ought to have noticed before, that, at the former contest, I was manfully and ably supported by Mr. John Gale Jones, who never deserted me, and who stood boldly by me to the very last day of the election. I ought also to have noticed, that my colours, surmounted by the Cap of Liberty, with the mottos of "*Universal Suffrage*" on one side, and "*Hunt and Liberty*" on the other, were every day, during the first general election in this year, carried to the hustings, and there nailed to the same, where they remained proudly floating in the air the whole day, till they were taken down, when the polling was closed, to proceed with my carriage every night into Norfolk street. I beg the reader, young or old, not to forget this fact, that at the general election in June 1818, for the *first* time in England, a gentleman offered himself as a candidate, upon the avowed principles of "*Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot;*" that at this election, which lasted fifteen days, the Cap of Liberty, surmounting the colours with that motto, was hoisted and carried through the streets morning and evening, preceding my carriage to and from the hustings in the city of Westminster; and that these were the only colours that were suffered by the people to remain upon the hustings, all other colours that were hoisted being torn down and trampled under the feet of the multitude, while the Cap of Liberty and the flag with Universal Suffrage remained all day, and every day, for fifteen days, fixed to the hustings, without the slightest insult or molestation being offered to it by any one. The cap and flag were frequently left for several hours together, without any one of my committee or myself being present; and I never heard that it was even hinted to offer to remove them, except once, on which occasion the following curious circumstance took place. One day, one of the constables, observing that myself and all my immediate friends were absent from the hustings, proposed in a low voice to some of his companions, to remove Hunt's flag and Cap of Liberty; but, softly as he had spoken, the proposal reached the quick ears of the multitude, and a loud and general cry was raised, "Protect Hunt's flag, my lads; touch it, if you dare!" This was accompanied by a rush towards that part of the hustings where it was fixed. The constable gentry slinked off, and never mentioned it afterwards, or attempted any thing of the sort.

One or two more instances of the devotion of the people towards me, I have forgotten to record. On the day when Mr. Dowling affected to strike me with a horse-whip, within the hustings, some one upon the hustings, Dr. Watson, I believe, communicated to the people without, that the constables were ill-using me; he seeing that the constables had seized me by the arms. With the quickness of lightning the boards which formed the lower end of the hustings were demolished, and the brave and generous people rushed in to my assistance, declaring that they were ready to lose their lives in my defence. I will give but another instance of their honest devotion to the man who they thought was advocating their rights. One evening, as I was leaving the hustings to pass to my carriage, there was, as usual, a great crowd at the door awaiting to salute me, and, amidst the pressure it so happened, that, without my being aware of any thing of the sort, a pickpocket neatly drew my watch from my pocket. But,

although the act was unobserved by me, it did not escape the vigilance of my friends, who surrounded the door from purer motives. I passed on through the crowd to my carriage, which stood at a distance of twenty yards, the coachman not being able to bring it nearer up to the hustings, and, after I had got into the carriage, a man who was standing close to the door of the hustings hailed me, and holding up my watch and seals in his hand, passed it over the heads of the crowd, till it was handed into the carriage-window to me. The fact was, that some of the people saw the fellow take my watch and pass it to another of his gang, and he did the same to a third, but they were pursued, and the watch was rescued from the gang, who got a sound drubbing for their pains, and the watch was restored to me in the way which I have stated. Amongst the number who acted in this gallant and handsome way to me, I did not recognise any one that I knew by name. Mr. Gale Jones was with me in the carriage, and was an eyewitness of this affair, so honourable to the people of Westminster, who attended the hustings during the election.

On the 17th of November, Queen Charlotte died at Kew, in her 75th year. The Lord have mercy on her! although I never heard that, during the very long period that she was Queen of England, she ever attempted to use her influence with her husband, George the Third, to save the life of a single fellow-creature, with the exception of *Dr. Dodd, a parson*, who was hanged for forgery! but may the Lord have mercy upon her!

On the same day, I think it was, there was a meeting called at the Crown and Anchor, to nominate someone, as a proper person to be elected for Westminster, in the room of Sir Samuel Romilly. I attended that meeting, and by accident was seated next to Sir Charles Wolseley, with whom I then, for the first time, became personally acquainted. The chair was taken by Sir Francis Burdett, who briefly stated the purpose for which the electors had met. A Mr. Bruce, the young man of that name who was imprisoned in France, for assisting in the escape of Lavalette from prison, proposed John Cam Hobhouse, Esq. as a fit and proper person for the choice of the electors of Westminster as their representative. One of the Westminster committee seconded this nomination, and Mr. Hobhouse, a very young man, mounted the table, and addressed his auditory in a good set speech, which appeared to have been prepared for the occasion, as it consisted of nothing definite, but was merely made up of general professions of his being friendly to Liberty and Reform. After he had done he left the room, amidst a pretty general expression of approbation. Some time now elapsed, during which there was a pause, as every one was in expectation of Mr. Wooler, or some friend of Major Cartwright, putting that gentleman in nomination; but, as no one came forward, I mounted the table. After some time I obtained a hearing, and I began by inquiring who and what Mr. Hobhouse was? I demanded if he was any relation to the Under Secretary of State, or if he were any relation of that Sir Benjamin Hobhouse house who had formerly professed in that very room the same sort of general principles of Liberty which were now professed by the youth whom we had just heard? whether he was any relation to that same Sir Benjamin Hobhouse, who afterwards accepted a place in the Addington administration, and who had for so many years annually received 2,000\_l\_ of the public money, for doing nothing, as a commissioner to inquire into the state of the Nabob of Arcot's debts. The truth was, that I thought this young gentleman was a brother of the then Under Secretary of State, and that he was a nephew of Sir Benjamin Hobhouse, and not his son. I followed up these questions, which were well received, and made a considerable impression upon the meeting; and at length I proposed my friend, Mr. Cobbett, as a fit and proper person to represent the enlightened citizens of Westminster, and I put him in nomination accordingly. There was a pretty general cry of no! no! and a loud laugh from the gentlemen of the Rump Committee; however, some persons in the crowd seconded my nomination. Mr. Wooler was then called for, as it was understood that he was to propose Major Cartwright. After a short parley, Sir Francis Burdett stated, that Mr. Wooler was not an elector of Westminster, and that he had nothing to say. But, though Mr. Wooler had nothing to say, it appeared that Mr. Gale Jones had something to say. But Mr. Jones was not permitted to express his sentiments; for, as usual, the impartial gentlemen of the committee cried him down with the most horrible yell, howling out that he was no elector. I believe Mr. Bruce, who proposed Mr. Hobhouse, was no elector. I was no elector, who proposed Mr. Cobbett.—This I stated; but the answer was, "we did not know but you were going to propose yourself, which you had a right to do." "Well," said I, "hear Mr. Jones. How do you know that *he* is not going to propose himself?" But all that I could urge was fruitless. No man, who has not been an ear-witness, knows, nor can any man imagine, what sort of a thing is the howl which is set up by the party who attend those meetings, it would disgrace a conclave of fiends. I have always seen Mr. Jones hooted down by these worthies, and I never knew them give him a single fair hearing in my life. However, Mr. Jones had taken ample revenge upon them at the late election; during that fortnight he paid them off in full, for all the dastardly foul-play that they had shown towards him for many years, and now, when they got him upon their own dunghill, they retaliated, not by answering him, or controverting what he had to say, but by refusing to hear him at all. Mr. Gale Jones, who is one of the most eloquent and powerful speakers that I ever heard, was always too independent in spirit for these gentlemen; he could neither be purchased nor wheedled out of his opinion. Every art had been tried to seduce him from the path of honour, but the humble walk of life in which he has always moved is the best proof of his



sincerity, and that his noble mind stands far above the reach of all corruption's dazzling temptations. A man, who possesses his eminent talent and very superior eloquence, might in this venal age have been elevated to wealth and power, if he would have condescended to speak a language foreign to his heart, and become the slave and tool of the Government, or of one of the factions. I believe Mr. Jones to be one of the most amiable, virtuous, and truly humane men in the kingdom. Those who have been envious and jealous of his talents, are the only persons who speak ill of him. In his profession of a surgeon, he is skilful and assiduous, but his modesty has always prevented him from pushing his practice to any extent, so as to render it lucrative. How many unfeeling, stupid block-heads are there in London, who ride in their carriages, and keep elegant establishments, clearing thousands a-year as surgeons, who do not possess a tenth part of the talent and skill of Mr. Gale Jones! It may be asked, why then is he not rich, like other men in his profession? This question is very easily answered by me. Alas! his humanity and his modesty have been the cause of his poverty. Some people will laugh at the idea of the retiring modesty of a man who could stand forward upon the hustings, and address twenty thousand of his fellow-creatures, with so much ease, and with so little embarrassment; but my assertion is, nevertheless, not only perfectly true, but also perfectly consistent; he is a *lion* in the cause of Freedom and Humanity, but a *lamb* in all other cases. He is bold and fearless when contending for public Liberty; but he is no less modest, meek, and humble, in private life. This has assisted to keep Mr. Jones poor, but his poverty has principally arisen from his great benevolence. I have known Mr. Jones run a mile, and gratuitously devote hours, to assist a poor and friendless fellow-creature; I have known him to do this, and share the shilling in his pocket with the sufferer, and return weary and penniless to his wife and family, when he might have obtained a rich patient in the next street, and a guinea fee, with a twentieth part of the trouble and time he had gratuitously bestowed upon the poor and helpless.

I have said thus much of Mr. Gale Jones, as a matter of common justice; and, as a public duty, I call the attention of my readers in the metropolis to the situation of this worthy man, this real friend of Liberty, who has been neglected and insulted by that venal band of mercenary and time serving politicians, those flippant summer flies of the metropolis, those fair-weather patriots, which, when compared with the steady, sound, and inflexible patriotism of Mr. Jones, are like the dross of the vilest metal put in competition with the purest gold. In doing this justice to Mr. Jones's character (and it is but bare justice), I do not, however, mean to say that all the members composing the Westminster Committee are quite the reverse of what he is; on the contrary, I know many of them to be very worthy and most respectable men in private life, and perhaps they have very unintentionally been instrumental in making Westminster a rotten borough, in the hands of a particular circle. Probably there did not live a more honourable, upright man, in private life, than the late Mr. Samuel Brooks; and, as to his public exertions, I believe that his intentions were equally honourable, although he was frequently made the instrument to promote injustice, partiality, and foul play, by some of the designing and unprincipled knaves who surrounded him, some of whom had great influence over him, and frequently urged him on to do that which in his heart I know he very much disapproved.

But I must now return to my narrative, from which I was led by the foul, unmanly, un-Englishman-like conduct of the Westminster party, in hooting and howling down Mr. Jones at the public meeting at the Crown and Anchor, which meeting was called expressly to discuss a subject of great national importance, and to decide upon who was the most proper man to represent the great, the enlightened, the opulent city of Westminster. Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Cobbett were, as I have already stated, put in nomination, and the chairman took the sense of the meeting, which, certainly, was very evidently in favour of Mr. Hobhouse; those who held up their hands in his favour being more than ten to one. Upon this occasion I produced a letter, which I received from my friend Mr. Cobbett, from America, and likewise a New York newspaper, wherein was inserted a letter, which he had written to the editor of that paper. In his letter to me, as well as his letter in the New York paper, he solemnly declared that the letter which was read by Cleary upon the hustings, at the late Westminster election, which Cleary stated to be written by Cobbett, was a FORGERY, and, of course, was never written by him. Upon this Cleary went to Brooks's and produced the letter, which, when it was shown to me, still appeared to be forged, as it was written in a much stronger hand than Mr. Cobbett usually wrote; and I also observed the post-mark was different from that of the office where I knew he always sent his letters when at Botley. These circumstances, and my having implicit reliance upon the word of my friend, who in the most solemn manner declared it to be a forgery, made me have no hesitation in pronouncing it as my belief that it was such.

As the show of hands was so decidedly in favour of Mr. Hobhouse, and as I could not get a single Westminster man to join me, it was in vain to persist in forcing Mr. Cobbett's claims upon the electors; but I was nevertheless determined to look out for some other cock to fight, so satisfied was I that it was necessary to oppose the schemes of that party who appeared determined to make Westminster a rotten borough, it being very evident that Mr. Hobhouse was the mere nominee of Sir Frances Burdett. There was plenty of time to look about for a candidate, but I felt quite sure that no one would oppose him if I did not bring forward that candidate. The Whigs had no chance whatever, unless some popular

character stood forward to oppose the Westminster faction; and as for the Ministers, they had no relish to start another man, after the failure of Sir Murray Maxwell. Nothing could, indeed, have more forcibly shown their conscious weakness, and the thorough detestation in which they were held by the public, than that they did not even dare to start a candidate in the very hot-bed of corruption, the very citadel of Court influence.

The election was not to take place till the spring; in the mean time I did not fail to sound all the men that I thought likely to assist me, but I did this quite privately, while every possible exertion was made by Mr. Hobhouse and his friends, aided by the powerful influence, and still more powerful purse, of Sir Francis. The Westminster Committee now found it necessary to exert their utmost, and to strain every nerve. Canvassing committees were formed in every parish, and meetings were called, at which Mr. Hobhouse attended in person, to solicit the favour of the electors. The reports of these meetings I watched very narrowly, and in all the speeches of Mr. Hobhouse, I never could discover any one pledge given by him, to show that he was a friend to a real constitutional and efficient Reform. He dealt in general terms, such as his father Sir Benjamin, or Burke, or any other apostate from the cause of Liberty, might have used with perfect safety. There, nevertheless, appeared great enthusiasm amongst the party, and a general committee was formed, consisting, as it was said, of three hundred electors, selected from the different parishes. Those who were not in the secret, were astonished to hear of such extraordinary exertions, such seemingly overwhelming preparation; and the general opinion was, that the election of Hobhouse was placed far above the chance of a failure. In fact, he did not appear to have any opponent; no one had offered himself—no one had been proposed but Mr. Cobbett, who was named by me under such circumstances as made any opposition from such a quarter worse than futile, absolutely ridiculous. Apparently there was but one person who even insinuated any opposition to Mr. Hobhouse, but that one person was Hunt. The Rump knew me too well to treat my opposition lightly. They had so very recently experienced my power, that they saw with dismay that I had been the sole cause of endangering the election of Sir Francis, and that, by my exertions alone, he, their IDOL, *Westminster's pride and England's hope*, had been placed SECOND upon the poll, having received three hundred votes less than Sir Samuel Romilly. The Rump Committee and Sir Francis knew all this perfectly well: they knew that if it had been a contest between Romilly and Burdett, without any interference of mine, that Burdett would have had a thousand or fifteen hundred votes more than Romilly. Hence all the preparations and exertions that were now made.

Seeing all this, I was obliged to act with great caution. I had applied, over and over again, to those that I thought the staunchest friends of Major Cartwright, but I found them wavering and insincere; desponding, and exclaiming "it is all no use! it is impossible to return the Major!" I had taken care to get a friend to sound the Major, and I found that the old veteran was exceedingly pleased at the thought of being once more nominated for Westminster, for which city he certainly ought to have been the member long before. *This was the Old Game Cock*, then, that I had determined to set up against the young *Bantam*, although I found that I should have great difficulty in bringing his seconds, or rather his proposers, up to the mark. I had therefore solemnly made up my mind as a dernier resort, that if my effort to have the Major proposed should ultimately fail, I would once more offer myself, and stand the contest in person, so convinced was I of the absolute necessity of exposing the conduct of the electors of Westminster, who constituted what was called the Rump Committee. They had treated me at the late election in the most foul and unhandsome way, such as was totally unbecoming the character of the very lowest of those who set up any pretension to honour or honesty. I had made them feel the weight of my opposition, and I was determined that they should a second time experience the effect of my single-handed hostility. I well knew that Major Cartwright was by no means popular amongst the Westminster electors, and that he would not stand the slightest chance of being elected; but I was also thoroughly assured, that, as soon as the Whigs were quite certain that I had determined to stand forward against the Burdettite faction, they also would start a candidate. This was the state of parties in Westminster at the close of the year 1818.

By a report of a Committee, appointed by the House of Commons, it appeared that *four millions of pounds weight of sloe, liquorice, and ash-tree leaves*, are every year mixed with Chinese teas in England, besides the adulterations that take place in China, before the teas sent to England leave that country! The new Parliament met on the 14th of January, 1819, and was opened by commission. The Queen's death was noticed in the speech, and a Bill was brought in, and passed, to give the custody of the old insane King's person to the Duke of York, instead of the Queen, with an allowance of TEN THOUSAND POUNDS per annum! This is about *four thousand pounds a year* more than the salary of the President of the United States of America. The guardians of John Gull's purse vote the King's son *four thousand pounds a year* more, for having the custody of his father's person, who was confined as a lunatic in Windsor Castle, than the Americans pay to their Chief Magistrate, for managing all the business of the American nation! In settling the election petitions, *three boroughs* were declared by the committees and by the House of Commons to have been carried by *bribery*, and an order was given to the Attorney-General to prosecute the parties. Another bill was passed to prevent the Bank of England

from paying their notes in gold. What a hoax! A bill was likewise passed, to prevent the subjects of England from inlisting into the service of any foreign state at war with another, which bill was intended to apply to the colonies of Spain.

The middle of February was fixed for the Westminster election, and not a breath had been heard about any opposition to Mr. Hobhouse. I, however, put an advertisement into the *Sunday Observer*, I think it was, signed with my name, assuring the electors that an independent, real friend of Reform would be nominated at the hustings on the day of election. Before this letter appeared in the paper alluded to, the Westminster committee were so satisfied in their own minds that, by their great and overwhelming show of preparations and canvassings, they had deterred any one from offering any opposition, and that their candidate would be returned on the same day, without going to the poll, that the high bailiff had not taken the usual precaution of erecting a hustings, a temporary scaffold being thought quite sufficient. Nay, so thoroughly convinced of this was the Rump, that they actually ordered the CAR, and got it prepared for chairing their candidate, Mr. Hobhouse, and every necessary preparation was made for this ceremony being performed on the first day of the election: but, as soon as my letter appeared in the papers, it was all consternation and confusion amongst them, and the party were running about from one to the other like so many wild men! In the mean time, Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Northmore had been written to, and had arrived in London. A meeting was called, at the Russell Coffee-house, under the Piazzas, over night; Sir Charles and Mr. Northmore subscribed 50\_l\_ each, and a few other subscriptions were entered into, making in the whole about 120\_l\_, which was placed in the hands of Mr. Birt, of Little Russell Street, who was appointed treasurer; and with this sum I undertook to conduct the election of the Major for *fifteen days*, if the arrangements were left to me. This was agreed to, and a placard was issued, and posted immediately, merely stating "*that the gallant Major was in the field.*"

A friend of mine that evening communicated to the Whigs, who were assembled at Brooks's, in St. James's Street, what had been done, and what was decided upon, and that I pledged my life for a fifteen days opposition to Sir Francis's nominee, Mr. Hobhouse. This intelligence was not communicated to the Whigs till late in the evening preceding the day on which the election was to be held; but they instantly assembled a council of war, to decide upon what steps ought to be taken. At length it was agreed upon by them to start Mr. George Lambe, the son of Lord Melbourne. He was instantly sought for, and, as I was credibly informed, he was called out of bed, to hear the news, so late as one o'clock in the morning; the election being to commence at eleven the same day. I immediately agreed for a Committee Room, at the Russell Coffee-house, where, as I have said, we had a previous meeting of some half dozen the evening before, to settle who was to propose and second the nomination of the Major in the morning. The only two electors of Westminster who attended, besides Mr. Birt, were Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Bowie. These gentlemen hesitated about performing this office, and we separated without any thing being decided upon as a certainty. However, I knew that Mr. Birt was to be depended upon as a man of strict honour and integrity; and looking forward to the probability of the other two gentlemen failing to attend, I had taken care to provide against any contingency of that sort. It was necessary to take every precaution, for I was aware that I had to contend with the greatest tricksters of the age; I knew Mr. Morris, the High Bailiff, to be one of the Rump faction; and I knew Master Smedley, the deputy of the High Bailiff, to be a cunning, sly, intriguing fellow; and it was therefore certain that I should have to watch their motions narrowly, being quite sure in my own mind that they would take advantage of any little informality to close the election—a step, or their part, which I was determined, if possible, to frustrate.

The morning arrived, and I attended the committee room early; but I found no one there except Mr. Birt and Dr. Watson, from whom I learned that Messrs. Bowie and Nicholson, the professed friends of the Major, had appointed to meet, to breakfast, at a Coffee-room, at the top of Catherine Street, in the Strand. Thither I repaired, and found them still wavering and undecided. When, however, I gave them to understand that it did not depend upon them *alone*, whether the Major should be proposed or not, as I had procured two electors, who were ready to propose and second the nomination of the Major if they failed to do so, their doubts and hesitation vanished, and they immediately agreed to go upon the hustings, and perform the task.

At this moment I received a message from the Major, who wished to see me at Probat's hotel, in King Street, Covent Garden, where he was waiting. I found the Major very anxious to know how matters were going on, he having heard of the difficulties which had been started; I assured him that all was going on well, but I strongly remonstrated against his taking any part in the election, and censured his coming so near the hustings as Probat's hotel, as I knew that the Rump would have been delighted to have saddled the Major with a heavy share of the expenses of the hustings, &c. The Major agreed to return home, and not interfere any further, and he also assured me that he had positively prohibited the little upstart Irishman, Cleary, from going near the committee room, or interfering at all in the election on his account, as he knew that I had an objection to place myself in the power of such a

fellow, by being even in the same room with him. Cleary, who, upon such occasions, was always a very busy, officious, meddling Marplot, felt very much mortified at this prohibition, so much so, that I am informed he immediately offered his services to the Rump, to act in opposition to his patron and friend, the Major. But, however basely the Rump might have acted in other respects, they acted very properly in this instance; for they declined to accept this treacherous offer, and poor Mister Cleary sunk into his original nothingness.

When I returned from visiting the Major, I found that the High Bailiff had proceeded to Covent Garden, mounted the scaffold, and with unusual haste had proceeded to have the writ read, and to open the proceedings of the election. I got as near as possible to the hustings, upon which I observed that Mr. Bowie and Mr. Nicholson had taken their stations; and with considerable difficulty I also contrived to mount them. Mr. Hobhouse was proposed, Mr. Lambe was proposed, and the Major also was proposed and seconded in due form; and the High Bailiff, upon a show of hands, declared the election to have fallen upon John Cam Hobhouse, Esq. by a very large majority, which was evidently the case, in the proportion of eight or ten to one.

As soon as this ceremony was over, I found Mr. Lambe and his friends, Lambton, Macdonald, and Co. hastening off the hustings, apparently to prepare for the polling, without ever taking any steps *to demand a poll*. Now was the moment to exert myself, and, as no time was to be lost, I made my way through the dense crowd upon the scaffold up to Messrs. Nicholson and Bowie, and requested them immediately to *demand a poll*, as I saw that the High Bailiff was preparing to declare Mr. Hobhouse duly elected. When thus brought to the test, they both began to shuffle, and finally replied that they would not undertake to do this, as it would make them liable to the expenses. It was in vain that I denied this, and requested them to tender their votes for the Major; they were not to be moved, and as every thing would be lost by a single instant of indecision, I rushed back again through the crowd, to that part of the scaffolding where I had seen Mr. Lambe and his friends retreating, and in my way I nearly overturned several of the Rump. I assured the High Bailiff that a poll would be demanded, and with great difficulty I was just in time to seize the tail of Mr. Lambe's coat, as he was walking down the ladder of the scaffold. In doing this I was obliged to jostle Mr. Lambton, who appeared excessively indignant at the *shake* which he received from me. I, however, kept fast hold of Mr. Lambe's coat, and earnestly requested him to return that instant and demand a poll, as otherwise the election would be closed in favour of Hobhouse. Both he and Mr. Macdonald, although they had been bred to the bar, appeared to know nothing of the matter, and seemed to doubt the accuracy of my assertion. I again emphatically assured them that, unless they returned and instantly in writing *demand a poll*, the law would justify the High Bailiff in declaring Hobhouse to be duly elected. My earnestness induced them to return and do so, and if they had not complied with my suggestions, the election of Hobhouse would have been *irrevocably declared* in less than one minute after.

Thus by my presence of mind were the High Bailiff and the Rump frustrated in their schemes; for, had it not been prevented by my prompt, bold, and decisive interposition, Hobhouse would have been at once chaired as one of the Representatives of the city of Westminster. In consequence of the want of such decision and presence of mind, this trick has been a hundred times successfully played off at elections, and would most certainly and most effectually have succeeded here; for, after the show of hands is taken, unless one of the candidates or two of the electors immediately present to the returning officer a written demand of a poll, he is justified by law in declaring that person *duly elected* for whom the show of hands has been given.

It was, I repeat it, my interference, and my single exertions upon this occasion, that prevented Mr. Hobhouse from being at once returned as the colleague of Sir F. Burdett; and yet some persons are so foolish as to inquire, "what can be the reason of such men as Tailor Place, Currier Adams, &c. &c. and the rest of the Rump, persisting with such vindictive and rancorous hostility against Mr. Hunt?" The fact which I have stated is of itself a sufficient reason for their malice; but there are other reasons for the display of the malignant feelings of Mr. Tailor Place and Co. The reader should recollect, that I have often called the public attention to the conduct of this said professed Jacobin Tailor; for instance, when Sir Francis Burdett left the Tower, and the procession was got up for him, Tailor Place undertook to attend, and to take the management of those who were on horseback; but when the time arrived, the Tailor *forgot to attend*, although he was one of the most violent against the Baronet, for going over the water and deceiving the people. Again, when the *famous Inquest* was held upon the body of the murdered SELLIS, in the Duke of Cumberland's apartments in the Palace, *who*, in Heaven's name, should be selected for the *foreman* of that jury which sat on the inquest, who but *Tailor Place, of Charing Cross!* The verdict was *felo de se*, and the body of poor Sellis was buried in a cross road! Tailor Place was considered by some as having been a very *lucky* fellow, to be *selected* as the *foreman* of the said jury, by the Coroner for the Palace. I know, and I beg to remind the public, that the conduct of the said tailor was so very suspicious, that Colonel Wardle and Sir F. Burdett did not fail to speak very plainly upon the subject; and I know also that for many years Sir Francis Burdett would not trust

himself in the same room with the said tailor, and that when he spoke of him he did it in the most unequivocal terms of suspicion and distrust—and more-over, that for many years the late Samuel Brooks never would have any communication with the said tailor. These things, with many others, came to my knowledge, and I never failed to speak of them in the language which they merited, both to the face of the said tailor and behind his back: my friends will therefore at any rate not be surprised at the malignant and cowardly hostility of this part of the Rump, in order to be revenged upon me. The exposures that I have made, the hundred times that I have frustrated the dirty plots of this gang, have entitled me to, and secured to me, the honour of their everlasting hatred, and a high honour I assure them I esteem it.

After the poll had been demanded by Mr. Lamb, the High Bailiff adjourned the election till the next morning, to give time for the workmen to erect a proper hustings. The polling commenced under the most vindictive and malignant feelings towards me on the part of the Rump; in consequence of the disappointment and the defeat which they had sustained, in not carrying the election of Mr. Hobhouse without opposition; which opposition they very justly attributed to me alone. I stood upon the hustings the avowed advocate of the Major, but at the same time the openly avowed opponent of Mr. Hobhouse, because he was the nominee of Sir Francis Burdett, whom I was determined to convince that he was nothing without the support of the people, that people which I contended he had deserted in 1816, when he refused to present their Address and Petition to the Prince Regent, and when he declared himself hostile to Universal Suffrage. The Baronet felt his situation to be such that he must either retire for ever from politics, or make a desperate effort to carry his point; he had set the die upon the election of Mr. Hobhouse, and his failing to carry that election would be a death blow to his popularity throughout England, and to his future influence in Westminster. I thought the Baronet had deserted his post, by refusing his aid and protection to the suffering people, in the years 1816 and 1817, and upon *public* grounds alone was I determined publicly to bring him to a sense of the relative situation in which he stood with the people. Whether I was right, or whether I was wrong, is not the question. I believed that he had neglected his public duty, and I took this public occasion, even as it might be said upon his own dunghill, to convince him of his error. I solemnly declare that I was actuated solely by a sense of what I owed to the public, and that I never in my life felt any private enmity towards Sir Francis; on the contrary, I always entertained a personal regard for him. But no influence on earth could induce me to abandon what I thought a public duty, to gratify any private or personal considerations. I now met Sir Francis Burdett openly upon his own ground, where he had been always idolized, in the midst of his friends, and surrounded by his constituents. I did not go behind his back to attack him, I met him face to face, and I boldly charged him with having deserted the cause of the people. I was indeed urged on to do this in a less courteous manner than I should otherwise have done, by the cowardly and blackguard attacks which I was daily experiencing from the dirty members of the Rump, by whom I was assailed with all the malice, filth, and falsehood which that august body could rake together, and fabricate against me. In fact, when I began to speak, I was baited like a bull, by a set of as cowardly caitiffs as ever disgraced, by their presence, the face of the earth; and, in addition to these, towards the latter end of the election, ruffians and assassins were regularly hired to attack me in a body.

The Baronet attended daily on the hustings, and he went round and visited the committees, and addressed them at night; his purse-strings were thrown open, and, in truth, if the Baronet's life had depended upon the event, he could not have laboured harder or have done more to have saved it, than he did to secure the election of Mr. Hobhouse;—but all would not do! The gang composing the Rump also attended every evening, with their hired myrmidons. As my only object was to expose them and their corrupt system, so their only apparent object now appeared to be to vilify and abuse me, and when, at length, the election of Mr. Lamb seemed to be almost certain, they became desperate. I was not only hissed and hooted, but I was pelted with sticks and stones by their hired agents, and although the people appeared excessively indignant at these outrages, they could not altogether prevent them. A little gang of desperadoes was always placed to open on me as soon as I began to speak, to endeavour to drown my voice in the most vulgar, brutal, and beastly manner. Amongst this gang generally some of the reporters to the Burdettite newspapers took up their station, and in such beastly abuse, as I have alluded to, much too coarse and horrid to mention in print, these worthies freely indulged. The commencement of their attack was, "Hunt, where's your wife?" And then followed a volley of such beastly and disgusting ribaldry as would have disgraced the most abandoned inmates of the lowest brothel in the metropolis.

It had been frequently suggested to me that none but wretches of the most profligate character could be guilty of such atrocious conduct, in which opinion I fully concurred. One day, when I was about to address the people at the close of the poll, this gang began their accustomed attack, and vociferated the most revolting, obscene, and truly horrid observations, relating to my wife; upon which I turned round and asked, if it were possible for such language to proceed from the mouth of any one who possessed the character of a man? And I added, that it did appear to me more than probable, that no one would resort to such cowardly, base, and horrid language, but some monster who was connected

with a gang like that of Vere-street notoriety. This silenced the scoundrels for a moment, but at length some fellow among them took this to *himself*, and demanded if I meant to accuse him of unnatural propensities? I replied that I did not allude to any one individual, but that it did seem clear to me that none but monsters of the worst description could be guilty of such conduct as had been exhibited daily before the hustings when I addressed the people.

This circumstance, which occurred exactly as I have stated it, was, nevertheless, grossly perverted in a great number of the newspapers the next day; they falsely asserting that I had accused a person of being guilty of an unnatural crime, and pointed him out to the vengeance of the multitude before the hustings; and this has frequently been repeated and harped upon since by some scoundrels, who know the utter falsehood of the accusation. It is, however, a very curious fact, which would require but little trouble to prove, that one of the very men who suffered last week at the Old Bailey, for this detestable crime, was a constant attendant at the aforesaid Westminster election, amongst that part of the crowd from whence the horrid insinuations with respect to my wife were daily vociferated. So much for the dreadful cry out that was made against me by the daily press, for having, as they falsely asserted, accused a person wrongfully. I remember at the time of the general election, in 1812, when Mr. Cobbett offered himself a candidate for the county of Hants, a drunken, vulgar blackguard was abusing him in a most beastly and insufferable manner, whereupon Mr. Cobbett seriously informed the people that he was a maniac, and that his opponents had suffered him to escape for the purpose of abusing him; and he made a most feeling appeal to the people, and expostulated, in the most grave and serious manner, upon the baseness and cruelty of suffering the poor maniac to come amongst the crowd to expose himself without his keeper. This appeal had the desired effect, for the drunken ruffian was led away out of the crowd perforce, under the impression that he was actually a madman, who had just escaped from his keeper; yet no one thought of abusing Mr. Cobbett for this trick to get rid of an intoxicated beast, who was unwarrantably abusing him.

I attended the hustings daily till the last day but one, when the success of Mr. Lamb, and the defeat of the Baronet and Mr. Hobhouse, were certain. Mr. Lamb was declared duly elected at the end of the fifteenth day, to the great mortification of Sir Francis Burdett, and the total discomfiture of the Rump; and the CAR which had been provided for the chairing of Sir Francis's disciple, was laid by for another occasion.

For this defeat of the Rump they have solely to thank me. I made them a second time feel the power of courage, honesty and truth, when opposed to fraud, trickery, and pretended patriotism; and this great lesson was read to Sir Francis Burdett, that he was nothing without the support of the people; that all his immense wealth, that all his great and profound talent, and all his influence, were nothing in the scale of political power without the people. The Baronet is, I believe, truly sensible that my exertions have taught him this useful lesson, and, like a truly great and good man, he bears me no malice for performing this painful duty—for I have no hesitation in saying, that it was the most painful, the most trying public duty that I ever performed in the whole course of my life.

The numbers polled at this election were, for Lamb 4465, for Hobhouse 3861, for Major Cartwright 38:—so that Mr. Lamb polled 604 more electors than Mr. Hobhouse. As for Major Cartwright, he had not the slightest chance from the beginning. No real Reformer, no friend of Universal Suffrage, can have the slightest chance to be returned for Westminster, while that rotten borough continues in the hands of a particular family, or while any considerable portion of the electors suffer themselves to be led by the nose by a gang of the most contemptible, as well as most corrupt, men under the face of the sun. As a body of men, the electors of Westminster are, perhaps, as enlightened and intelligent as any body of men in the universe; but the little faction called the Rump, are as contemptible and as corrupt as their brother electors are free and impartial. The great mass of the electors do not take any trouble to inquire about these matters; they are industrious tradesmen, every one of them having business of importance of his own to attend to, and consequently when an election comes they suffer themselves to be led by the nose by a little junto, who have no more pretensions to patriotism than they have to talent and integrity, of which it is plain that they are totally destitute. When I stood the contest for Westminster, at the general election, and only obtained eighty-four votes, it was urged against me how few friends and supporters I had amongst the real electors of Westminster; it was said that I had disgusted and displeased all parties; and Counsellor Scarlett, one of the licenced libellers of the Court of King's Bench, had the impudence to state this fact in the Court, as a proof in what little estimation my character was held; and he added this unblushing, bare-faced falsehood, that "wherever Sir Samuel Romilly offered himself, there I went to oppose him, merely because he was a good man;" while, on the contrary, he well knew that, had not Sir Francis Burdett and his nominee been opposed by *me*, Sir Samuel Romilly, far from being elected for Westminster, would never have been even nominated for that city. But what answer will these trading politicians give to the fact, that Major Cartwright obtained only thirty-eight votes during a contested election of fifteen days? I had made thousands of personal enemies, yet I obtained eighty-four votes; while the Major, who never in his life made a personal

enemy, could only obtain thirty-eight votes, not half the number that polled for me, although he was amongst all his friends, where he had resided for many years, and where he was universally and justly respected, both for his private and his public virtues. The fact is, that of the Major's politics, as of mine, the honesty and sincerity are hated and dreaded by the whole of the Rump faction, who would soon be reduced to their native nothingness, if once a really independent man were to be chosen for Westminster; I mean a man independent, as well of Sir Francis Burdett, as of the Ministry and the Whigs. Till that time arrives, the representation of Westminster will be upon a level with the rottenest of rotten boroughs. We know Sir F. Burdett to be a profound politician, a real and steady friend of Liberty, and a truly great man, yet in the House of Commons he carries no more weight from his being the Representative of the great city of Westminster, than he would do if he were only the Representative of Old Sarum, or any other rotten borough. Such is the abject state to which, by their dirty intrigues, the Rump have reduced this once great and high-minded city, by the exertions of which the whole kingdom was wont to be agitated! Mr. Hobhouse is an active member of the Honourable House, but he dares not quit the leading-strings of the worthy Baronet; and let me ask the honest part of mankind to point out any one great political question which he has brought before the House? What has he done for the people, or for the cause of Liberty, since he has been elected? I am not speaking personally; for I personally feel that Mr. Hobhouse did his best to serve me, when I was in bondage in Ilchester gaol, for which I shall always feel personally grateful; but still, looking at the question on public grounds, I must ask what has he ever done in the House, such as we might and should have formerly expected from one of the independent Members of the city of Westminster? We know that he always votes with the Whigs against the Ministers; but how is it, if he is in earnest, that he has never created any great sensation throughout the country, by some grand exposure of those Ministers, and of that system of which his father, Sir Benjamin, forms so prominent a part? It has often been asked, what can *one man* do in the House? I think I can give a silencing answer to such a time-serving question: What could *not one man* do in the way of exposure, if he were honestly disposed to do it? I think, after the exposure that I made while I was locked up in a gaol, I am entitled most triumphantly to make this answer.

In consequence of the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, Cumberland, and Cambridge disposed of their mistresses, and got married, in order, as it would seem, to secure a heir from the precious stock of the Guelds, to fill the British throne; to accomplish which desirable purpose there appears to have been a hard race, for on the 26th of March, in this year, 1819, the Duchess of Cambridge brought forth a son—on the 27th the Duchess of Clarence was delivered of a daughter—on the 24th of May the Duchess of Kent was delivered of a daughter—and on the 5th of June the Duchess of Cumberland was delivered of a son. So that this worthy family presented John Gull with an increase to their burdens in one year of *four great pauper babes*, to be rocked in the national cradle, and to be bred up at the national expense. Oh, rare John! what a wonderfully happy fellow thou must be! On the 29th of March, the conscientious guardians of our rights and liberties, the faithful stewards of public property, the worthy Members of the Honourable House of Commons, voted an allowance of TEN THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR to the Duke of York—for taking care of his poor old mad father's person; and it is a very extraordinary fact that, on the 12th of April, on one of his early visits to Windsor, to enable him to *earn* this large sum of money from John Gull, his Royal Highness fell in one of the rooms of Windsor Palace, and BROKE HIS ARM. All the old women in the nation, and many of the young ones also, swore that this was a judgment upon him, for extorting such a sum from John Gull's pocket, for such a purpose! On the 17th, Johnston, Bagguley, and Drummond were tried, and, as a matter of course, found guilty of sedition at the Chester assizes. On the 26th of May the House of Commons passed a vote of thanks to Marquis Camden, for giving up the profits of his sinecure place of *Teller of the Exchequer*. This was another precious hoax upon John Gull; the fellow having been actually frightened out of it in 1817, in consequence of the resolutions which were passed at the great public meeting where I had the honour to preside; which meeting was held in the city of Bath, where the Noble Marquis was recorder. On the 1st of June there was a serious riot at Carlisle, by the weavers out of employment. On the 19th there was a very numerous public meeting held at Huntslet Moor, near Leeds; and about the same time, and in the following weeks, very numerous meetings were held at Glasgow, in Scotland, and other places all over the North of England, petitioning for Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot. On the 12th of July a great meeting was held at Newhall Hill, near Birmingham, for Parliamentary Reform, at which Major Cartwright and Mr. Wooler were present. It was said upwards of sixty thousand persons attended, and unanimously elected Sir Charles Wolseley their legislative attorney, and representative for Birmingham, with directions that he should apply to the Speaker to take his seat. On the 13th twenty thousand Spanish troops at Cadiz, destined by Ferdinand to fight against the cause of Liberty in South America, *mutinied and deserted*. On the 15th Bills of Indictment were found, at Chester, against Sir Charles Wolseley and the Rev. Joseph Harrison, for political speeches made at a great public meeting for Reform, at Stockport; and on the 31st the Gazette contained a proclamation against seditious meetings, particularly denouncing the election of representatives or legislative attorneys as illegal.

On the 21st a Reform meeting was held in Smithfield. This meeting was called by some of the inhabitants of the Metropolis, and I was invited to attend and take the chair. Dr. Watson and his friends were particularly active in procuring this meeting, and when the committee invited me to take the chair, I did not hesitate a moment to accept it, though, at the same time, I made up my mind to be particularly careful as to what resolutions were passed, &c. and by no means to be led into the scheme of electing any legislative attorney, as they had done at Birmingham, especially as this scheme had been denounced as illegal by the proclamation in the Gazette the week before. When I came to London, the night before the meeting, I was met by Dr. Watson and the committee, and I desired to see what resolutions they had prepared to be submitted to the meeting the next day. I found, however, that they had only a few very vague and imperfect resolutions drawn up; but the Doctor produced a letter from Joseph Johnson, the brush-maker, at Manchester, saying, that it was the wish of the people of Manchester, that I should, at the Smithfield Meeting, be elected the representative and legislative attorney for the unrepresented people of the Metropolis, &c. He also alluded to the great public meeting, which was to be held at Manchester in the beginning of August, and stated, that it was the intention of the people on that day to follow the example of the people of Birmingham and the Metropolis. It was very easy to discover that the motive of Mr. Johnson for advising the people of the Metropolis to elect me their legislative attorney, was, that he might be elected for Manchester at the ensuing meeting. On this proposition I at once put a negative, by referring to the Gazette, and to the proclamation, adding, that it would be worse than folly to run our heads against such a post; and I further declared, that I saw no good that was to be derived from such a measure. In this the committee at once concurred, and it was agreed, that every intention of that sort should be abandoned, that other resolutions should be drawn up, and that the same DECLARATION which had been passed at the Meeting held in Palace-Yard, and at the Manchester Meeting, at which I presided in the early part of that year, should be proposed to the Smithfield Meeting. It was also decided, that certain conciliatory resolutions, and an address to the Catholics of Ireland, should be submitted to the meeting. Of these resolutions I highly approved.

The next morning, just before the time fixed for the meeting, Mr. James Mills, late of Bristol, called at my lodgings with a string of resolutions, which he wished to be submitted to the meeting. Dr. Watson, I think, was present. These resolutions were read over in a hasty manner, and as hastily adopted, to be made part of the proceedings of the day. I own that this was acting very differently from my usual cautious manner; but, as Mills gave us to understand that they had been laid before Major Cartwright, and I believe he said had been approved of by him, and as he led us also to believe that he would attend at the meeting to move them, they were accordingly sent off to the *Observer* office, to get slips set up, that they might be given to the different reporters who attended the meeting.

Great military preparations were on this occasion made, under the pretence of quelling some tremendous riot, or some apprehended insurrection. The then Lord Mayor, John Atkins, was a corrupt and devoted tool of the Government, and he made himself particularly officious in this affair. Six thousand constables were sworn in the day before, and in the city all was hurry and bustle; and all this was done in order to work upon the fears of the timid and foolish part of the community, to create a prejudice in their minds against the Radicals. When the hour of meeting arrived, an immense multitude was collected, which was computed to consist of not less than seventy or eighty thousand persons. The Rev. Joseph Harrison, from Stockport, attended, and either moved or seconded some of the resolutions; but Mr. Mills, the author of them, never came near the place; or at any rate he never showed himself upon the hustings. A warrant had been issued against Harrison, by the Magistrates of Cheshire, with which the officers had followed him up to town, and, having got it backed by the Lord Mayor, he was apprehended upon the hustings by the city officers. This was evidently done with the view to work upon the feelings of the multitude, and to create an appearance of tumult, that the military might be called in and let loose upon the people, with some apparent show of necessity. Had not care been taken to frustrate it, this plot of the worthy John Atkins would have succeeded; for some one cried out a rescue, and the multitude was spontaneously pressing towards the officers for that purpose; but here my natural presence of mind in emergencies was exercised promptly and with full success. I came forward, and stated to the people what had occurred, and I cautioned them not to be led away by any such plot, to excite them to a breach of the peace; and I demanded of them, in case of a warrant having been issued against me, that they would let me go with the peace-officers quietly, for nothing would delight our enemies so much as to work up the people to tumult and disorder, that they might have a pretence for bloodshed. This had the desired effect. Harrison was taken away peaceably, and the business of the meeting proceeded with the greatest regularity, as if nothing had occurred of a nature to disturb it. This was certainly one of the most cold-blooded attempts to excite a riot that was ever made in this or in any other country. But fortunately I had influence enough over the people to frustrate this plot. The resolutions were passed, and the declaration was carried unanimously, as well as the address to the Catholics; the meeting was dissolved, and the people retired to their homes in the most peaceable manner, after having conducted me, their chairman, to my lodgings.



The slips, which had been printed at the *Observer* office, had been sent to me while I was on the hustings, and I delivered them to the different reporters, who applied for them. Mr. Fitzpatrick, the reporter of the *New Times*. was the only one who had the baseness treacherously to betray this confidence, by voluntarily coming forward in the Court, at York, to swear to the fact of my having furnished him with them upon the hustings. Thus ended the great Smithfield Meeting, held on the 21st of July, 1819.

On the 26th of the same month, at a Common Hall, the Livery of the City of London passed a strong vote of censure upon their Lord Mayor, John Atkins, "for his officious and intemperate conduct on the day of the Smithfield Meeting."

I forgot to mention, in the proper place, that I had been invited to attend and preside at a great public meeting, held at Manchester, in the early part of this year; if I recollect right it was in January. This meeting had been convened by public advertisement. I slept at Stockport the night before, and was accompanied from that town to the place of meeting by thousands of the people. When I arrived there, none of the parties who had invited me to Manchester, Messrs. Johnson, Whitworth, and Co. accompanied me upon the hustings; but they attended a public dinner, which, in the evening, after the meeting, was provided at the Spread Eagle Inn, Hanging Ditch, at which upwards of two hundred persons sat down. I found a number of good men at Manchester, and amongst that number I esteem my worthy friend Mr. Thomas Chapman, of Fannel-street, one of the very best men and most honest advocates of Liberty in the kingdom. I have ever found him the same man in principle, sincere and bold in public, and kind, generous, and open-hearted in private. To know during one's political life, and to possess the friendship of, two or three such men as Mr. Chapman, is more than sufficient recompence for the treachery, cowardice, and baseness of hundreds that one must as a matter of course become acquainted with. Here I first saw Johnson, the brush-maker; he had not the courage to accompany me upon the hustings, although he was one of the most officious to invite me to preside at the meeting. John Knight and Saxton were the men who attended me upon the hustings, and addressed the people, &c. &c. I had never seen either of them before. Mr. Wroe and Mr. Fitton, of Royton, also were upon the hustings. I had seen the latter, as a delegate from Royton, at the meeting of delegates called by Major Cartwright and the Hampden Club, in the name of Sir Francis Burdett, in the year 1817.

As this meeting passed off without any difficulty or danger, Johnson the brush-maker, who was very young in the ranks of Reform, professed a determination to take a more active part at a future opportunity. In conformity with this resolution, he wrote to invite me to attend a public meeting, to be held at Manchester on the 9th of August, which invitation I accepted. The intended meeting being publicly announced in all the London papers, excited a very considerable sensation throughout the country, and particularly through the North of England. As I strongly suspected that my letters to Manchester, about this time, were opened at the post-office, I sent them by other conveyances than by the post. My family appeared to dread my second visit to Manchester, and to forebode some fatal accident, and they endeavoured to persuade me not to attend; but, although I did not anticipate a very pleasant journey, yet I had given my word, and that was quite enough to insure my attendance.

On my road, I stopped to bait my horse at Wolseley Bridge. As soon as I arrived, the landlord of the inn addressed me, and begged to know if my name was Hunt. I answered in the affirmative; upon which he delivered an invitation from Sir Charles Wolseley, requesting me to call on him. He lived only about a hundred yards from the inn. The fact was, I had slept at Coventry the night before, where I met Messrs. Goodman, Lewis, and Flavel, and one of them had written to Sir Charles Wolseley, to say that I should pass Wolseley Bridge in the morning, and this induced him to leave the message which I have mentioned. I accepted his invitation, and this was the first time that I ever met the worthy Baronet in private. I spent a few hours very pleasantly with Sir Charles, who had also, I understood, been invited to attend the meeting at Manchester; but some family reasons prevented him from complying. When I arrived at Bullock Smithey, near Stockport, I heard that the meeting was put off, and that another meeting was advertised to be held on the 16th of August, the following Monday. The cause of this was, that Mr. Johnson and those concerned in calling the meeting had, in their advertisements, stated one of the objects to be, that of electing a representative or legislative attorney for Manchester. This foolish proposition, directly in the face of the late proclamation, was seized on by the Magistrates of Manchester, and they issued hand-bills, and had placards posted all over the town, denouncing the intended meeting as illegal, and cautioning all persons "*to abstain at their peril from attending it.*" Upon this, Mr. Saxton had taken a journey to Liverpool, to obtain the advice of some barrister, of the name of Raincock, who gave it as his opinion that the meeting was advertised for an illegal purpose, and that the Magistrates would be justified in preventing it, or dispersing the people when they were assembled. The parties concerned immediately, therefore, advertised, and placarded the town, to say that the meeting would not take place on the 9th of August; but that another meeting would be convened on Monday the 16th of August, "*to take into consideration the best and most legal means of*

*obtaining a Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament.*" A requisition in these words was immediately drawn up, signed by upwards of seven hundred of the inhabitants, and addressed to the Boroughreeve of Manchester, requesting him to call the meeting. It was presented to the Boroughreeve, who haughtily refused to call the meeting, whereupon it was immediately called in the name of those who signed the requisition, and was appointed by them to be held on the *sixteenth*. All this had taken place; the original meeting of the *ninth*, to which I had been invited, had been abandoned, the new requisition had been signed, and the meeting of the 16th had been appointed, without my having in any way received the slightest intimation of what had been going on. I had arrived on the eighth at Bullock Smithey, which is within ten miles of Manchester, and within three miles of Stockport, where I had appointed to sleep on Sunday, the day previous to the intended meeting, and I had not yet heard one word of its being put off. I had travelled two hundred miles in my gig for the purpose of presiding, and when I learned that I had been made such a fool of, I expressed considerable indignation, and declared my intention of returning into Hampshire immediately. I was, however, at length prevailed upon to proceed to Stockport to sleep that night, as I understood that Mr. Moorhouse had provided a bed for me, and a stall for my horse. On my road to Stockport I was met by Johnson, the brush-maker, and Mr. Saxton, who explained to me the whole of the circumstances, and at the same time expressed a great desire that I should remain in Manchester, to be present at the 16th, as they had, without my knowledge, advertised my name as chairman of the intended meeting. At first I positively refused to comply with their wish, and I assigned more reasons than one for my refusal. At length, it was agreed that I should proceed through Manchester the next day, Monday the 9th, to dine with Mr. Johnson at Smedley Cottage, to meet some friends whom he had invited to join me there.

I slept at the house of Mr. Moorhouse that night, and received from him every polite and kind attention. When I arose in the morning, I was agreeably surprised by a note being brought to me from Sir Charles Wolseley, to say that, soon after I had left Wolseley Park, he had followed me; that he was at the inn, and would accompany me to Manchester, if I would let him know the time at which I meant to start for that place. I immediately waited upon him at the inn, and, after breakfast, we proceeded together in my gig to Manchester, attended by many thousands of the Stockport people. Johnson, the brush-maker, and others, from Manchester, had come to meet us, and they followed in a chaise, and Mr. Moorhouse followed, with a party, in his coach. We were greeted with the utmost enthusiasm by the people of Manchester. In one of the open spaces I addressed them briefly, and explained to them the reason of my then appearing amongst them. I told them that I had travelled two hundred miles to keep my appointment, and that it was not till the day before, when I had arrived within a few miles of their town, that information was given to me of the meeting having been postponed.

We dined at Smedley Cottage; and, after having, for a length of time, resisted the most urgent intreaties, I was at last, though still very much against my inclination, and quite in opposition to my own judgment, prevailed upon to yield to the pleadings of Mr. Johnson and his friends, to remain with him till the following Monday, in order that I might take the chair at the intended meeting. Had Johnson's life depended upon the result, he could not have been more anxious to detain me. He begged, he prayed, he implored me to stay; urging that without my presence the people would not be satisfied; and, in fact, foreboding the most fatal consequences if I departed before the meeting took place. I solemnly declare that I never before consented with so much reluctance to any measure of the sort. I had important engagements of my own to attend to, which I had put off to enable me to take the chair on the 9th, and to remain from home another week would cause me the greatest personal and private inconvenience. I was, nevertheless, ultimately prevailed upon to stay, from a conviction that my presence would promote tranquillity and good order, and under the assurance that, if I did quit the place, confusion and bloodshed would, in all probability, be the inevitable consequence. The manner in which those in authority had treated them, had irritated to the highest degree the people in and near Manchester, and they had also been excited to acts of desperation and violence, by some of those who professed to be their leaders. As for Johnson, the brush-maker, he was a composition of vanity, emptiness, and conceit, such as I never before saw concentrated in one person. It was the most ridiculous thing in the world to see him assuming the most pompous and lofty tone, while every one about him did not fail openly to express contempt for his insignificance and folly. In truth, even amidst all his pomposity, of which he had so enormous a share, this poor creature could not conceal the fact from any one, that he had not the slightest confidence in himself; he expressed the greatest terror at the idea of my leaving to him the management of the intended meeting, and swore that he would run away from it altogether if I did not stay. In this he involuntarily did himself justice; for, in reality, every one appeared to dread the thoughts of the thing being left in his hands. Every thing, therefore, conspired to impress on my mind the conviction that I alone had the power of conducting this great meeting in a peaceable, quiet, and Constitutional manner. I knew and felt, indeed, that it would be a task of great difficulty, danger, and responsibility. Yet as I had never turned my back upon the people because difficulties and dangers presented themselves, so I made up my mind not to desert them upon this trying occasion, when I knew they were surrounded by the most base and blood-thirsty opponents, who were laying in ambush, and only waiting for a pretext to take every unmanly and cowardly

advantage of any accidental disturbance or disorder that might occur. I repeat again, that I consented most reluctantly to accept Johnson's pressing invitation to remain at his house during the intervening week prior to the 16th of August; and I can, with great truth, affirm that this was one of the most disagreeable seven days that I ever passed in my life, not excepting the period of my solitary imprisonment in the Manchester New Bailey and Ilchester Bastile. However, most fortunately for me, Johnson was from home a considerable portion of this time, attending to his brush-making and other business; this alone rendered the visit to Smedley tolerable: he frequently invited me to visit, with him, the surrounding neighbourhood, from the inhabitants of which places I had received pressing invitations; but all these I declined from prudential motives, and it was fortunate I did so, or my prosecutors would have found some pretence for the charge of conspiracy, of which, as it was, they could never bring the slightest shadow of proof.

During this week I was waited upon by many very respectable inhabitants of Manchester and the surrounding country, and on the Friday Mr. Edward Grundy and a friend from Bury called, and informed me that there was a report in circulation in Manchester, that it was the intention of the Magistrates to have me apprehended, under the plea of having committed some political offence, in order to interrupt the proceedings of the meeting; but these gentlemen assured me that they would become my bail to any amount, if it should be so. However, this did not satisfy me, and on Saturday, morning I drove down to the New Bailey, where the Magistrates were sitting, and applied to know if there was any charge against me?—if there was, I begged to know what was the nature of it, as I was then ready to surrender myself and to meet it. Mr. Wright, who was present, appeared surprised at my application, and said he had not heard of any such thing, and he called Nadin, and asked him, if he had heard of any charge having been made against Mr. Hunt? Nadin, who appeared to be surprised at the question, replied, "none whatever." I then informed them that I understood the report to come from the police office, which induced me to attend for the purpose of ascertaining the fact. I was, I told them, then ready, and should at all times be ready, to meet any charge that had been or might be preferred against me; and, consequently, there could be no necessity to issue any warrant or summons whatever, as the slightest intimation of my conduct being called in question would always insure my attendance. Mr. Wright, as well as Nadin, professed they were perfectly satisfied of this, and appeared to shew to me all the polite attention that they were capable of showing. I left the Court House with the full assurance from them that there was no charge against me, nor, as far as they knew of, any person who designed to bring a charge against me. Although I was fully impressed with the treacherous and blood-thirsty characters of those with whom I had to deal; and, of course, was not wholly satisfied of the sincerity of their language, yet I was conscious of having in this instance performed an important duty to the public, by depriving the authorities of every fair pretence for interfering with the proceedings of the intended meeting. I therefore returned to Smedley Cottage, with the conviction upon my mind that I had done all that a man could do, or ought to do, upon such an occasion.

On Sunday morning intimation was brought to me that one Murry, a sort of spy of the police, had, early in the morning, been very much beaten and ill-used, for interrupting some persons, who had assembled on a neighbouring Moor, to practice the method in which they should come into Manchester, to join the meeting on the following day; their wish being to enter the town with that sort of regularity which should give the least possible room for complaint to the authorities. I was sorry to hear of this breach of the peace, as I foresaw that an advantage would be taken of the circumstance, to inflame the minds of those who were perhaps as yet only half bent upon the diabolical plot against the liberties of the people, and that it would be used as a plausible pretext to alarm the more timid part of those who are called the respectables of Manchester. I, therefore, passed the Sunday with that degree of anxiety which every person not wholly devoid of sensibility must have naturally felt for the result of the coming day.

Monday arrived, and a beautiful morning it was. From my bed-room I beheld the people, men, women, and children, accompanied by flags and bands of music, cheerfully passing along towards the place of meeting. Their appearance and manner altogether indicated that they were going to perform an important, a sacred duty to themselves and their country, by offering up a joint and sincere prayer to the Legislature to relieve the poor and needy, by rescuing them from the hands of the agents of the rich and powerful, who had oppressed and persecuted them. In fact, the conduct of the people, in every instance, was such, that none but devils in human form could ever have premeditated to do them any injury.

About twelve o'clock an open barouche was drawn up to the door of Smedley Cottage, to convey to the meeting myself and those who were assembled at Mr. Johnson's. It was settled that I should take the chair, that Johnson should move the Resolutions and the Remonstrance, and that John Knight should second them. It was not anticipated that any other person would address the Meeting. We entered the barouche soon after twelve o'clock on the morning of the 16th of August 1819, and proceeded immediately towards St. Peter's Plain, on which spot the Meeting was to be held. We were

attended by an immense multitude, preceded by a band of music, and we very soon met the Manchester Committee of Female Reformers, headed by Mrs. Fildes, who bore in her hand a small white silk flag. These females were all handsomely dressed in white, and they proposed to lead the procession to the field, walking two and two, but as, in consequence of the crowd, this was found to be impossible, they fell into the rear of the barouche, which position they maintained, with some difficulty, during the whole way till we arrived at the Hustings. Mrs. Fildes, who carried the flag, was taken up at my suggestion, and rode by the side of the coachman, bearing her colours in a most gallant stile. As, though rather small, she was a remarkably good figure, and well dressed, it was very justly considered that she added much to the beauty of the scene; and, as she was a married woman of good character, her appearance in such a situation by no means diminished the respectability of the procession, the whole of which was conducted with the greatest regularity and good order.

When I entered the field or plain, where the people were assembled, I saw such a sight as I had never before beheld. A space containing, as I am informed, nearly five acres of ground, was literally covered with people, a great portion of whom were crammed together as thick as they could stand. Great bodies of people had assembled and marched to the spot in regular order, each striving with the other which should contribute most to the respectability of the meeting by peaceable conduct; every one appeared to be animated with the greatest enthusiasm and devotion to the cause for which they had come together; that cause being solely either to petition, to address, or to remonstrate with, the throne, for a redress of insupportable grievances. Every one appeared to me to be actuated by a similar feeling to that by which I felt that I was prompted in attending the meeting—namely, the performance of an important, a sacred, and a solemn duty to ourselves and our country. Let the reader who was not present picture to his imagination an assemblage of from 180 to 200 thousand English men and women, congregated together to exercise the great constitutional right of laying their complaints and grievances before the throne, and when he has done this, he may form an idea of the scene which met my view.

The moment that I entered the field, ten or twelve bands struck up the same tune, "See the conquering hero comes;" eighteen or twenty flags, most of them surmounted by a Cap of Liberty, were unfurled, and from the multitude burst forth such a shout of welcome as never before hailed the ears of an individual, possessed of no other power, no other influence over the minds of the people, except that which he had gained by an honest, straight-forward discharge of public duty. With some difficulty, and by slow degrees, the carriage was drawn up within a few yards of the Hustings, where the crowd was so dense as to forbid the approach of the carriage any nearer. We alighted, and, an avenue being made for us, we ascended the Hustings. The ladies composing the Committee of Female Reformers had followed close to the carriage up to this point, and therefore it was absolutely necessary to dispose of them in some place of safety, to prevent their being trampled under foot. Some part of them were placed in the carriage, which we had left, and the remainder were assisted upon the Hustings.

Another shout now filled the air, as a compliment to me, and I took off my hat, to endeavour to address this immense multitude, with a full conviction that the very orderly conduct of the people would deprive their enemies of all pretence whatever to interrupt their proceedings. I had scarcely uttered two sentences, urging them to persevere in the same line of conduct, when the Manchester Troop of Yeomanry came galloping into the field, and formed in front of a house occupied by a Mr. Buxton, where it was said the Magistrates had assembled for the purpose of keeping the peace. As soon as the military appeared, the people, (as is always the case under such circumstance) began to disperse and fly from the outskirts. To prevent the confusion likely to arise from such a circumstance, I caused three cheers to be given, which had the desired effect of restoring the confidence of the people, who did not, indeed, suspect it to be possible that the devil himself would have authorised the Yeomanry to commit any violence upon them, as there was not the slightest symptom amongst them that could have created any real fear in the mind of the most timid. Before, however, the cheering was sufficiently ended to enable me to raise my voice again, the word was given, and from the left flank of the troop, the trumpeter leading the way, they charged amongst the people, sabring right and left, in all directions, sparing neither *age*, *sex*, nor *rank*. In this manner they cut their way up to the Hustings, riding over and sabring all that could not get out of their way. In this magnanimous exploit *several fell dead, and hundreds were wounded; and this was done in cold blood, with the most savage ferocity, without the slightest provocation having been given by the people, and without one act of resistance, without ONE STONE, ONE STICK, or ONE FINGER having been raised even to resist, much less to provoke, such a bloodthirsty, such a cowardly, wanton, cruel, and murderous act*. At length it turned out that these diabolical deeds were committed in order, as it was pretended, to execute a warrant, to apprehend myself and others who were upon the Hustings with me. Now I most solemnly declare, that this warrant could have been executed with the greatest possible ease, by any single constable, without the aid of the military, or any breach of the peace whatever; and I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind, that the magistrates were fully sensible of this fact at the time when they ordered the ferocious Yeomanry to charge and cut down the people. The object was to strike terror into the minds

of the assembled multitude, and to pull down reform by the sword, regardless of the blood that would be spilt in the enterprise. That my life was meant to be a sacrifice no reflecting man can for a moment entertain a doubt. We were now seized and taken, by Nadin and his runners, to the house where the worthy projectors of the plot were sitting in solemn conclave. While we were passing to the house, amidst the screams of the flying, and the piercing cries and groans of the dying people, two ruffian Yeoman made several efforts to cut me down, but each time I guarded myself, by placing Nadin between myself and them as they renewed their charge upon me. Nadin endeavoured to escape, and to leave me to their mercy, but, with the aid of providence, I held him fast, and used him as a shield to ward off the deadly blows of these blood-thirsty cowards. Nadin was so alarmed that he at length yielded like a child to the direction of my arm, and quietly suffered himself to be placed before me as they came up, hallowing lustily for them to desist, and using his staff for his protection. They, however, charged, and cut at me several times, and I received three cuts from them, a slight one on the back of my hand, and two others in my head, which cuts penetrated through my hat. As I entered into Buxton's house, pinioned between two constables, Nadin and another, a ruffian came behind me and levelled a blow at my head with a heavy bludgeon, which would have felled me to the earth, had I not been supported by the constables, who had hold of my arms. One fellow very deliberately took off my hat, that the other coward might have a fairer blow at me, which he instantly repeated, and had I not at the moment fortunately slipped my head on one side, my scull must have been fractured. Nadin cried shame at this, and replaced the hat upon my head, saying it was too bad! By this means Nadin saved my life, as it was evidently the intention of the ruffian to have taken it. The fellow who acted such a cowardly and diabolical part, was a general in the English army, of the name of C—y, who was then on half-pay, and living at Pendleton. The following extract from a letter, written to Mr. Sheriff Parkins by his brother, who was an eye-witness of the transaction, speaks for itself; it was given to me by Mr. Parkins to make what use of it I pleased, and I shall therefore insert it verbatim:

"79, *Water-Street, Manchester,*

"I take up my pen to relate to you one of the most daring, cruel outrages that ever was committed on a defenceless people. I was within ten yards of the Hustings, when the cavalry surrounded the stage on which Mr. Hunt, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Knight, and many other gentlemen, whom I personally knew, were standing, with several ladies. At this time the main body of the Cavalry made a charge on the people who were assembled, and cut down all before them; and if I had had a pistol, I would have levelled that villain C—y, who used Mr. Hunt in such an outrageous manner, that if I had gone into eternity that moment, I would have shot him; but I had nothing but a small walking-stick in my hand, with which I parried off several blows that were aimed at me, and thank God I received no material injury. I never saw a man behave with more fortitude than Mr. Hunt did on that most trying occasion.

"Instead of reading the Riot-Act, and ordering the people to disperse, the military came on without any notice whatever. Mr. Hunt was committed to the New Bailey Prison, and what will be the result of all this the Almighty only knows. If you will do a praiseworthy action, come down and back Mr. Hunt, and your name will then be handed down to posterity with the blessing of thousands of your suffering countrymen."

When I came before the worthy Magistrates, I saw that they were dreadfully alarmed at their own deeds. Hulton and Hay took the lead, and we were marched off to the New Bailey, to which we were committed upon a charge of High Treason; it being necessary to make some highly sounding charge, in order to take off the attention of the public as much as possible from the foul deeds that had been perpetrated by the drunken infuriate Yeomanry. I think there were twelve in all committed, and amongst the number was Mr. John Tyas, who attended as a reporter for the Times Newspaper. This circumstance I shall ever consider as a most fortunate. Mr. Tyas is a gentleman of a most respectable family and connections, and it is unnecessary to expatiate on his character and talents, it being, as far as regards these, quite enough to say, that he has long occupied the station of a reporter to the Times Newspaper, a lucrative and responsible situation, which none but a man of character and talent could fill for any length of time. Mr. Tyas was not only present during the procession from Smedley to the Hustings, but he was upon the Hustings, he was apprehended there, taken before the worthy Magistrates, and sent to the New Bailey, where he had the honour to pass twenty-four hours in a solitary cell. He was an eye-witness of the whole affair, and, as he was totally unconnected with any of those who called the meeting, he was capable of giving, and he did give, the most unprejudiced evidence upon the subject, and I hope he will yet live to give his evidence upon an inquiry into this atrocious affair, either at the Bar or before a Committee of the House of Commons; for if ever I get into that House, I pledge myself never to cease my exertions to procure an investigation, a *national investigation*, into the whole affair. If I should become a member of the House of Commons, I will leave no stone unturned, at whatever hazard to myself, to cause such investigation to take place. We were detained in separate cells, in solitary confinement, for eleven days. I was *once* brought *privately* before

the worthies, and questioned, but as *it would not do*, as they could make nothing of me, they gave it up, and we were at last brought up in open Court, and ordered to be held to bail, for a CONSPIRACY to overturn the Government, by frightening out of their seven senses all the old women in breeches who resided at Manchester. It was not so with Johnson. I believe the worthy Magistrates tried us all round, and found us all too staunch to be tampered with; all but Johnson; he, it appears by his own confession, was brought before them, and had several PRIVATE examinations, during which, he offered to give up all the letters which I had written to him, and he at length wrote a letter to his wife, with an order for her to deliver them to the messenger. Fortunately they had been placed by Mrs. Johnson in the hands of his attorney, who had too much honour to obey such disgraceful, such unprincipled instructions from his client. Not that I was afraid of any thing that I had written to any one. But as I had written in the greatest confidence to him, and had sent my letters by coach, via Oxford and Birmingham, because they should not be opened at the Post Office, it would have been a breach of every principle of honesty, honour, and fair dealing, to have given them up to the Magistrates, while I was in their custody under a charge of High Treason. In my political connexions, I have met with some very base and unprincipled fellows, but amongst them all, I do not believe that I ever knew any one, except Johnson, the Brush-maker, who would have voluntarily become such a shameless pander, such a thorough-paced time server, as to have given up my private letters to save his own worthless carcass from the chance of a Trial for High Treason. I repeat that, amongst all the political apostates I have ever known, and they are many, and some of them very vile indeed, I never knew one that I believe would have been so poor and mean a creature as this Johnson.

When we were brought up for final examination, the charge was shifted from that of High Treason to a Seditious Conspiracy to overturn the Government. I was to give bail in £1000 myself, and two sureties in £500 each, which Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Chapman were ready to enter into for me; but, as I was very hot and fatigued with the examination, I returned to my apartment to change my shirt before bail was given. I had not been in my room more than ten minutes before the goaler came to inform me that I must prepare to set off for Lancaster Castle in five minutes, as the magistrates had left the Court, and had ordered that we should be conveyed there immediately, for want of bail. I replied that Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Chapman were prepared to give bail for me, and that they were gone, or going, with Mr. C. Pearson, my attorney, to Mr. Norris's house to do so. The gaoler, a very civil little personage, lamented that he had no discretion, that his orders were peremptory, that a stage-coach, which had been hired for the purpose, was ready, and we must depart in less than five minutes, as a Military Dragoon Guard was in attendance, ready to conduct us thither. I answered *that I would be ready in half the time*, and I began to change my shirt and pack up my trunk before he left the room. The fact was, that the parties had made up their minds, (as is generally the case), before they came into Court; they had resolved upon a committal on the charge of High Treason, and they had given previous orders to prepare a coach and the Military Guard. A messenger had also been dispatched to Bolton, Blackburn, and Preston, to order the troops stationed in those towns to be ready to relieve the guards as they arrived, and to proceed forward. These relays were to have been ready as early as two o'clock in the day, the worthy Magistrates not having calculated upon the turn the question took in the Court, in consequence of my cross-examination of the witnesses produced to substantiate the charge. This cross-examination, which lasted several hours, during which I caused all the witnesses to be removed out of Court except the one under examination, by which means I contrived to make them, not only equivocate and contradict each other, but actually contradict themselves on every material point. This unexpected circumstance caused the worthy Bench of Magistrates to pause a little; they retired to consult, and held a private conference with Mr. Maule, the solicitor to the Crown, who was sent down to conduct the prosecution for the Attorney General. The result of this conference was, that the charge of High Treason was abandoned, and we were to be held to bail for a misdemeanor only.

After I had retired, Johnson and Moorhouse procured bail in Court, and they were liberated immediately. Johnson, I understood, was carried to his home on the shoulders of the populace, but he was totally regardless of what became of his *friend*, who was a stranger in the town. I stepped into the coach, and was followed by John Knight and Dr. Healy; Saxton, Bamford, and three others, wholly unknown to me, were placed on the top of the coach, each attended by one of the police, and with pistols and blunderbusses, &c. Mr. Nadin did us the honour to ride in the coach with us, whilst his runners took their stations aloft; a troop of horse, with swords drawn, surrounded the coach, and off we went for Lancaster, a distance of fifty miles, without my having had an opportunity of seeing or writing to my attorney or friends to apprise them of our departure. As I sat in the coach I wrote three lines with a pencil to Sir Charles Wolseley, merely stating the fact; and I handed it out open, requesting that it might be conveyed to him; but I saw that it was instantly seized by one of our amiable attendants, who took care that it should never reach its destination. We were paraded in this way to Bolton, from which place a fresh troop conducted us to Blackburn; another troop forwarded us to Preston, and a third attended us to Lancaster. At Preston we halted and took some refreshment, for which I offered to pay. Mr. Nadin, however, insisted upon it that I should not do so, as he had *already* given an order upon the treasurer of the county to pay all expenses. Thus, for the first and only time in my life, I was compelled

to take a meal at the public expense.

Previous to our arrival at Preston we were nearly overturned, and the pole of the coach was broken short off. We were consequently obliged to dismount and walk to the next village, to get it repaired. Nadin, who had hitherto conducted himself with great moderation, now burst out into such a strain as would have made a Lethbridgeite's hair stand on end upon his head; he poured forth a volley of oaths, which for atrocity and vulgarity exceeded all I had ever heard before or since, except in the instance of Bridle, the Ilchester Gaoler; he swore that he should lose all his prisoners, &c. &c. and that he would blow out the brains of the coachman and all his runners. I sat perfectly quiet during this disgusting scene, and heard with horror his beastly epithets and dreadful imprecations. At length, having exhausted his rage, he appealed to me in the utmost confusion to know what should be done. I told him we would walk to the next village, where he could get the pole mended; and, as I found that he was preparing to handcuff them together, I assured him that I would be answerable for the safety of all the prisoners. With this assurance he was satisfied, and we proceeded to a small inn upon the road. The news soon spread, the house was very quickly surrounded, and a rescue was boldly and openly offered. This kindness I of course declined, and Mr. Nadin's fears were soon dispelled.

During our stay at Preston, almost all the gentlemen of the town came to see us, as we were at supper. Amongst the number were some sincere friends, although total strangers, who shook me cordially by the hand, in token of their sincerity. We arrived at Lancaster Castle about three o'clock on the Saturday morning, where we found the gaoler, young Higgins, ready to receive us; he having, of course, been previously apprised of the intention of the worthy Magistrates to send us thither, right or wrong. At the door I thanked the officer of the Dragoons for his polite attention, lamenting sarcastically, as I had done to each of the others, that he should have had so much trouble on my account. We then entered the walls of Lancaster Gaol, and were conducted into a spacious dirty room, from which some other prisoners had been removed to make way for us. In an adjoining close room we were all to sleep, and beds were ordered for us. I expostulated against this arrangement, of our all sleeping in the same room; upon which Mr. Higgins replied, that I should be accommodated with a cell. Soon after this we were all removed into a much better and cleaner apartment, adjoining to one of the new round towers, where we spent the day, Saturday, in procuring materials for cooking, &c. &c. At Lancaster Castle nothing was provided for political prisoners, not even a trough to wash their hands in. My companions, not having anticipated such a journey when they attended the meeting on the 16th of August, could only muster a few shillings amongst them, but as I had a few pounds in my pocket, every thing necessary was soon provided, such as it was.

The fools, the mad-headed fools, who sent us to make a parade through their county, little dreamt of the feeling which it would create; I own I felt very indignant at the selfish conduct of Johnson, who had invited me to Manchester, although I never expressed this to my fellow prisoners. I was, however, quite sure that the moment Sir Charles Wolseley, Mr. Chapman, and Mr. Pearson were made acquainted with the dirty trick of the Magistrates, that they would lose no time in procuring bail, and forwarding it for my release.

When seven o'clock came, we were ordered into our cells in the Round Tower, and most infamously close they were. I thought that I should have been suffocated for some time after I entered it. I, however, laid myself down, and soon fell into a sound sleep, from which I was roused about nine o'clock, by the turnkey, who came to inform me that a gentleman was arrived with bail for me and John Knight. I soon dressed myself, and having taken leave of Saxton and Bamford in the adjoining cells, we proceeded to the Lodge, where I found my worthy friend Chapman, who had come over from Manchester, as soon as he could get Mr. Norris to take the bail of himself and Sir Charles Wolseley, which the Magistrate had contrived to avoid on Friday night, under a pretence that he was engaged. Mr. Chapman had procured two Magistrates of the town of Lancaster, one of them of the name of Salusbury, who came down to the Gaol to take our recognizance, notwithstanding it was an excessively wet night, and which might have afforded them something like an excuse to have kept us in the Castle till Monday morning. But they proved themselves the very reverse of the Manchester Magistrates, at whose conduct they appeared to feel ashamed and disgusted, and they did all that honourable men and gentlemen could do to wipe their hands of all connection with them.

We bid adieu to the Castle, and slept at the inn in Lancaster that night. In the morning we proceeded on our return to Manchester, where Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Pearson were waiting to receive me. We stopped and took some refreshment at Preston, where some of the worthy Electors of that town introduced themselves to us, and there and then it was that I received and accepted an invitation to become a Candidate for the Representation of that Borough, at the approaching general election. In the evening we reached Bolton, at which town we slept, and there I became acquainted with some of the very best men in the kingdom. In fact, to have been introduced to the worthy men of Preston and of Bolton was worth more than all the inconvenience I suffered from being dragged through the county under a military escort. The enthusiasm manifested by the people of Bolton, of all ranks and degrees,

surpassed every thing I had ever before witnessed, and it impressed my mind with a respect and attachment for that town, which will never be eradicated from my breast till the heart which it contains ceases to beat.

My reception in Manchester, the next day, which place we entered about three o'clock, surpassed all description. Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Pearson came to meet us about a mile beyond Pendleton, and the spontaneous expressions of the whole population, which appeared to have turned out to receive and welcome me, it is utterly impossible for my pen to describe. From my worthy friend Chapman, during our journey from Lancaster, I learnt the history of the bloody proceedings of the 16th of August, and my soul was struck with horror and indignation by the recital.

I returned to Johnson's house at Smedley, although Mr. Chapman had informed me of the report of his cowardly and base conduct, while he was confined in the New Bailey, of his having offered and actually written to his wife to give up all my confidential correspondence to the Magistrates, to enable them to make out a charge of *High Treason* against me, upon condition that he should be admitted what is called KING'S EVIDENCE. Notwithstanding Mr. Chapman assured me that he believed this report to be true, and produced to me almost incontrovertible proof of the fact, still I could not possibly bring my mind to believe that any one could be guilty of such incomparable baseness, and much less that Mr. Johnson, with all his devotion, with all his professions of friendship and regard, could be such a mean, dirty, cowardly dog; and I never should have credited it to its full extent if the wretched slave had not confessed it with his own lips.

While I was confined in the New Bailey, not a soul was allowed to have any access to me but the officers of the Gaol, and latterly my servant, in the presence of the gaoler. I had written to Mr. Charles Pearson, to request his professional assistance, which of course was the greatest proof I could give of the high estimation I entertained of his honour, talent, and political integrity. It is true that I was only slightly acquainted with him at the time, but the result proved that I was perfectly justified in the choice which I made, and the confidence which I placed in him. To have been cursed with either a fool or a knave, under such circumstances, would have been worse than death itself; but I found him to be, what I expected, a man of brilliant talent, and of inflexible political honesty, yet possessed, at the same time, of an intimate knowledge of all the quirks, quibbles, tricks, and shuffles of both the bar and the bench, as well as of all the intermediate ranks between the lowest catchpoll and the highest elevated judge upon the bench. Though he has since been unfortunate in his pursuits, and though he was sometimes inattentive and careless, and though I have heard others complain of him, yet, in the midst of all his foibles and follies, for follies and foibles he has as well as other men, I can safely say that up to this hour, when put to the test, in all his dealings, relations and connections with me, I have found him actuated by the strictest notions of honour, honesty, and conscientious integrity. In a matter of importance, in a case of life and death, such a case as I was then concerned in, I would rather have the professional assistance of Mr. Pearson, even under his present circumstances, if he would devote himself to it, than that of any other man I ever met with in his profession.

While I was imprisoned in Manchester, Mr. Wooler called a Public Meeting, at the Crown and Anchor, and some spirited resolutions were entered into; and a subscription was set on foot for the relief of those who had suffered at Manchester, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of the horrid murders and cruelties committed on the 16th of August. Major Cartwright was appointed the Treasurer. Sir Francis Burdett likewise addressed an excellent letter to his Constituents, to call a meeting upon the subject. This letter was calculated to rouse into action every man in the kingdom who had a heart in his body, and I verily believe that in any country in the world, except England, such a letter, written to the people by a man of Sir Francis's rank, would have caused the whole people to rise in arms to avenge the horrid murders which had been committed upon their helpless, unoffending countrymen. Meetings were, however, called all over the kingdom, to petition the King and the Parliament to investigate the affair, and to bring to justice the authors of such a dreadful outrage upon the lives and liberties of the people.

In the mean time the subscription set on foot by Mr. Wooler began to fill apace—a circumstance which was calculated to have the very best effect. It, nevertheless, excited the envy and jealousy of the worthies who composed the Westminster, the Borough, and the City of London Rump Committees, and they lost no time in devising the means of getting the management out of the honest hands of those who had taken up the measure. These gentry, who understand how to manage their matters so well, soon wormed themselves and their agents into the Committee, in sufficient numbers to form a majority; and this being accomplished, the next step was to propose to elect four of the Westminster or Burdettite Rump; four of the City, or Waithmanite Rump; and four of the Borough, or Wilson Rump, and these twelve worthies were to form what they themselves were pleased to denominate the Metropolitan Committee, to manage the Subscriptions, and the affairs of the Manchester Sufferers. Major Cartwright and Mr. Wooler were disgusted with the proceedings, and the Major immediately resigned his office of Treasurer, upon which they appointed their own Treasurer, and, in the most unblushing



manner, proposed to send Mr. Harmer, a relation of one of the leaders of the party, down to Lancaster, to prefer Bills of Indictment against the Yeomanry, and to assist in defending myself and others who had been prosecuted by the Government. It was, however, suggested by some one of them, that it was too bare-faced a job to send Mr. Harmer down, who had written for, and had already got Mr. Pearson down to assist us, and therefore it was agreed upon, to appoint Mr. Harmer and Mr. Pearson to act jointly in this affair. Mr. Harmer was consequently sent off post to Manchester, to do that which Mr. Pearson, who was on the spot, was so fully competent to have done.

The moment that I heard of these proceedings, I foretold, to Mr. Pearson and Sir Charles Wolseley, every thing that would happen, and how the subscriptions would be misapplied; all of which predictions have been verified to the very letter. Mr. Harmer did not arrive till after we had undergone the final hearing before the Magistrates, till they had abandoned the charge of High Treason, till we had been sentenced to Lancaster Castle, after having undergone an imprisonment of eleven days' solitary confinement; he did not arrive till all this had taken place, and we had been bailed and returned from Lancaster; all this had occurred, and we might have all been committed to Lancaster Castle for High Treason, several days before Mr. Harmer, the Attorney of the Trinitarian Rump Committee, reached Manchester, if it had not been for the assistance of Mr. Pearson and my own personal exertions.

Bills of Indictment were preferred before the Grand Jury at Lancaster, against Owen, Platt, and Derbyshire, for perjury. The first was found a true bill, although bills against the two others were ignored upon the very same evidence. Bills were also preferred against several of the Yeomanry Cavalry, for cutting and maiming men, women, and children, in the most wanton, cruel, and murderous way, on the 16th of August, not only at the meeting on St. Peter's Plain, but likewise in various parts of Manchester; and, in one or two instances, for cutting and maiming those who had never been at the meeting at all, and who were merely standing at their own doors, looking at the military, who were hunting, driving, cutting and slaying in all directions, regardless of age or sex. All the bills, notwithstanding they were supported by the most unquestionable testimony, and all the parties were identified, ALL, ALL of them were ignored and thrown out by a Lancashire Grand Jury, the foreman of which was Lord Stanley, the great Whig Member for that County. Lord Stanley is the eldest son of Lord Derby, who is a regular supporter of the Whigs in the House of Lords, and Lord Stanley is a regular supporter of all Whig measures in the House of Commons. This Whig, Lord Stanley, was also one of the most violent against a parliamentary inquiry into the transaction, when the question was brought before the House of Commons.—The Lord deliver us from the tender mercies of the Whigs, I say!

The bill that was preferred by the Crown, against myself and others, for attending the Manchester meeting, was found immediately, and bail to a heavy amount was required for the appearance of all the parties at the Assizes; which bail could never have been obtained for many of the party, who were very poor men, had it not been for the magnanimous and truly generous conduct of Sir Charles Wolseley. He not only, in the first instance, came to Manchester to bail me, but he remained at Manchester, assisting in causing the bloody Yeomanry to be indicted, and he went to Lancaster, and attended the whole time, and at length became the voluntary bail for every one that could not procure it otherwise. This was really acting a true, noble, manly, and patriotic part! Sir Charles actually saved several of those who were indicted with me from remaining in prison from September to the following March. By his magnanimous behaviour he proved himself to be in reality, an independent, upright Radical, a real friend to justice and humanity. In this affair, Sir Charles Wolseley did more to serve the cause of Liberty and the People, than was done by all the Aristocracy and all the Country Gentlemen in England put together.

Sixteen persons had been murdered, and upwards of Six Hundred had been badly wounded, on the Sixteenth of August. Coroners' Inquests had been held, without effect, upon several of the bodies! "They all died a Natural Death!" till, at last, an Inquest was held at Oldham, on the body of John Lees. This Inquest was attended by Mr. Harmer, and, at the end of the third or fourth day, the evidence was so conclusive, that the Jury were prepared to have returned their verdict of Wilful Murder! but, by some extraordinary fatality, by some unaccountable cause, Mr. Harmer kept calling fresh witnesses, and the Inquest was adjourned from day to day, and from place to place, for a month, and after the last adjournment, they never met again. As the Petition of Robert Lees, the father of the murdered man, speaks fully for itself, and will explain this very curious circumstance better than any thing that I can say, I shall conclude the subject by inserting it at full length, as follows:—

**"TO TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.**

The HUMBLE PETITION of ROBERT LEES,  
Of OLDHAM, in the County Palatine of LANCASTER,  
Cotton-spinner,

SHEWETH, That your Petitioner's son, John Lees, a youth twenty-two years of age, having attended the meeting held at Manchester on the 16th of August last, was, as your Petitioner is led to believe, without any just cause or provocation, most inhumanly attacked and cut by Yeomanry Cavalry, and afterwards most unmercifully beaten with the clubs or batons of Police and Special Constables, and also trampled upon by the horses of the Cavalry, whereby he was so much injured, that he was, from that time, incapable of attending to his ordinary employment, and lingered in pain and debility until the night of the 6th of September following, when he died.

That the Surgeon who attended your Petitioner's son having certified that his death was occasioned by violence, several householders in Oldham and the neighbouring townships were served, late in the evening of the 7th of September, with summonses from the Coroner of the district, to attend the next morning at half-past ten o'clock, to serve as Jurors on an inquest to be held on the body of your said Petitioner's son. At the time appointed the said Jurors assembled, and were met by a person named BATTYE, who attended as Deputy for the said Coroner, for the purpose of inquiring into the cause of the death of your Petitioner's son; and, having sworn the Jury, he went with them to take a view of the body. But, finding that several witnesses had arrived from Manchester, to give evidence upon the said inquiry, he refused to proceed in the inquest; and having adjourned the same for three hours, he, at the expiration of that time, further adjourned until the 10th day of the same month, when the said BATTYE promised, that either Mr. FERRAND, his employer, or Mr. MILNE, a neighbouring Coroner, should certainly attend and proceed in the investigation.

"That, on the next day, a Surgeon attended, by the direction of the said Mr. BATTYE, to open and examine the body of your Petitioner's son; and he was then allowed to be interred.

"That, on the 10th day of September, the Jury again assembled; but, although Mr. MILNE attended, he refused to interfere in the business, as he said it did not belong to his district; and the inquest was further adjourned until the 25th day of the same month. And, during this interval, some of the Manchester newspapers inserted the vilest falsehoods, to depreciate the reputation of the deceased, with a view, as your Petitioner believes, to extinguish every feeling of sympathy for his fate.

"That, on the said 25th day of September, Mr. FERRAND attended; and, after swearing the Jury, and ascertaining from them that they had all seen the body, he proceeded to examine witnesses; but, in the course of the investigation, he adjourned several times for days together, without any reasonable or probable cause, and merely, as your Petitioner believes, to harass and tire out the witnesses, who came day after day a considerable distance to give testimony.

"That, in detailing his complaint to your Honourable House, your Petitioner exceedingly regrets he should be  
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It is possible that these pages were suppressed as they were "written by himself in H'.M's Jail at Ilchester".

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