THE

SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM WINDHAM,

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4, 1801,

ON THE

REPORT OF AN ADDRESS TO THE THRONE,

APPROVING OF THE

PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE

WITH THE

REPUBLICK OF FRANCE.

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WILLIAM WINDHAM, &c.

SIR,

IN the present stage of this business, and in a House so little numerous, I am not disposed to take up the subject in the way in which I should have wished to consider it, had I been able with tolerable satisfaction to myself, to deliver my sentiments in the debate of last night. Something, however, I wish to say, founded in a great measure on what then took place.

All that I heard, and all that I saw, on that occasion, tends only to confirm more and more the deep despair in which I am plunged, in contemplating the probable consequences of the present Treaty.

Not-

Notwithstanding some lofty talk which we heard of dignity and firmness, and which I shall be glad to see realized, and a happy quotation, expressive of the same sentiments, from my Honourable Friend not now present (Mr. Pitt), the real amount of what was said, seems to be little more than this:—that France has, to be sure, the *power* of destroying us, but that we hope she will not have the *inclination*;—that we are under the paw of the lion, but that he may happen not to be hungry, and, instead of making a meal of us, may turn round in his den, and go to sleep.—This is not stated in so many words: but it will be difficult to shew, that it is not the fair result of the arguments.

That I should have lived to see the day, when such arguments could be used in a British House of Commons!—that I should have lived to see a House of Commons, where such arguments could be heard with patience, and even with complacency!—The substance of the statement is this. We make Peace, not from any necessity actually existing, (my Honourable Friends, with great propriety, reject that supposition,) but because we foresee a period, at no great distance, when such a necessity must arise; and we think it right, that provision

for

for such a case should be made in time.—We treat, or, to take at once the more appropriate term, we capitulate, while we have yet some ammunition left. General Menou could do no more. General Menou could do no more in one sense; but in another he did, I fear, a great deal more:—a point to which I must say a word hereafter;—he did not abandon to their fate those whom he had invited to follow his fortunes, and to look up to him as their protector. Both, however, capitulated; and upon the plain and ordinary grounds of such a proceeding, namely, that their means of resistance must soon come to an end, and that they had no such hopes of any fortunate turn in their favour, as to justify a continuance of their resistance in the mean time. The conduct of both in the circumstances supposed, was perfectly rational: but let us recollect, that those who stand in such circumstances, be they generals or be they nations, are, to all intents and purposes, *conquered!* I know not what other definition we want of being conquered, than that a country can say to us, "we can hold "out, and you cannot; make Peace, or we will "ruin you:" and that you, in consequence, make Peace, upon terms which must render a renewal

of hostilities, under any provocation, more certainly fatal than a continuation of that War, which you already declare yourselves unable to bear.

If such be the fact, we may amuse ourselves with talking what language we please; but we are a *conquered people*. Bonaparte is as much our master, as he is of Spain or Prussia, or any other of those countries, which, though still permitted to call themselves independent, are, as every body knows, as completely in his power, as if the name of *department* was already written upon their foreheads.—There are but two questions,—Is the relation between the countries such, that France can ruin us by continuing the War? and will that relation in substance remain the same, or rather will it not be rendered infinitely worse, by Peace, upon the terms now proposed?—If both these questions are answered in the affirmative, the whole is decided, and we live henceforward by sufferance from France.

Sir, before we endeavour to estimate our prospects in this new and honourable state of existence I wish to consider for a moment, what the reasonings are, that have determined our choice, as to the particular mode of it; and why we think that ruin by War

must

must be so much more speedy and certain, than ruin by Peace. And here I will take pretty much the statement given by the Honourable Gentlemen who argue on the other side.

I agree, that the question is not, whether this Peace be good or bad, honourable or dishonourable, adequate or inadequate; whether it places us in a situation better or worse, than we had reason to expect, or than we were in before the War. All these are parts of the question, and many of them very material parts; but the question itself is, whether the Peace now proposed, such as it is, be better, or not, than a continuation of hostilities? —Whether, according to a familiar mode of speech, we may not go further and fare worse?—Whether, to take the same form in a manner somewhat more developed and correct, the chances of faring better, compared with the chances of faring worse, and including the certainty of the intermediate evils, do not render it adviseable upon the whole, that we should rest contented where we are.

This I take to be the statement of the question, on the present, and on all similar occasions: nor do I know of any addition necessary to be

made, except to observe, that in estimating the terms of Peace in the manner here proposed, you are not merely to consider the physical force, or pecuniary value, of the objects concerned, but also the effect which Peace, made in such and such circumstances, is likely to have on the character and estimation of the country; a species of possession, which, though neither tangible nor visible, is as much a part of national strength, and has as real a value, as any thing that can be turned into pounds and shillings, that can be told by the score or hundred, or weighed out in avoirdupoise. Accordingly a statesman, acting for a great country, may very well be in the situation of saying,—I would make Peace at this time, if nothing more were in question, than the value of the objects now offered me, compared with those which I may hope to obtain: but when I consider what the effect is, which Peace, made in the present circumstances, will have upon the estimation of the country; what the weakness is which it will betray; what the suspicions it will excite; what the distrust and alienation it will produce, in the minds of all the surrounding nations; how it will lower us in their eyes; how it will teach them universally to fly from

connexion with a country, which neither protects its friends, nor seems any longer capable of protecting itself, in order to turn to those, who, while their vengeance is terrible, will not suffer a hair of the head to be touched, of any who will put themselves under their protection:—when I consider these consequences, not less real, or permanent, or extensive, than those which present themselves in the shape of territorial strength or commercial resources, I must reject these terms, which otherwise I should feel disposed to accept, and say, that, putting character into the scale, the inclination of the balance is decidedly the other way.

Sir, there is in all this nothing new or refined, or more than will be admitted by every one in words; though there seems so little disposition to adhere to it in fact.—If we refer to the practice of only our own time, what was the case of the Falkland Islands and Nootka? Was it the value of these objects, that we were going to War for? The one was a barren rock, an object of competition for nothing but seals and seagulls: the other a point of land in a wilderness, where some obscure, though spirited, adventurers had hoped that they might in time establish a trade with the

 savages

savages for furs. Were these, objects to involve nations in Wars? If there was a question of their doing so, it was because considerations of a far different kind were attached to them,—considerations of national honour and dignity; between which and the objects themselves, there may often be no more proportion, than between the picture of a great master, and the canvass on which it is painted.

If I wished for authorities upon such a subject, I need go no further than to the Honourable Gentleman, [Mr. Fox,] who has recurred to a sentiment, produced by him formerly with something of paradoxical exaggeration, (though true in the main,) namely, that Wars for points of honour, are really the only rational and prudential Wars in which a country can engage. Much of the same sort is the sentiment of another popular teacher, JUNIUS, who, upon the subject of these very Falkland Islands, says, in terms which it may be worth while to quote, not for the merit of the language, nor the authority of the writer,—though neither of them without their value,—but to show, what were once the feelings of Englishmen, and what the topicks chosen by a writer, whose object it was to recommend himself to the people:

"To

" To depart, in the minutest article, from the ni-
" cety and strictness of punctilio, is as dangerous
" to national honour, as it is to female virtue.
" The woman who admits of one familiarity, sel-
" dom knows where to stop, or what to refuse;
" and when the counsels of a great country give
" way in a single instance, when they are once
" inclined to submission, every step accelerates the
" rapidity of their descent !"

We are not therefore, according to the present fashion, to fall to calculating, and to ask ourselves, what is the value at market of such and such an object, and how much will it cost us to obtain it. If these objects alone were at stake, I should admit the principle in its full force; and should be among the first to declare, that no object of mere pecuniary value could ever be worth obtaining at the price of a War: but when particular points of honour are at stake, as at Nootka or the Falkland Islands (without inquiring, whether in those cases the point of honour was either well chosen, or rightly estimated); and still more, where general impression, where universal estimation, where the conception to be formed of the feelings, temper, power, policy, and views of a great nation

are

are in question, there to talk of calculating the loss or profit of possessions to which these considerations may be attached, by their price at market, or the value of their fee-simple, is like the idea of Dr. Swift, when he compares the grants to the Duke of Marlborough, with the rewards of a Roman conqueror, and estimates the crown of laurel at two-pence.

The first question for a great country to ask itself,—the first in point of order, and the first in consequence,—is this: Is the part which I am about to act consonant to that high estimation which I have hitherto maintained among the nations of the world? Will my reputation suffer?—whether that reputation relate to the supposed extent of its means, to the vigour and wisdom of its counsels, or to the uprightness of its intentions. If, in any of these ways, the country is to sustain a loss of character; if the effect of what is proposed be to render it less respected, less looked up to, less trusted, less feared; if its firmness in times of trial, its fidelity to its engagements, its steady adherence to its purposes through all fortunes, are to be called in question; it must be a strong necessity indeed, stronger than any which I believe to exist in the present instance,

that

that ought to induce it even to listen to counsels liable to be attended with any of these consequences. It must be a weighty danger, that, in the scales of a great country, can be allowed to balance the loss of any part of its dignity. What then shall we say of a country, which, abandoning from the outset every consideration of this sort, will not wait till it becomes insecure by ceasing to be respectable, but becomes unrespectable by ceasing to be secure? Which drops at once at the feet of its rival? Which begins by a complete surrender of its security; and suffers fame, character, dignity, and every thing else, to go along with it?

Whether such is the situation of this country, we shall judge better by taking a short view of the terms of the proposed Peace. The description of these is simple and easy:—France gives nothing, and, excepting Trinidad and Ceylon, England gives every thing. If it were of any consequence to state what in diplomatick language was the basis of this treaty, we must say, that it had no *one* basis; but that it was the *status quo*, on the part of England, with the two exceptions in its favour, of Ceylon and Trinidad; and the *uti possidetis*, with the addition of all the other English con-

quests,

quests, on the part of France. But what may be the technical description of the treaty, is, comparatively, of little importance. It is the result that is material, and the extent of power and territory, now, by whatever means, actually remaining in the hands of France. The enumeration of this, liable indeed in part to be disputed, but upon the whole sufficiently correct, may be made as follows:

In Europe.—France possesses the whole of the Continent, with the exception of Russia and Austria. If it be said, that parts of Germany, and the Northern courts of Denmark and Sweden are not fairly described as being immediately under the control of France, we must balance this consideration by remarking, the influence which France possesses in these governments, and the commanding position which she occupies with respect to Austria, by the possession of Switzerland and Mantua, and those countries which have been considered always, and twice in the course of the present War, have proved to be, the direct inlet into the heart of her dominions.

In Asia,—Pondichery, Mahé, Cochin, Negapatam, the Spice Islands.

In

In Africa,—the Cape of Good Hope, Goree, Senegal.

In the Sea that is inclosed by these three continents, which connects them all, and furnishes to us in many respects our best and surest communication with them,—the Mediterranean,—every port and post except Gibraltar, from one end of it to the other, including the impregnable and invaluable port of Malta; so as to exclude us from a sea, which it had ever before been the anxious policy of Great-Britain to keep in her hands,—and to render it now, truly and properly, what it was once idly called, the Sea of France.

In the West Indies,—St. Domingo, both the French and Spanish parts, Martinico, St. Lucie, Guadaloupe, Tobago, Curaçao.

In North America,—St. Pierre and Miquelon, with a right to the fisheries in the fullest extent to which they were ever claimed; Louisiana, (so it is supposed,) a word dreadful to be pronounced, to all who consider the consequences with which that cession is pregnant, whether as it acts northward, by its effects upon the United States, or southward, as opening a direct passage into the Spanish settlements in America.

In South America,—Surinam, Demerary, Berbice, Essequibo, taken by us and now ceded;—Guiana, and by the effect of the Treaty fraudulently signed by France with Portugal, just before the signature of these Preliminaries, a tract of country extending to the river Amazon, and giving to France the command of the entrance into that river. Whether, by any secret article, the evils of this cession will prove to have been done away, time will discover. In fact, (be that as it may,) France may be said to possess the whole of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements upon that Continent. For who shall say, that she has not the command of those settlements, when she has the command of the countries to which they belong;—*cum custodit ipsos custodes?* She has, in truth, whatever part of the Continent of South America she chooses to occupy; and as far as relates to the Spanish part, without even the necessity, a necessity that probably would not cost her much, of infringing any part of the present Treaty.

Such is the grand and comprehensive circle to which the New Roman Empire may be soon expected to spread, now that Peace has removed all obstacles, and opened to her a safe and easy

passage

passage into the three remaining quarters of the globe. Such is the power, which we are required to contemplate without dismay! under the shade of whose greatness we are invited to lie down with perfect tranquillity and composure! I should be glad to know, what our ancestors would have thought and felt in this situation? what those weak and deluded men, so inferior to the politicians of the present day, the Marlboroughs, the Godolphins, the Somers's, the King Williams, all those who viewed with such apprehension the power of Louis XIV., what they would say to a Peace, which not only confirms to France the possession of nearly the whole of Europe, but extends her empire over every other part of the globe. Is there a man of them, who would not turn in his coffin, could he be sensible to a twentieth part of that which is passing, as perfect matter of course, in the politicks of the present moment?

But to all these mighty dangers we have, it seems, one great security to oppose; not that degrading and bastard security to which I have before adverted, and to which, I fear, I must again recur,—that France is *lassata*, if not *satiata*; that having run

down her prey, she will be content to spare it, and be willing for a while to leave us unmolested ;— but a rational, sober, well-founded security, applicable to the supposition that she may not be wanting in the will to hurt us, but will happily not possess the power. This great security, we are told, is our wealth. We are, it seems, so immensely rich, our prosperity stands on so sure and wide a basis, we have such a pyramid of gold, so beautifully constructed, and so firmly put together, that we may safely let in all the world to do their worst against it ; they can never overturn it, and might spend ages in endeavouring to take it to pieces. We seem to consider our commercial prosperity, like those articles of property, timber, marble, and others of that sort, which, however valuable, may be safely left unguarded, being too weighty and bulky to be carried away.

Sir, the first circumstance that strikes one in this statement, is, that odd inconsistency, by which a country that makes Peace on account of its poverty, is to rest its whole hope of security in that Peace, upon its wealth. If our wealth will protect us, it is a great pity that this discovery was not made long ago ; it would have saved us many years of painful

struggle ;

struggle; have kept in our hands a great additional portion of these very means of protection; and have lessened considerably the dangers against which such protection is wanted. But wealth, I fear, abstracted from certain means of using it, carries with it no powers of protection, either for itself or others. Riches are strength, in the same manner only as they are food. They may be the means of procuring both. But we shall fall into as great a folly, as in the fable of Midas, if we suppose that when we have laid down our arms, and surrendered our fortresses, our wealth, alone, can afford us any protection. I cannot therefore, for my own part, understand what is meant by this, unless it be, that by superiority of capital, and priority of market, of which I allow the effects to be immense, we might, if things were left to themselves, in a fair competition, in a fair race, still keep a-head of our competitors, in spite of all the multiplied advantages which France will now possess. This might be so; though it is by no means clear that it would. But the competition will not be left to its natural course. This game will not be fairly played. Buonaparte is a player, who, if the game is going against him, will be apt to pick a quarrel,

and ask us, if we can draw our swords.—And here perhaps, it is time to remark the singular fallacy, which has run through all the reasonings of Gentlemen on the other side; that, namely, of supposing, that in discussing the present question, the Peace, such as it is, is the state which is to be contrasted with the continuance of the War.—They forget, or choose that we should forget, that this Peace may, at any moment, at the mere pleasure of the enemy, be converted into a new War; differing only from the other, by the ground which we in the mean while shall have lost, and the numerous advantages which the enemy will have acquired. There is not the least reason why this Treaty, if the enemy should so please, should be any thing more than a mere piece of legerdemain, by which they shall have got possession of Malta, have established themselves in all their new colonies, have perhaps re-entered Egypt, have received back twenty or thirty thousand seamen, and have otherwise put themselves into a situation to recommence the War, with new and decisive advantages. If they do not immediately take this course, it will be, simply, because they will hope to succeed as well without it; or, because they choose to defer it till a more convenient

nient opportunity: The means will, at every moment, be in their power.

Two suppositions are, therefore, always to be made, and two comparisons to be instituted, when we talk of the merits of this Peace: 1st. That the enemy will choose to adhere to it, or 2dly, that they will break it: and the two comparisons to be formed in consequence are, 1st. The comparison between a continuation of the War and a state of Peace, such as it will be under the present Treaty; and 2dly, a comparison of that continuation with such a War as France may revive at any moment after the present Treaty shall have taken effect.

What the condition and feelings of the country would be, in this latter case, namely that of a renewed war, I need hardly point out. The dread in fact of what they would be, will operate so strongly, that the case will never happen. The country will never bear to put itself in a situation, in which the sense of its own folly will press upon it in a way so impossible to be endured. At all events, with its present feelings and opinions, the country never *can* go to war again, let France do what she will: for, if we are of opi-

nion,

nion, that war, continued at present, must be ruin in the course of a few years, what do we suppose it must be, when, to replace us, where we now are, we must begin by the recovery of that list of places, which the present treaty has given up? France, therefore, will be under no necessity of going to war with us: and nothing but her own intemperance and insolence, and an opinion of our endurance and weakness, beyond even what they may be found to deserve, can force upon us that extremity. She has much surer and safer means of going to work, means, at the same time, sufficiently quick in their operation to satisfy any ordinary ambition:—she has nothing to do but to trust to the progress of her own power in peace, quickened, as often as she shall see occasion, by a smart threat of war. I cannot conceive the object, which a judicious application of these two means is not calculated to obtain. A Peace, such as France has now made, mixed with proper proportions of a seasonable menace of war, is a specifick, for the undoing a rival country, which seems to me impossible to fail.—Let us try it in detail.—Suppose France, by an arrangement with that *independent* power, Spain, similar to the arrangement which, in violation of the treaty of

Utrecht,

Utrecht, produced the surrender of Louisiana, and of the Spanish half of St. Domingo, should obtain the cession (which would be in violation of no treaty,) of all the Spanish settlements in America: would you consider that as an occasion of war? Suppose Portugal, the integrity of whose possessions is in some sense or other guaranteed to her, but who is not prevented, I presume, by that guaranty from parting with any of them that she pleases, should choose, in kindness to France, to make over to her any of those settlements which she, Portugal, still retains,—would that, again, be a cause of war? By these two ways, without the infraction of any treaty, without any act which could be construed to be an aggression, much less which we should be inclined to treat as such, might France render herself completely mistress of the Continent of South America. Is there any commercial claim, then, that France could set up, any commercial regulation which she could introduce, either in her own name, or that of her allies, of a nature the most injurious and fatal to our commerce, which we should make a case of resistance, and think of magnitude enough to involve the nation in another war?—The augmentation of

her marine, to which professedly she means to direct all her efforts, and the increase of her establishments to any amount that she pleases; these are objects which it would be perfectly ridiculous to talk of, or to suppose that we should make the subject even of the most friendly remonstrance. Indeed, according to the modern doctrines of not interfering in the internal concerns of another country, I do not understand upon what pretence the armament of a state can ever become a subject of representation, since nothing surely is so completely an internal concern, as what any nation does with its own military or naval forces, upon its own soil, or in its own harbours. But setting aside these *smaller* objects, suppose France was to invade Egypt; was, without waiting even for the form of a surrender from the Order, to take forcible possession of Malta; was to land a body of troops in Greece, and either in that way, or by succours to Paswan Oglow, was to overset the government of the Porte;—would you be able, on any of these occasions, to satisfy those by whose opinions it is now the fashion to guide the counsels of states, that an interest existed sufficiently strong to call for the interference of this country, to prevent

the

the mischief, much less to redress and vindicate it when done? Why, Sir, we know that in the present state of opinions and feelings, and upon the principles on which the present Peace has been made, not only no one, but hardly all of these put together, would drag the country into a renewal of hostilities, though, as is evident, its very existence might depend upon it. The consequence is, that France is our mistress; that there is nothing she can ask, which she must not have; (she has only to threaten war, and her work is done;) —that all the objects of interest and ambition which France can have in view, lie open before her, to be taken possession of whenever she pleases, and without a struggle: her establishments will accumulate round us, till we shall be lost and buried in them; her power will grow over us, till, like the figures in some of Ovid's Metamorphoses we shall find all our faculties of life and motion gradually failing and deserting us:

——— *Torpor gravis alligat artus;*
Mollia cinguntur tenui præcordia libro.

If, in this last extremity, we should make any desperate efforts and plunges, that might threaten to become troublesome, and give us a chance of

extricating ourselves, she will call in the aid of her arms, and with one blow put an end at once to our sufferings, and our existence.

Sir, are these idle dreams, the phantoms of my own disordered imagination? or are they real and serious dangers, the existence of which no man of common sense, let his opinions of the Peace be what they may, will attempt to deny? The utmost that any man will pretend to say, is, that he hopes, (and so do I) that the evils apprehended will not happen; and that, great as the risk may be, he thinks it preferable to those risks, which would attend a continuation of the War. None but the most weak or inconsiderate, if they are not disaffected, or absorbed and lost in the sense of some immediate personal interest, will feel, when they shall well understand the subject, that there is any cause of joy or rejoicing.

Here it is then, that I must advert again to that topick of consolation, (miserable indeed must our state be, when such are our topicks of consolation,) to which, in order to make out a case not perfectly hopeless, we are willing to have recourse and which, more I believe than any reliance upon our wealth, does really support us, in the situation to which we are reduced. This is the idea, that from

some cause or other, from some combination of passions and events,—such as no philosophy seems capable of explaining, and no history probably can furnish an example of,—the progress of the Revolution will stop where it is: and that Bonaparte, like another Alexander,—or rather like that adviser of Alexander, whose advice was *not* taken,—instead of proceeding to the conquest of new worlds, will be willing to sit down contented in the enjoyment of those which he has already.

Sir, the great objection to this hope, to say nothing of its baseness, is its utter extravagance. On what possible ground do we believe this? Is it in the general nature of ambition? Is it in the nature of French ambition? Is it in the nature of French revolutionary ambition? Does it happen commonly to those, whether nations or individuals, who are seized with the spirit of aggrandizement and acquisition, that they are inclined rather to count what they possess, than to look forward to what yet remains to be acquired? If we examine the French Revolution, and trace it correctly to its causes, we shall find that the scheme of universal empire was, from the beginning, that which was looked to as the real consummation of its labours; the

object

object first in view, though last to be accomplished; the *primum mobile* that originally set it in motion, and has since guided and governed all its movements.

The authors of the Revolution wished to destroy morality and religion. They wished those things as ends: but they wished them also, as means, to a higher and more extensive design. They wished for a double empire; an empire of opinion and an empire of political power: and they used the one of these, as a means of effecting the other. What reason have we to suppose, that they have renounced those designs, just when they seem to touch the moment of their highest and fullest accomplishment? When there is but one country, that remains between France and the empire of the world, then is the moment, when we choose to suppose that all opposition may be withdrawn, and that the ambition of France will stop of its own accord.—It is impossible not to see in these feeble and sickly imaginations, that fatal temper of mind, which leads men to look for help and comfort from any source rather than from their own exertions. We are become of a sudden great *hopers*. We *hope* the French will have no inclination

tion to hurt us;—we *hope*, now Peace is come, and the pressure of War, as it is called, taken off, that the French Empire will become a prey to dissensions, and finally fall to pieces;—we *hope*, that the danger to have been apprehended from the example of the Revolution, is now worn out; and that Buonaparte, being now a monarch himself, will join with us in the support of monarchical principles, and become a sort of collateral security for the British constitution. One has heard to be sure, that *magni animi est sperare*; but the maxim, to have any truth in it, must be confined, I apprehend, to those hopes which are to be prosecuted through the medium of men's own exertions, and not be extended to those, which are to be independent of their exertions, or rather, as in the present instance, are meant to stand in lieu of them.

Of this description are all those expectations which I have just enumerated; one of which is, that the French will fall into dissensions.—Why, Sir, they have had nothing else but dissensions from the beginning. But of what avail have such dissensions been to the safety of other countries? One of their first dissensions was a war of three years, called the war of La Vendée; in which, according to some of their calculations,

calculations, the Republick lost, between the two sides, to the number of 600,000 souls. Yet when did this interrupt for a moment, even if it might in some degree have relaxed, the operations of their armies on the frontiers, and the prosecution of their plans for the overthrow of other countries? As for changes of government, they have been in a continued course of them. Since the beginning of the Revolution, the government has been overturned at least half a dozen times. They have turned over in the air, as in sport, like tumbler-pigeons;—but have they ever in consequence ceased their flight? The internal state of the country has been in the most violent commotion. The ship has been in mutiny;—there has been fighting in the waist and on the forecastle;—but in the midst of the confusion somebody has always been found to tend the helm, and to trim the sails; the vessel has held her course.—For one, therefore, I have no great confidence in the effect of these internal commotions; which every day become less and less likely, in proportion as the power of the present government becomes more confirmed, and as the people of France become more and more bound together by the common feeling of national glory, and by the

desire

desire of consolidating the empire which they have seen established. Such commotions may undoubtedly happen, and may of a sudden, when it is least expected, bring about some change favourable to the world. But it is curious to hear these chances gravely brought forward, as the best foundation of our hopes, by those, who a few weeks ago, while the War continued, would never hear of them, as entering, at all, into calculation. It seems, that the chapter of accidents, as it is called, which could do nothing for us in war, may do every thing for us in time of peace. Whereas I should have thought just the contrary; that chances, such as are here intended, were not only more likely to happen in war, but, what is a little material, might then be better improved and turned to account. While war subsists, while armies are ready to act, while confederacies are in force, while intelligences are going on, while assistance may be lawfully and avowedly given, every chance of this sort may, if properly improved, lead to consequences the most decisive. In peace, all that fortune can do for us, falls dead and still-born. Nobody is ready, nobody is authorized to move a step, or stretch forth a hand, to rear and foster those

chances, however promising, which time and accident may bring forth. It is not an answer to say, that such never have been improved. In regulating plans of future conduct, we must consider not what men *have* done, but what they may and ought to do. The only rational idea that I could ever form of resistance to that power, which unresisted must subdue the world, was, that it must be the joint effect of an internal and an external war, directed to the same end, and mutually aiding and supporting each other. All the powers of Europe could not subdue France, if France was united; or force upon it a government, even were such an attempt warrantable, really in opposition to the wishes of the people. On the other hand, no internal efforts, unassisted by force from without, seemed capable of rescuing the country from the yoke imposed upon it, so long as the several factions that governed in succession, could find means of securing to themselves the support of the armies. We are now required to believe, that what has hitherto failed to be performed by both these powers together, is to be effected by one alone: and that with respect to any hope of a change of government in France, the War that has been car-

rying on for nine years has proved only an impediment !—Such is the state of our hopes on that side.

But we have another hope, founded on rather a contrary supposition, namely, that Bonaparte, now that he is a king himself,—and a king he is so far as power can make one,—will no longer be an encourager of those absurd and mischievous doctrines, which, however they may have helped him to the throne, will be as little pleasing to him, now that he is fairly seated there, as to any the most legitimate Monarch. Sir, I agree, that Bonaparte, like other demagogues and friends of the people, having deluded and gulled the people sufficiently to make them answer his purpose, will be ready enough to teach them a different lesson, and to forbid the use of that language towards himself, which he had before instructed them in, as perfectly proper towards others. Never was there any one, to be sure, who used less management in that respect; or who left all the admirers of the French Revolution, within and without,—all the admirers of it, I mean, as a system of liberty,—in a more whimsical and laughable situation. Every opinion for which they have been contending, is now completely trodden down, and trampled un-

der foot, and held out in France to the greatest possible contempt and derision. The Honourable Gentlemen *on the Opposition Benches* have really great reason to complain of having been so completely left in the lurch. There is not even a decent retreat provided for them.

But though such is the treatment, which the principles of "the Rights of Man," and of the "Holy Duty of Insurrection," meet with in France, and on the part of him who should be their natural protector, it is by no means the same, with respect to the encouragement which he may choose to give them in other countries. Though they use none of these goods in France for home consumption, they have always a large assortment by them ready for foreign markets. Their Jacobin orators are not to be looked for in the clubs at Paris, but in the clubs of London. There, they may talk of *cashiering Kings*, with other language of that sort: but should any orator more flippant than the rest choose to hold forth in that strain, in the city where the Great Consul resides, in the metropolis of liberty, he would soon put him to silence, in the way that we see adopted in the sign of the Silent Woman. Bonaparte, being invested, in virtue

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of the Rights of Man, with despotick power, can afford to sanction the preaching of those doctrines in other countries, of which he will not suffer the least whisper in his own. While he is at the head of an absolute Monarchy in France, he may be the promoter and champion of Jacobin iusurrections every where else. The abject as well as wicked nature of Jacobinism in this country, which, while it would rebel against the lawful authority of its own government, is willing to enslave itself to France, finds no difficulty of allowing to him these two opposite characters: and I know no reason why we should suppose him disinclined to accept them.

I must confess, therefore, that I see as little hope for us on this side, as I do on the other. In fact, if I could believe, in spite of all probability, that there was any remission of that purpose, which has never yet ceased for an instant,—the purpose of destroying this country,—such belief, however produced, must be instantly done away by a view of the conduct of France, in the settlement of this very treaty. There is not a line of it, that does not either directly point to the destruction of this country, or, by a course a little circuitous,

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but not less certain, equally tend to the same object. What can France want with any of the possessions which she has compelled us to surrender, but with a view of rivalling our power, or of subverting it, or of removing out of our hands the means of controlling her further projects of ambition?—Of the first sort are all her stipulations for settlements in South America and the West-Indies: of the second, her demand of the Cape and Cochin; and of the last, that most marked and disgraceful condition on our part, the surrender of Malta. What upon earth could France have to do with Malta, but either as a means of humbling us by the surrender of it, in the eyes of all the world, or of depriving us of a port in the Mediterranean, that might stand in the way of designs which she is meditating against the countries bordering upon that sea? The miserable pretexts which are formed to palliate this surrender, and the attempt to cover it, in part, by the show of delivering that fortress to the Order, though much the greater part of the Order are now living in the dominions of Bonaparte, and many of them actually serving in his armies, are wholly insufficient, either to conceal our shame, or to disguise the purpose of the French in

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making this demand. But the circumstances of the negotiation, not less than the treaty resulting from it, shew, in another way, the folly of those hopes, which are founded upon the supposed intentions or characters of the persons with whom it is made. It does not augur very favourably for the intentions of a party in any transaction, that there appear in every stage of it the clearest proofs of duplicity and fraud.—What do we think of the artifice, which signs a treaty with us, guaranteeing the integrity of Portugal; but previously to that, at a period so late, as to make it sure that the knowledge of the transaction shall not reach this country in time, signs another treaty, totally altering the nature of that guaranty? What shall we think of the candour and fairness, which in a treaty with us, proposes, as a joint stipulation, the evacuation of Egypt, at a time when the proposers knew, though we did not, that every soldier of theirs in Egypt was actually a prisoner to our troops? Where was their good faith to the Turks, when, in the same circumstances, they knowing the fact and the Turks not, they took credit from the Turks for this very evacuation? Why, Sir, it is a fraud upon a level with any of those practised at a lottery-office. They insure the ticket, at

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the moment when they know it to be drawn. And are these the people, to whose good faith, generosity and forbearance, and above all, to whose good intentions towards this country, we are to deliver over, bound hand and foot, the interests of the British Empire, to be destroyed or saved, as they, in their good pleasure, shall think fit?

I say nothing here on a topick, however closely connected with the present subject, the character of the First Consul himself—a character hitherto as much marked by frauds of the most disgraceful kind, as by every other species of guilt; but pass on to the question, that meets us at every turn, and seems to stop the progress of all argument, the great question—" What are we to do? The dan-
" ger is great, but how are we to avoid it?
" War cannot be eternal, and what prospect
" have we of reaching a period, when it may
" be terminated in circumstances upon the whole
" more favourable than the present?"

Sir, the word, eternal, which in any use of it is sufficiently awful, will undoubtedly not be least so, when associated with the idea of War. But I must beg leave to remind the House of a circumstance, of which they and the country seem never to have been at all

aware,

aware, that the question of eternal War, is one, which it is not left for us to decide. It is a question which must be asked of our enemies: and is not less proper to be asked, if we could hope that they would answer us, at the present moment, than it was before the signature of the present preliminaries. The War depends not upon conventions to be entered into between the two governments, nor upon acts of hostility which may take place between the subjects of each, by land or on the high seas; but on the existence or non-existence of that fixed, rooted, determined purpose, which France has hitherto had, and which we have no reason whatever to think she has relinquished, of accomplishing the final overthrow of this country. While that purpose exists, and shall be acted upon, we are at War, call our state by what name you please: and the only question is, whether France cannot work as effectually to her purpose in Peace; and if Peace is made in a certain way, infinitely more effectually than she can in what is professedly and declaredly War. I would really wish to ask, whether Gentlemen have never heard of a people called the Romans, a set of republicans who conquered the world in the old time; and whom the

modern Romans take as their model in every respect, but in none more than in what relates to the overthrow of this country? Among the nations that fell under the Roman yoke, there were but few whom they were able to fetch down at a blow,—to reduce in the course of a single War. All their greater antagonists, particularly the state whose fate is chosen as a prototype of our own, were not reduced till after repeated attacks, till after several successive and alternate processes of War and Peace: a victorious War preparing the way for an advantageous Peace; and an advantageous Peace again laying the foundation of a successful War. This was at least the conduct of a great people; a people not to be put aside from their purposes by every transient blast of fortune. They had vowed the destruction of Carthage; and they never rested from their design, till they had seen it finally accomplished. The emulators of their fortune in the present day, are, in no less a degree, the emulators of their virtues; at least of those qualities, whatever they may be, that give to man a command over his fellows. When I look at the conduct of the French Revolutionary rulers, as compared with that of their opponents; when I

see the grandeur of their designs; the wisdom of their plans; the steadiness of their execution; their boldness in acting; their constancy in enduring; their contempt of all small obstacles and temporary embarrassments; their inflexible determination to perform such and such things; and the powers which they have displayed, in acting up to that determination; when I contrast these with the narrow views, the paltry interests, the occasional expedients, the desultory and wavering conduct, the want of all right feeling and just conception, that characterize so generally the governments and nations opposed to them, I confess I sink down in despondency, and am fain to admit, that if they shall have conquered the world, it will be by qualities by which they deserve to conquer it. Never were there persons, who could shew a fairer title to the inheritance which they claim. The great division of mankind made by a celebrated philosopher of old, into those who were formed to govern, and those who were born only to obey, was never more strongly exemplified than by the French nation, and those who have sunk, or are sinking, under their yoke. Let us not suppose, therefore, that while these qualities combined with these purposes, shall continue to exist,

they will ever cease, by night or by day, in Peace or in War, to work their natural effect,—to gravitate towards their proper centre; or that the bold, the proud, the dignified, the determined, those who *will* great things, and will stake their existence upon the accomplishment of what they have *willed*, shall not finally prevail over those, who act upon the very opposite feelings; who will "never push their resistance beyond their convenience;" who ask for nothing but ease and safety; who look only to stave off the evil for the present day, and will take no heed of what may befal them on the morrow. We *are* therefore, in effect, at War at this moment: and the only question is, whether the War, that will from henceforward proceed under the name of Peace, is likely to prove less operative and fatal, than that which has hitherto appeared in its natural and ordinary shape. That such is our state, is confessed by the authors themselves of the present Treaty, in the measures which they feel it necessary to recommend to the House. When did we ever hear before of a large military establishment necessary to be kept up in time of Peace? The fact is, that we know that we are not at Peace; not such

as is fit to be so called, nor that in which we might hope to sit down, for some time at least, in confidence and security, in the free and undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings which we possess. We are in that state, in which the majority, I believe, of those who hear me, are in their hearts more desirous that we should be, than, in our present prostrate and defenceless situation, they may think it prudent to avow ;—in a state of armed truce ; and then the only questions will be, at what price we purchase this truce ; what our condition will be while it lasts ; and in what state it is likely to leave us, should it terminate otherwise than as we are willing to suppose.

This brings us at once to the point. If we are to come at last only to an armed truce, would it not have been a shorter and better course, to turn our War into an armed truce, into which in fact it had pretty much turned itself, rather than to take the round about way which has been now adopted, of making Peace by the sacrifice of all the means of future War, in order afterwards to form an armed truce out of that Peace ? Let us state the account, and consider the loss and profit on either side.

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The evils of War are, generally speaking, to be comprized under three heads: the loss of lives and the consequent affliction brought upon friends and families; the loss of money, meaning, by that, money expended in a way not to be beneficial to the country that raises it; and the loss of money in another sense, that is to say, money not got; by which I mean the interruption given to national industry, and the diminution of the productions thence arising, either by the number of hands withdrawn from useful labour, (which is probably however but little material,) or by the embarrasments and restraints which in a state of War impede and clog the operations of commerce. I do not mean, that there are not in War, evils which may be said not to be included properly under any of the above heads; among which may be numbered, the distress arising from sudden changes of property, even when the persons who lose, and those who acquire, are equally parts of the same community. This, however, is an evil that will be more felt at the beginning, than in the later periods of a War; and will in fact be likewise felt, though in a less degree, by a transition even from War

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to Peace. The enumeration, now made, however, may be sufficiently correct for the present purpose. And, with this in our hands, let us consider, in what so very violent a degree, the present armed truce, or Peace, if you choose to call it so, differs from what might have been our state, in the case so much dreaded and deprecated, of a continuation of the War.

To take the last first,—the loss of national wealth by the interruption given to commerce and industry; such is the singular nature of this War, such the unexampled consequences with which it has been attended, that it becomes a question, and one in itself of the most anxious and critical importance, on which side of the account the consequences of Peace in this respect are to be placed: whether, instead of balancing the dangers of Peace, if such there are, by accessions which it will bring, to our wealth and commerce, we are not rather called upon to prove some great advantages which Peace will give us in respect of security, in order to balance the diminution likely to be produced by it in our commercial opulence. That our commerce will suffer at the long run, admits, I fear, of no doubt. If my apprehensions are just, it is in the diminution

of our manufactures and commerce, that the approaches of our ruin will first be felt: but is any one prepared to say that this may not happen in the first instance? We have at present, subject to the inconveniences which War produces, nothing less than the commerce of the whole world. There is no part of the world to which our goods do not pass freely in our own ships; while not a single merchant ship, with the enemy's flag on board, does at this moment swim the ocean. Is this a state of things to be lightly hazarded? Does the hope of bettering this condition, even in the minds of those most sanguine, so much outweigh the fear of injuring it, that these opposite chances can upon the whole be stated otherwise than as destroying each other; and that of consequence, in the comparison of War and Peace, the prospect of increased industry and commerce, which in general tells so much in favour of Peace, must not here be struck out of the account? On this head the question between Peace and War stands, to say the least of it, evenly balanced.

The next of these heads, the first indeed in point of consequence, but the next in the order in which it is here convenient to consider them, is the loss of lives, and the effect which War is likely

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to have on private and individual happiness. No man can pretend to say, that War can continue upon any footing, however restricted the circle of hostilities, without the lives of men being liable to be sacrificed; and no such sacrifice can be justified, or reconciled to the feelings of any one, but by that which must justify every such sacrifice, however great the extent, the safety and essential interests of the state. But if ever there was a War, in which such sacrifices seemed likely to be few, not as an effect of any choice of ours, but by the necessary course of events, it was that which we should have had to carry on in future with the Republick of France.

The great and destructive operations of War, the conflict of fleets or armies, or the consumption of men in unwholesome climates and distant expeditions, had ceased of themselves. I know not what expeditions we should have had to prosecute, unless new cases should have arisen, similar to that of the ever-memorable one of Egypt; where, the same motives existing, we should be sorry indeed not to have the means of acting upon them. But in general, our fleets would have remained quietly at their stations, and our armies have lived at

home: the whole question reduces itself to a mere question of expense; and that again pretty much to a mere question of establishment.—The great heads of war expenditure, the army extraordinaries, would, in most parts, have ceased; and in the rest, have been greatly reduced. The chief question will be, not between an ordinary Peace establishment, and a War, such as from circumstances ours has hitherto been, involving expeditions to all parts of the globe; but between a Peace establishment, such as that which is now declared to be necessary, and a War, which had become, and was likely to continue, merely defensive; in which we should have had nothing to do, but to maintain a competent force, with little prospect of being obliged to make use of it. The advocates for the present Peace must find themselves always in an aukward dilemma, between economy and safety. We make Peace in order to save our money: if we reduce our establishments, what becomes of our security? if we keep up our establishments, what becomes of our savings? Whatever you give to one object, is unavoidably taken from the other. The savings of the present Peace, therefore, can be looked for only between the narrow limits of a high Peace and

a low

a low War establishment; or, to state the case more correctly, between a high Peace establishment and a War, reduced in the manner that I have described. I wish that a correct estimate were formed of the difference, in point of expense, between these two states; recollecting always that among the expenses of Peace are to be counted the provisions necessary against the new dangers brought by the Peace itself; the new dangers, for example, with which Jamaica, and all our West-India Islands are threatened by the establishment of the French in Saint Domingo, and other parts in that quarter of the world: the new dangers to which our Empire in the East is exposed, by the re-entry of the French into the peninsula of India, and the cession to them, for such in effect it is, of the Cape and Cochin: in general, by the free passage now given to their ships and armies into every part of the world, and the establishment of them every where in the neighbourhood of our most valuable possessions.

Against all these dangers War provided, as it were, by its own single act. The existence of our fleets upon the ocean, with an Admiralty order "to "burn, sink, and destroy," shut up at once all

those attempts, which are now let loose, and require as many separate defences, as there are parts liable to be attacked. A fleet cruising before Brest, therefore, was not to be considered as so much clear expense, to be charged to the account of the war; without deducting the expense of additional troops and additional ships, which the absence of that fleet might require to be kept, for instance, in the West-Indies.

With respect to home defence. Considering the little reliance to be placed upon the Government in France, now subsisting; the still greater uncertainty with respect to any future Government (such as may arise at any moment); and the increased defence necessary on land, in proportion to the diminution of our force by sea; I know not, how we can remain secure with a military establishment much less considerable, than that which we should have had to maintain here in the case of war.—So much for the expense of peace.

On the other hand, we must consider, what the reductions are, that might be made in the expense of the war, beyond those, which the very scheme and shape of the war itself would unavoidably produce.

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The expenses of our armies, as at present established, are excessive: but what should hinder us from adopting some of those expedients, by which a country not more considerable than Prussia, under the regulations introduced by a former great monarch, is made capable of maintaining a military establishment superior to that of Great-Britain?—The chief of those expedients, and that which we could best imitate, is, the putting at all times the half of the army upon the footing of militia, to be exercised only for a month or two, and to be at home for the remainder of the year. Other expedients might be suggested, if this were the proper occasion for discussing them.

It is true, as may be observed, that such a reduction of expense, if it can be at all effected, may be applied not less in time of peace than in time of war; and in a comparison, therefore, between the two, must be counted on both sides. But that circumstance, as is plain, does not do away the effect of what is here stated. If both sides are reduced, the absolute difference, which is what we are considering, will be reduced also; not to mention that, with a view to what will be the effect of the measure in other ways, such a re-

duction may be better applied to a large establishment, than it can to a small one. If an army of 80,000 men, for instance, may, for the moment, be reduced to half, because the remaining 40,000 will still be a sufficient force, it is not to be concluded, that a proportionate reduction might be made in an army of only half that number, when the remainder, left on an emergency for the defence of the country, would be only twenty thousand. Consider, therefore, when the reductions capable of being made in a state of war, and the new and extraordinary expenses necessary to be incurred in this peace, shall have been fairly calculated, to what the difference between the two states will amount; and taking then this difference at its utmost, compare the money so saved, with all the evils and dangers which peace, as now proposed, will give rise to; or even, according to the modern fashion, compare the value of the Sinking Fund created by this saving, with the difference of the circumstances in which we shall be placed at the commencement of any future war, should France chuse to put us under this necessity. By the result of these comparisons, must the question be decided.

Should it so happen, (and who shall say, that it will not?) that our commerce, instead of increasing,

ing, or remaining where it is, should fall off; that our manufactures should decline; that, from these and other causes,—such as a great emigration, and considerable transfer of commercial property;—and above all from the great loss of territorial revenue, the income of the state should be lessened, to a degree equal only to this proposed saving, then we shall have incurred all the dreadful difference to be found in our situation in case of the renewal of war, and all the no less serious dangers during the continuance of peace, absolutely for nothing.

I select this, only as the case which may be considered as the most probable. In argument, to be sure, having already agreed to take at par, our prospects with respect to the increase or decrease of our commerce and manufactures, I am not at liberty to insist on this case, or upon the still more fatal one of a greater and more extensive decrease, without allowing those who argue on the other side, to avail themselves of the supposition, that the sources of national wealth may possibly be in a great degree augmented.

We are to estimate, however, whatever be the extent of these expected savings, and the improve-

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ment to be made in consequence in our finances, the evils and dangers which are to be placed in the opposite scale. The chief of these I have already touched upon. They are, first, the ascendency, which, it is to be feared, France may in time obtain over us, even in those sources of greatness, which we are inclined to consider as a substitute for all other,—our manufactures and commerce. (I proceed here on the supposition, that peace continues without interruption, and even without any great advantage being taken, of the threat of a renewal of hostilities)—There is then, secondly, the effect to be produced by the continued use of the menace of war, and finally by war itself.—Of these I will say no more. The only head of danger, to which I wish now to speak, is one of a quite different nature; but so serious, so certain, so imminent, so directly produced by the Peace itself, that I must not omit to say a few words upon it. This is, the danger now first commencing; and which may be conveyed in a single word, but that, I fear, a word of great import—intercourse. From this moment the whole of the principles and morals of France rush into this country without let

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or hindrance, with nothing to limit their extent, or to control their influence. While the war continued, not only the communication was little, or nothing, but, whatever contagion might be brought in by that communication, found the country less in a state to receive it. The very heat and irritation of the war was a preservative against the infection. But now that this infection is to come upon us in the soft hour of peace; that it is to mix with our food; that we are to take it into our arms; that it is to be diffused in the very air we breathe; what hope, can we suppose, remains to us of escaping its effects?—This I used formerly to be taught, before the weight of taxes had lessened our apprehensions of French fraternity, was one of the consequences most to be dreaded in peace, in whatever form it should come, short of the restoration of some Government, not founded on jacobinical principles. But somehow or another, the very idea of this danger seems long since to have vanished from our minds.—We are now to make peace in the very spirit of peace, and to throw ourselves without reserve into the very arms of France. With respect, indeed, to one part of the danger, the principles

of France,—meaning by that the political principles,—we are told, that all danger of that sort is at an end; that in this country, as every where else, the folly of the revolutionary principles is so thoroughly understood, that none can now be found to support them. Jacobinism is, as it were, extinct: or, should it still exist, we shall have, as our best ally against it, Bonaparte himself.

Sir, I have already stated what my confidence is in that ally. I know that neither he personally, nor any other of the *free* governments that have subsisted in France, have ever suffered these doctrines of jacobinism to be used against themselves. But I must again ask, on what grounds we suppose, that France has renounced the use of them, with respect to other countries? We have heard less, indeed, of late, of her principles, because we have heard, and felt, more of her arms. For the same reason, we may possibly hear little of them in future. But do they therefore cease to exist? During the whole course of the revolution, France has sometimes employed one of these means, and sometimes the other. Sometimes the arms have opened a way for the principles, at others the principles have prepared the object, as an easy con-

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quest to the arms:—In the flight of this chain-shot, sometimes one end has gone foremost, and sometimes the other; and at times they may have struck their object at once: But the two parts alike exist, and are inseparably linked together.

Nothing, therefore, can in my mind, be more idle than this hope of the extinction of jacobinism, either as an instrument to be used by France, should her occasions require it, or as a principle ever to be eradicated out of any community, in which it has once taken root. However true it may be, that the example of France ought to serve as the strongest antidote to its poison, and that it does so, in fact, in the minds of many; yet it is equally true, that, in another view, and to many other persons, it operates in a directly contrary way, —not as a warning, but as an incitement. What I am now speaking of, is, however, not the danger of the political principles of France, but the still surer and more dreadful danger, of its morals. What are we to think of a country, that having struck out of mens' minds, as far as it has the power to do so, all sense of religion, and all belief of a future life, has struck out of its system of civil polity, the institution of marriage? That has for-

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mally, professedly, and by law, established the connection of the sexes, upon the footing of an unrestrained concubinage? That has turned the whole country into one universal brothel? That leaves to every man to take, and to get rid of, a wife, (the fact, I believe, continues to be so,) and a wife, in like manner to get rid of her husband, upon less notice than you can, in this country, of a ready-furnished lodging?

What are we to think of uniting with a country, in which such things have happened, and where for generations the effects must continue, whatever formal and superficial changes prudence and policy may find it expedient to introduce in the things themselves.

Do we suppose it possible, that, with an intercourse subsisting, such, as, we know, will take place between Great-Britain and France, the morals of this country should continue what they have been? Do we suppose that when this *Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*, when that 'revolutionary stream,' the Seine, charged with all the *colluvies* of Paris,—with all the filth and blood of that polluted city,—shall have turned its course into the Thames, that the waters of our fair 'domestick flood' can remain pure and wholesome, as before? Do we suppose these things can happen?

pen? Or is it, that we are indifferent, whether they happen or not: and that the morals of the country are no longer any object of our concern?

Sir, I fear, the very scenes that we shall witness, even in the course of the present winter, will give us a sufficient foretaste of what we may expect hereafter; and show, how little the morals of the country will be protected by those who should be their natural guardians, the higher and fashionable orders of society. In what crowds shall we see flocking to the hotel of a Regicide Ambassador, however deep in all the guilt and horrour of his time, those, whose doors have hitherto been shut inflexibly against every Frenchman; whom no feeling for honourable distress, no respect for suffering loyalty, no sympathy with fallen grandeur, no desire of useful example,—and in some instances, I fear, no gratitude for former services or civilities, have ever been able to excite to show the least mark of kindness or attention to an emigrant of any description; though in that class are to be numbered men, who in every circumstance of birth, of fortune, of rank, of talents, of acquirements of every species, are fully their equals; and whom the virtue that has made them emigrants,

has, so far forth, rendered their superiors!—A suite of richly furnished apartments, and a ball and supper, is a trial, I fear, too hard for the virtue of London.

It is to this side, that I look with greatest apprehension. The plague with which we are threatened, will not begin, like that of Homer, with inferior animals, among dogs and mules, but in the fairest and choicest part of the creation; with those, whose fineness of texture makes them weak; whose susceptibility most exposes them to contagion; whose natures, being most excellent, are, for that reason, capable of becoming most depraved; who, being formed to promote the happiness of the world, when "strained from that fair use," may prove its bane and destruction; retaining, as they will do, much of that empire which nature intended for them, over the minds and faculties of the other half of the species. "The woman tempted me, and I did eat," will be to be said, I fear, of this second fall of man, as it was of the first. Sir, we heard much last year, of the necessity of new laws to check the growing progress of vice and immorality. I suppose we hardly mean to persist in any such projects. It

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will be too childish to be busying ourselves in stopping every little crevice and aperture, through which vice may find admission, when we are going to open at once the flood-gates, and let in the whole tide of French practices and principles, till the morals of the two countries shall have settled at their common level.

I must beg here, not to be told, that of this kind of argument the only result is, that we should never make Peace with France at all, until the monarchy should be restored. The argument implies no such thing. That no kind of Peace with France will be safe, till then, I am not in the least disposed to deny: but the nature of human affairs does not admit of our getting always what we may think most desirable. We must take up often with what is far short of our ideas, either of advantage or safety. The question at present is, whether in either of those views, we ought to take up with the present Peace: and among the evils incident to it, and immediately resulting from it, I state one, which, in conjunction with others, is to be weighed against its advantages; namely, the havock likely to be made by it in our principles and morals. If any one should be of opinion, that this consideration is of so much

much weight, that War, almost upon any terms, is preferable to Peace with a state, founded upon a declared Atheism, and filled with all the abominations and pollutions certain to result from such an origin, it is not my business to dispute with him: but that is not the way in which the argument is applied here; nor is it indeed applied in any way, otherwise than as a consideration, making part of the case, and to which every body is to allow what weight he shall think proper. The misfortune of the country has been, that it has never seen, and felt, fully, the extent of its danger. The country,—speaking of it in general, and not with a view to particular places, or classes of people, upon whom the pressure of the War has borne with peculiar severity,—has been so rich, so prosperous, so happy; men have enjoyed here in so superior a degree, and with such perfect freedom from molestation, all the blessings and comforts of life, that they have never been able to persuade themselves, that any real harm could befall them. Even those, who have clamoured most loudly about the dangers of the country, and have given at times, the most exaggerated representations of them, have really, and when their opinions come to be examined,

never

never described this danger as any thing truly alarming. For *their* danger has always been a provisional and hypothetical danger, such as we should be liable to, if we did not conform to such and such conditions: but as these conditions were always in our power, and are now, as we see, actually resorted to, our real and absolute danger was, in fact, none at all. "You will be ruined, if you continue the War; "but, make Peace, and you are safe:" and unquestionably, as there can hardly have been a period, when a Peace, such as the present, was not in our power,—if such a Peace can give us safety, there never was a period, when we could properly be said to have been in danger. We had a port always under our lee; so that if it came to overblow, or the ship laboured too much, we had nothing to do, but to put up our helm, and run at once into a place of safety. But my ideas of the danger have always been of a far different sort. To me it has ever seemed, that the danger was not conditional but absolute: that it was a question, whether we could be saved upon any terms: whether we could weather this shoal upon either tack. The port appeared to me to be an enemy's port; where, though we might escape the dangers of the sea, we should fall into the hands of the savages, who would never suffer us

to see again our native land, but keep us in a state of thraldom, far more to be dreaded than the utmost fury of the waves.

I have never pretended to say, that there were not dangers in war, as unquestionably there are great evils; I have said only that there were evils and dangers, not less real and certain, in peace, particularly in a peace, made on such terms as the present. For terms of peace, in spite of what we hear talked, *have* something to do with rendering our situation more or less secure, even in those respects, in which they are supposed to operate least. In general, though terms, however advantageous, would not secure us against the mischiefs of French fraternity, and the infusions of French principles and morals, yet they would make a little difference, I apprehend, as to the effect which peace would produce in the feelings of Europe; as to the air of success and triumph which it would give to the enemy, and of defeat and humiliation, which it would impress upon us; as to the consequences resulting from thence, even with respect to the propagation of French principles, but certainly as to the confirmation of French power; and, above all, as to the situation in which we should stand, should France choose to force us again into a war. The port of Malta, strong, as it is, would not,

literally,

literally, serve as a bulwark to stop the incursions of Jacobinism: figuratively, it would not be without its effect in that way: yet there would be some difference, I conceive, at the beginning of a war, whether we were in possession of Malta or not; and, in the mean while, the knowledge of that difference, in the minds of the enemy, and of ourselves, would be quickly felt, in any discussions which might take place between us, in time of peace.

The dangers of Peace, therefore, are augmented a hundred-fold by terms at once so degrading and injurious, as those to which we have submitted: On any terms on which it could have been concluded, it would have had its dangers, and dreadful ones too; France remaining a revolutionary government, and being, as it is, in possession of Europe. Whether that evil must not ultimately have been submitted to; whether the hopes of change, either from coalitions without, or commotions within, might not have become so small, and the evils of War, however mitigated, so great, that we must have made up our minds, after taking the best securities against those dangers that we could, finally to have acquiesced in them, is a separate question, which I will not now discuss. But the time in my opinion was not come, when such

unqualified acquiescence on our part was requisite; when we were to cease to inquire what those securities were; or when we ought to have taken up with such securities, if securities they can be called, as are offered by the present treaty. The great misfortune has been, that this question of Peace has never yet been fully and fairly before the country. We have been taken up with the War; that was the side of the alternative next to us;—and have never yet, till it was too late, had our attention fairly directed, or, I must say, fairly summoned, to the dreadful picture on the other side. If we had, we should never have heard, except among the ignorant and disaffected, of joy and exultation through the land, at a Peace such as the present.

Here, Sir, I have nearly closed this subject. One only topick remains, a most important one indeed, but which I should have been induced, perhaps, on the present occasion, to pass over in silence, if in one part of it I did not feel myself called upon, by something of a more than ordinary duty.

When a great military monarch of our time was at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, and had sustained a defeat, that seemed to extinguish all his remaining hopes, the terms of his letter, written from the field of battle, were—"We have lost every thing, but

but our honour." Would to God, that the same consolation, in circumstances liable to become in time not less disastrous, remained to Great-Britain! I should feel a far less painful load of depression upon my mind, than weighs upon it at this moment. But *is* our honour saved in this transaction? Is it in a better plight than those two other objects of our consideration, which I have touched upon, our dignity and our security? I fear not. I fear that we have contrived to combine in this proceeding, all that is at once ruinous and disgraceful; all that is calculated to undo us, in reputation as well as in fortune, and to deprive us of those resources, which high fame and unsullied character may create, "even under the ribs of death," when all ordinary means of relief and safety seem to be at an end. I am speaking here, not of the general discredit that attaches to this precipitate retreat and flight out of the cause of Europe, and of all mankind; but of the situation in which we stand with respect to those allies, to whom we were bound by distinct and specifick engagements. I must be very slow to admit that construction, which considers as a breach of treaty any thing done by a contracting power, under a clear *bonâ fide* necessity, such as the other party itself does not pretend to dispute. If an ab-

solute conquest of one of the parties to an alliance does not absolve the other from the obligation which it has contracted, so neither can a timely submission, made in order to avert such conquest, when the remaining party itself shall not be able to describe that submission as injurious either to her own interest, or to that of the common cause. If we were not in a state to say to Sardinia, that it was better for *us* that she should continue her resistance, rather than accept the terms offered her; then, I say, we are not in a state to consider her submission as a forfeiture of the claims which she had upon us. We have left Sardinia, however, without an attempt to relieve her, without even a helping hand stretched out to support or to cheer her, under that ruin which she has brought upon herself, with no fault on her part, while adhering faithfully to her treaty with us. I must call that adherence faithful, which has continued as long as we ourselves could say, that it was of any use.—The case of Sardinia is, with no great variation, the case of Holland also. Both powers were our allies; both are ruined, while adhering to that alliance; both are left to their fate. But Sardinia and Holland are two only of our allies; and placed in circumstances of peculiar difficulty. There were others, more capable of being assisted,

for

for whose security and protection every thing has been done, that the most scrupulous fidelity could require. Naples, Portugal, and Turkey, will attest, to the end of time, the good faith of Great-Britain; and shew to the world that *she* is not a power, who ever seeks her own safety by abandoning those with whom she has embarked in a common cause. Sir, if I were forced to make a comparison between the instances, in which we plainly and openly desert our allies, and those in which we affect to protect them, I should say, with little hesitation, that those of the former class were the least disgraceful of the two; because our protection is in fact nothing else but a desertion, with the addition of that ridicule which attaches upon things, that endeavour to pass for the reverse of what they really are.

The protection which we yield to these unfortunate powers, is much of the same sort with that which Don Quixote gives to the poor boy, whom he releases from the tree; when he retires with perfect complacency and satisfaction, assuring him, that he has nothing more to fear, as his master is bound by the most solemn promise not to attempt to exercise against him any further severity. We know, Sir, what respect was paid to

this

this promise, as soon as the knight was out of sight; and it is not difficult to foretell, what respect will be paid by Buonaparte, (without waiting even, I am afraid, till my Honourable Friends shall be out of sight,) to this solemn stipulation and pledge, by which we have provided so *effectually* for the security of the dominions of our good and faithful allies.

The ridicule of this provision, which in any case would be sufficiently strong, has, undoubtedly, in the case of Turkey, something of a higher and livelier relish; Turkey being the power, in whose instance, and with respect to precisely the same party, the total insufficiency and nullity of such engagements has been so strikingly manifested, and is still kept so fresh in our memories, by the very operations with which the War has closed.

So much as to our conduct towards those powers, with whom we stood in the relation of allies, according to the usual diplomatick forms; and whom the common policy of Europe had been accustomed to consider under these and similar relations.

But there was another body of allies, not ranked indeed among the European powers, nor possessing much, perhaps, of a corporate capacity, but who, as men, acting either separately or together,

ther, were equally capable of becoming objects of good faith, and in fact had so become, though by means different, in point of form, from those which engaged the faith of the country, in any of the instances above alluded to:—These persons were, the Royalists of France, wheresoever dispersed, but particularly that vast body of them which maintained so long a contest against the Republick, in the West; where they formed the mass of the inhabitants of four or five great provinces, far exceeding, both in extent and population, the kingdom of Ireland. I mention these particulars of their force and numbers, not because they are material to the present purpose, but because they serve to obviate that delusion of the understanding, by which things, small in bulk, and filling but little space in the imagination, are apt to lose their hold on our interests and affections. The mention of them may, moreover, not be unnecessary in this House, where, I fear, from various causes, all that relates to the Royalists is a perfect *terra incognita*, as little known or considered, as the affairs of a people in another hemisphere. The Royalists were, however, a great, numerous, and substantive body, capable of maintaining against the Republick a War, confessed by

the Republicans themselves to have been more formidable and bloody, than most of those in which they had been engaged; and of terminating that War by a Peace, which showed sufficiently what the War had been, and what the fears were, which the Republick entertained, of its possible final success. But let the numbers and powers of the Royalists have been what they might; had their affairs been still less considered; had they been more disowned, discountenanced, and betrayed, than in many instances they were; had more such garrisons as those of Mentz and Valenciennes been suffered to be sent against them; had they been less the real, primary defenders and representatives of that cause, which the Allies professed to support; still there were our formal Proclamations, issued at various periods, not engaging indeed to make stipulations for them in case of a Peace, but calling generally for their exertions, and promising succour and protection, to all those who should declare themselves in favour of the ancient order of things, and of their hereditary and rightful Monarch. What I am to ask, is, have we acted up to the spirit, or even the letter, of our own proclamations; or to the

spirit of that relation, in which the nature of the War itself, independent of any proclamations, placed us with respect to these people? I am compelled to say, (I say it with great reluctance, as well as with great grief,) I fear we have done no such thing. I fear, that a stain is left upon our annals, far deeper than that, which, in former times, many were so laudably anxious to wash away, in respect to the conduct of this country towards the Catalans. The Catalans were not invited by any declarations more specifick than those which we have made to the Royalists: their claim upon us was in some respects more doubtful. Yet, so far were they from being passed over in silence in the terms of the Peace; so far were they from being abandoned to their fate, left to the merciless persecution of their enemies, that a stipulation was made for a full and complete amnesty for them; and, far more than that, a provision, that they should be put upon the same footing, and enjoy the same privileges, with that province which was in fact the most favoured under the Spanish Monarchy. Yet, because *more* was not done; because they were not placed in the situation of enjoying *all* that they asked;—much of it, perhaps, having more of an imaginary than a real value;—because in a

part, where their claim was more disputable, perfect and entire satisfaction was not given them; did a large and respectable majority of this House think it necessary to institute a solemn inquiry,—the intended foundation of proceedings still more solemn,—in order to purge themselves and the country, as far as depended on them, from the shame of what they deemed a breach of the national faith.

By what purgations, by what ablutions, shall we cleanse ourselves from this far deeper and fouler blot, of having left to perish under the knives of their enemies, without even an effort to save them, every man of those, whom we have *affected*, as it must now appear, to call our friends and allies; with whom we were bound, by interests of far higher import than those of a disputed succession; who were the assertors with us of the common morality of the world; who were the true depositaries of that sacred cause, the very priests of that holy faith; with whom we had joined, as it were, in a solemn sacrament; and who on all these grounds, but chiefly for the sin of having held communion with us, are now, as might be expected, doomed, by the fanatics of rebellion,

to

to be the objects of never-ceasing hostility, to be pursued as offenders, whose crimes can only be expiated by their destruction?

I agree with what has been said by my Honourable Friend, [the Chancellor of the Exchequer,] that Peace once made, all communication with this, or any other class of people, hostile to the French Government, must completely cease. Whatever the Government is, or whatever its conduct may be with respect to us, if we think fit to make Peace with it, that Peace must be religiously kept. I am not for curing one breach of faith by another. But was nothing to be done, in the final settlement of that Peace; and still more, while it was yet pending? I wish a satisfactory answer could be given to those inquiries. I wish it were true, that, for months past, numbers had not been perishing throughout the Royalist provinces, the victims of their loyalty and honour;—(men, hunted down, like wild beasts, for acts, which that Government may call crimes, but which we, I hope, have not yet learned so to characterize;)—simply for want of such means, as might have enabled them to effect their escape, and, after the loss of every thing but what their own minds must

bestow

bestow, to have sought an asylum in some foreign land.

Sir, I would gladly draw a veil over these facts. But our shame is too flagrant and glaring, to be concealed: the cry of this blood is too loud to be stifled. I beg to wash my hands of it. The share which I have happened to have in the affairs of this illustrious and unfortunate people; the interest which I have always taken in their cause; make me doubly anxious to vindicate myself from any participation in the guilt of having thus abandoned them. I wish I could vindicate, in like manner, the Government and the country. Among all our shames it is that of the most fatal nature, and of which, possibly, we shall longest rue the effects.

Sir, I have done. I have stated, as I thought it my duty to do, what my apprehensions are, as to the nature and consequences of the present Peace. If the evils which I impute to it, are not to be found there, if the dangers which I apprehend should not come to pass, no one will more rejoice in my errour than myself: those who differ from me will have nothing to complain of: I shall have alarmed

myself;

myself; I shall not, probably, even have to reproach myself, with having succeeded in alarming them. But if any there should be, (there are none I am sure in this House,) who should say, that my fears are *not* imaginary; that they think of this Peace as I do; that they apprehend it *will* ruin the country; but that they hope the country may last long enough to serve their turn; that being traders, they think the trade of the country may be lost; that, being manufacturers, they believe its manufactures may decline; but that for this they care but little, provided the Peace in the mean time shall prove advantageous to *them*;—to all such, if any there can be, there could be but one answer,—that they are a disgrace to their country and to their species; and that he must be as bad as they, who, upon such terms, could seek to merit their good opinion, or could solicit their favour. I trust, however, that no such men are to be found; but that all who rejoice in the present Peace, do it under a persuasion, that the good which they may hope to derive from it, individually, is not to be obtained by the sacrifice of the final welfare and safety of their country.

THE END.

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