COMMERCe
AND
MANUFACTURES,
AND
THE ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

INTRODUCTION.

ORDERS IN COUNCIL.—MR. STEPHEN'S CHARACTER.—
MR. PERCEVAL'S DEATH.

The continental system of Napoleon, the idea and even the outline of which he took from the policy of the Republic, and especially the Executive Directory, formed during the latter part of his life, that is, after the termination of the peace of Amiens, the favourite object of all his attempts. The extension of his territorial possessions, and his direct power by the annexation of some provinces to France; the union of the kingdom of Italy with his imperial crown; and the foundation of dependent monarchies under members of his family in Naples and in Spain; were no doubt valued by him as in themselves tending to his own aggrandizement and that of his adopted country: yet as long as Great Britain remained unsubdued and with resources little exhausted even by the expences of protracted wars, he knew that his security was exceedingly imperfect, and that a rallying point always must remain for whatever continental powers should make an effort to regain independence. The projects of invasion, if they were ever seriously entertained, he soon laid aside. It cannot be doubted that the chief benefit he expected from them, as far as they regarded England, was the shock which the attempt, however unsuccessful, must give to the stability of a singularly artificial and commercial system. Nor could he ever reckon upon more than a temporary success in Ireland, to which the views of the Director...
had been directed in vain while affairs rendered such a plan far less likely to fail. The unbroken and unprecedented triumph of the British navy rendered all attempts at colonial warfare desperate, while the success of our cruisers in sweeping the seas made the combined maritime resources of France, Holland, and Spain alike ineffectual to embarrass our commerce or to protect their own. We had neither territory, nor dependencies, nor ships, nor trade, directly exposed to his power; and his whole supremacy, whether of direct power or indirect influence in Europe, seemed to arm him with no force which could be pointed immediately against the

Toto penitus divisos orbe Britannos.

Yet to injure us,—to reduce our resources,—to cripple our trade,—to weaken our authority in the world,—seemed necessary for his reputation, and even for his own security. Accordingly this was the point to which all his views were directed; and he never subjugated an enemy, or overpowered a rival, or seized upon a place, without endeavouring in the very first instance to make the event conducive towards the great design of injuring British trade.

There was evidently but one way in which this could be effected,—and that was to unite the continent in a general league against all commercial intercourse with our islands. If this could be rendered complete, our trade must be confined to our own dominions in Europe, the colonies, and India, and to those of our former subjects and kinsmen of America. A vast bulk of commerce would thus remain wholly beyond his reach; but a severe blow would also be struck by the entire loss of the European market.

It order, however, to render this scheme at all effectual, the European league must be complete. A single country having sea-ports, and communicating with other countries, raised the European blockade, because once our goods were introduced there, an entrepôt was obtained through which they might be sent all over the continent. Accordingly, wherever the French arms penetrated, although the sovereignty of the country might not be seized upon by France, she yet required the rigorous exclusion of all British ships and trade, as a condition of leaving the territory in possession of its former owners, even when these might be at peace or possibly in alliance with England, and whatever might have been the original title by which their dominions were acquired. This was carried so far, that in 1806, when Hanover was occupied by Prussia, Napoleon required the exclu-
INTRODUCTION.

zion of our commerce with that Electorate, as an execution, or at least a consequence, of the treaty by which Prussia had previously bound herself to exclude it from her other territories. Nevertheless, such is the elasticity of trade, so extremely prone are men to run almost any pecuniary risks for the sake of having the chance of pecuniary gain, and so difficult is it to watch an extended line of sea-coast, that British produce found its way into all parts of the continent although at prices somewhat raised by the obstructions thrown in its way. Napoleon was therefore determined to try the effect of more severe measures of exclusion; and when the premature and ill-concerted resistance of Prussia, in the autumn of 1806 (principally occasioned by her refusing implicit submission to the commercial measures of France) had speedily terminated in the complete overthrow of her military power, and had placed her entirely at the conqueror's mercy, the first use he made of his victory was to issue his famous Berlin decree, by which he professed to interdict all commerce, and even all intercourse, direct or indirect, with the British dominions. This interdict, so important in its consequences, bore date the 20th November 1806, at Berlin, which he had then occupied with his troops, having driven the King from his capital, after the entire overthrow of his army at the battle of Auerstadt. It declared the British islands in a state of blockade—all British subjects, wheresoever found, prisoners of war—all British goods lawful prize. It interdicted all correspondence with our dominions; prohibited all commerce in our produce; and excluded from all the ports of France, and of the countries under French control, every vessel, of what nation soever, that had touched at a British port. The alleged ground of this measure was the distinction made by England, but not by her alone, or by any maritime state now for the first time, between enemy's property taken on shore or at sea—(the former not being prize to the captors, unless it belonged to the hostile state; the latter being liable to capture, though belonging to private individuals) the similar distinction as to prisoners of war, who on shore are only made of persons taken with arms in their hands—and the extension of the right of blockade, which it was alleged we should restrict to places actually invested by an adequate force. The Berlin Decree was declared to be in force until England should agree to make the same law of capture applicable by sea and by land; and to abandon the right of declaring coasts or ports not actually invested, in a state of blockade.
INTRODUCTION.

It has been already observed that Napoleon borrowed from the Directory the outline of these commercial measures. The main provisions of the Berlin Decree are to be found in the Decrees of July 1796, and January 1798; the former of which professed to treat all neutrals in the same manner in which they should submit to be treated by England; the latter of which made all English goods or colonial produce liable to seizure wherever found, and all vessels to capture having any part of their cargo so composed—shut the French ports to every vessel that had touched at any British port—and even went to the barbarous extremity, not imitated by Napoleon, of denouncing death to all neutral seamen found on board of English ships.

Although some parts of the Berlin Decree were mere angry menaces, which France had no power whatever to execute, as the blockade of our whole coast, yet there were parts which she could carry into execution, at least to such an extent as must occasion great temporary embarrassment to the nations of the continent, and some interruption to our commerce. The seizure of all British produce, and the exclusion of all vessels that had touched at a British port, were the most formidable parts of the measure; and against these provisions the trading classes were urgent in their remonstrances. Napoleon sternly answered that he would not yield a hair's-breadth—that the utmost commercial distress must be undergone, if necessary to make England feel the weight of his hostility—and that the continent must be prepared for returning to the barter of the fourth century rather than yield to our pretensions, and suffer our commerce to escape his vengeance.

All men of sense and foresight saw plainly that this system never could be completely successful, and that by far the wisest course for England to pursue would be that of leaving France and the neutral states, especially America, to fight it out amongst themselves, secure that the result must be favourable to our trade, as long as our goods were in universal demand, and could no where else be obtained. The thing most to be dreaded was any retaliating measures on our part, since by these we must both increase the obstructions raised to our commerce by the attempts of France, in which, without the help of our prohibitions, enforced by our navy, she never could succeed; and also bring on a contention, possibly a rupture, with neutral powers, on whose aid as carriers we entirely depended, as long as the continent could not be approached by our own vessels. But such were not the views of men in power, of ei-
ther party. The Whigs were in office when the Berlin Decree of November 1806 arrived in this country; and so little time was given for deliberation, before a course fraught with mischief of the greatest magnitude was resolved upon; that on the 7th of January following, the first of those fatal measures was announced, since so well known under the name of the Orders in Council. This first and Whig Order declared, that the Berlin Decree authorised England to blockade all the French dominions, to forbid any neutral power from entering our ports which had touched at any port of France or her dependencies, and justified us in capturing all her produce; but that we were unwilling to inflict such injuries on neutral nations. There never perhaps was a more absurd, not to say false statement in any instrument of state. The right thus pompously asserted is that of self-destruction, and the reason given for not exercising it, is the fear of injuring a neighbour. It is as if a man were to say to his adversary, "You have thrown a rocket at my house and my neighbour's, which from your great distance fell short of both buildings—therefore I have a full right to burn my own dwelling, but I will not, for fear I should set fire to the next house." The Order then states, that self-defence though not requiring complete retaliation, yet calls for something of the kind—in other words,—that though the duty of self-defence does not require the act of entire self-destruction, it yet calls for a partial self-destruction—and then it declares that for the purpose of retaliating upon the enemy the "evils of his own injustice," no vessels shall trade from one enemy's port to another, or from one port to another of a French ally's coast shut against English vessels; so that the only chance our goods had of being spread over the continent being by getting them smuggled into some port less watched by France than the rest, and then their being freely conveyed from thence in all directions, the wisdom of the Whig cabinet, then flushed with Napoleon's success into a state of most belligerent excitement against him, induced them to institute a blockade against our own commerce, by forbidding any one to carry British manufactures from place to place of the continent. The only chance we had of sending our goods any where, was getting them in somewhere, and then having them freely distributed everywhere. "No, said the ministers of 1807, let them be stopped where they are landed, and let no American think of carrying them elsewhere. Let them lie and rot in the warehouses of Pola, and Trieste, and Ancona, and Cadiz. But if any American or Sicilian presume to carry them on to their final destination,
INTRODUCTION.

at Marseilles, or Bordeaux, or Nantz, let him be seized and and condemned for violating the blockade instituted by the very effectual London Decree of England in aid of the empty Berlin Decree of France, both Decrees alike levelled at the existence of the British commerce, though levelled with very different aim.”—It is farther to be remarked, that there existed no right whatever in England to issue any such decree against neutral states, merely because France had violated neutral rights. If time had been given for seeing whether or not America and other neutrals would submit to the Berlin Decree, something might have been said in behalf of our order. But it was issued 7th January, 1807, the Berlin Decree having been dated 20th November 1806—consequently it was physically impossible that we should then know what course America intended to pursue with respect to the French invasion of her rights. To every fundamental objection afterwards urged against the other Orders in Council issued at the close of the same year by the Tory Ministers, is the Whig Order of January 1807 completely exposed. It is equally a violation of neutral rights; tends equally to create a misunderstanding with America; operates equally in the wrong direction, namely, to the injury of our own commerce; and has equally the preposterous effect of assisting Napoleon in carrying into execution against us those measures which, without our own help, must in his hands be nearly, if not altogether, inoperative.

Accordingly, although it suited the views of party to forget that Order, and only to attack those of Mr. Perceval, which were framed on the very same principles, yet the Americans never made the least distinction between the two; and Mr. Brougham, while contending against the system on behalf of the English merchants and manufacturers at the bar of the House of Commons in 1808, objected in the very same terms to both, and always treated the preamble of the Whig Order, which stated a measure of vigour against ourselves enforcing the evils of Napoleon’s hostility towards our commerce, to be retorting those evils on himself, as the leading absurdity of the whole system. It must be at the same time added, that when subsequent measures displayed more fully the absurd impolicy of their own act, the Whig party did eminently useful service by their strenuous opposition to the extended system of impolicy and injustice. To these ulterior measures it is now necessary that we should advert, but first something may be said of their author.

Mr. Stephen was a person of great natural talents, which, if accidental circumstances had permitted him fully to
INTRODUCTION.

cultivate, and early enough to bring into play upon the best scene of political exertion, the House of Commons, would have placed him high in the first rank of English orators. For he had in an eminent degree that strenuous firmness of purpose, and glowing ardour of soul, which lies at the root of all eloquence; he was gifted with great industry, a retentive memory, and ingenuity which was rather apt to err by excess than by defect. His imagination was, besides, lively and powerful; little certainly under the chastening discipline of severe taste, but often enabling him to embody his own feelings and recollections with great distinctness of outline and strength of colouring. He enjoyed, moreover, great natural strength of constitution, and had as much courage as falls to the lot of most men. But having passed the most active part of his life in one of the West Indian colonies, where he followed the profession of a barrister, and having after his return addicted himself to the practice of a Court which affords no scope at all for oratorical display,* it happened to him, as it has to many other men of natural genius for rhetorical pursuits, that he neither gained the correct taste which the habit of frequenting refined society, and above all, addressing a refined auditory, can alone bestow, nor acquired the power of condensation which is sure to be lost altogether by those who address hearers compelled to listen, like judges and juries, instead of having to retain them by closeness of reasoning, or felicity of illustration. It thus came to pass, that when he entered Parliament, although he could by no means be said to have failed, but on the contrary at first, and when kept under some restraint, he must be confessed to have had considerable success, yet he was, generally speaking, a third-rate debater, because of his want of the tact, the nice sense of what captivates such an audience, how far to press a subject, how much fancy to display,—all so necessary for an acceptable speaker and powerful debater, one who is listened to by the hearers as a pleasure, not as a duty—for the hearers's own gratification, and not for the importance of the subject handled—one in short who must address and win the tribute of attention from a volunteer audience like the House of Commons, and not merely receive the fixed dole of a hearing from the compulsory attention of the Bench. There was another circumstance connected with Mr. Stephen's nature, which exceedingly lessened his influence, and indeed incalculably lowered his merit as a speaker. He

* The Prize Appeal Court in the Privy Council.
was of a vehement, and even violent temper; a temper too, not like that of merely irascible men prone to sudden fits of anger or excitement, but connected also with a peculiarly sanguine disposition; and as he thus saw objects of the size and in the colours presented by this medium, so he never could imagine that they wore a different aspect to other eyes, and exerted comparatively little interest in other bosoms. Hence he was apt to proceed with more and more animation, with increasing fervour, while his hearers had become calm and cold. Nor could anything tend more to alienate an audience like the Commons, or indeed to lessen the real value of his speeches. It must have struck all who heard him when, early in 1808, he entered Parliament under the auspices of Mr. Perceval, that whatever defects he had, arose entirely from accidental circumstances, and not at all from intrinsic imperfections; nor could any one doubt that his late entrance upon Parliamentary life, and his vehemence of temperament, alone kept him from the front rank of debaters, if not of eloquence itself.

With Mr. Perceval, his friendship had been long and intimate. To this the similarity of their religious character mainly contributed; for Mr. Stephen was a distinguished member of the Evangelical Party to which the minister manifestly leant without belonging to it; and he was one whose pious sentiments and devotional habits occupied a very marked place in his whole scheme of life. No man has however, a right to question, be it ever so slightly, his perfect sincerity. To this his blameless life bore the most irrefragable testimony. A warm and steady friend—a man of the strictest integrity and nicest sense of both honour and justice—in all the relations of private society wholly without a stain—though envy might well find whereon to perch, malice itself in the exasperating discords of religious and civil controversy never could descry a spot on which to fasten. Let us add the bright praise, and which sets at nought all lesser defects of mere taste, had he lived to read these latter lines, he would infinitely rather have had this sketch stained with all the darker shades of its critical matter, than been exalted, without these latter lines, to the level of Demosthenes or of Chatham, praised as the first of orators, or followed as the most brilliant of statesmen.

His opinions upon political questions were clear and decided, taken up with the boldness—felt with the ardour—asserted with the determination—which marked his zealous and uncompromising spirit. Of all subjects, that of the Slave Trade and Slavery most engrossed his mind.
experience in the West Indies, his religious feelings, and his near connexion with Mr. Wilberforce, whose sister he married, all contributed to give this great question a peculiarly sacred aspect in his eyes; nor could he either avoid mixing it up with almost all other discussions, or prevent his views of its various relations from influencing his sentiments on other matters of political discussion. His first publication was the "Crisis of the Sugar Colonies," a striking and animated picture of the mischiefs of Slavery, and a strong recommendation of the cause of St. Domingo to the favour of this country. Thus the conduct of Napoleon towards St. Domingo plainly sowed in his mind the seeds of that hatred which he bore to the Emperor and all his plans; and to this source may accordingly be traced, not merely his "Life of Toussaint," written partly to gain favour for the negroes, and partly to stimulate the public indignation against France during the alarms of invasion which accompanied the renewal of hostilities in 1803; but also the "Opportunity," in which he very prematurely urged the policy of forming an alliance with the new Black Republic, and soon afterwards his able and eloquent pamphlet on the "Dangers of the Country." This appeared early in 1807; and contains, among other things of undoubted excellence, a signal proof of his enthusiasm outstripping his better judgment,—for he deliberately traces the misfortunes of Europe in the late wars against France to the special interposition of Providence, because of England repeatedly rejecting the measure of Slave Trade Abolition;—forgetful that although those calamities indirectly and consequentially injured England, they fell far more heavily, and in the very first instance, upon the continental states which had neither a Colony, nor a Slave, nor a Slave trading vessel in their possession, which therefore could not have committed the offence that called down the penalty, and which were subjugated by one of the greatest Slave holders and Slave traders in the world, France, the only gainer by all these visitations of Divine vengeance. It was further remarked, that even as to England his theory failed very soon after the work was published. For hardly had the Abolition been carried, than its authors were driven from power; and the Fifth Coalition was dissolved by the defeat of Russia at the great battle of Friedland.

Baffled, therefore, in his speculations respecting the cause of Napoleon's successes, he betook himself to devising means of counteracting his influence as used against this country. In consequence of his jealous hostility towards Napoleon
and also from his intimate acquaintance with the frauds practised by neutrals in the court of Prize Appeal, where he had the leading practice until he became a Master in Chancery, he had early turned his attention to the French commercial measures, and upon his friend Mr. Perceval coming to the head of affairs, he obtained his assent to a far more complete system of retaliation than the Whig Order in Council of January 1807. He it was who first found and afterwards zealously supported the famous Orders of November in that year, which brought the mercantile conflict with France, and unhappily with America also, to a crisis. These Orders were ushered in by a Tract upon the general subject of the conduct pursued by neutrals, entitled "War in Disguise, or the Frauds of the Neutral Flags;" of all his works the most celebrated, the most justly admired, and a work certainly of extraordinary merit. The facts on which it dwelt were undeniably true, and as they appeared to shew a systematic evasion of belligerent rights by the shifts and contrivances of neutral traders, connived at and indeed encouraged by their governments, it was no hard matter to influence the people of this country against such conduct, and make them believe that this was really hostility towards us and our interests under the mask of neutrality. The fallacy thus greedily swallowed by the nation's prejudices was very sincerely believed by the zealous and impetuous author, and the Ministers whom he counselled; and it is the prevailing fallacy which runs through the whole policy of the Orders in Council, from that of the Whigs in January to that of the Tories in November 1807. This fallacy consists in supposing that the trade driven by the neutrals with our enemies, because it benefits the latter, is therefore hurtful to ourselves, although it perhaps benefits us tenfold; on which is engrafted another mistake, if indeed it be not rather the root of the whole error, that of grudging the impossibility of our ever deriving advantage from the exchange of own goods without something of the benefit redounding to our enemies, customers, and consumers.

When in the train of this brilliant and captivating publication the Orders of November appeared, all men were struck with the magnitude of the design on which they were framed, and all reflecting men regarded them as calculated to execute the grand purpose of the first Decree. Their principle was indeed abundantly simple. Napoleon had said that no vessel should touch a British port and then enter a French one, or one under French control. The Orders in Council said that no vessel whatever should enter any
such port unless she had first touched at some port of Great Britain. Many other regulations opposed to neutrals were made in prosecution of this principle, and an ad valorem duty was levied upon their cargoes. Immediately after came forth Napoleon's Milan Decree, bearing date the 17th December 1807, enforcing more rigorously that of Berlin, and declaring all vessels lawful prize, which had submitted to the right of search claimed by England.

The first result of our general blockade of all Europe was the adoption in this country of a system most liable to every kind of abuse—that of Licences issued to let certain vessels pass notwithstanding the Orders; and this was accompanied by a yet more abominable system of fabricated papers, which naturalized among the merchants and navigators of this country the worst practices of forgery and fraud. The next result was the American Embargo and Non-Importation acts, operating a suspension of all commerce with the United States. The distress experienced by the trade and manufactures of this country was extreme. A series of hostile proceedings with America was begun,—and after much suffering endured, extreme ill-will engendered, many insults offered and resisted, this state of things ended in an open rupture, which lasted till the end of the war in Europe, led to the capture by the Americans of some British frigates, and was terminated by a most inglorious expedition to Washington, and a most unfortunate one to New Orleans,—leading to the injury of our national character in the one, and the tarnishing of our military fame in the other.

When the Orders in Council and the American Embargo first threatened British commerce with destruction, the merchants and manufacturers of London, Hull, Manchester and Liverpool, comprising all the industry of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and all the general trade which centres in the capital, petitioned Parliament against the obnoxious policy of the Orders, craved to be heard by their counsel, and tendered evidence of the injuries sustained by them from the operation of those Orders. Mr. Brougham was their counsel, and was heard at the Bar of both Houses, where he likewise adduced the evidence during several weeks in support of the petitions. The Ministry, however, triumphed over all the attempts then made to defeat the system; and it was not until four years after, in 1812, that, the general distress having gone on increasing, there was found any chance of obtaining a more favourable hearing. Both Mr. Brougham and Mr. Stephen were now members of the House of Commons; and in March 1812, the subject was brought for-
ward by the former. This motion was then negatived; but soon after Easter, he presented petitions from the same parties who had formerly been his clients; and on the motion of Lord Stanley,* on the 28th of April, the House agreed without a division to hear evidence in support of the petitions. The case was conducted every night for seven weeks by Mr. Brougham and Mr. Baring,‡ than whom it would not have been possible to find a more powerful coadjutor. His extensive possessions in America—his connexions both of family and commerce with that country—his former residence there—his vast mercantile knowledge derived from varied and long experience—his great general information, and the depth as well as precision of his understanding—would have rendered him a most formidable adversary of the system, even stript of all the weight which any cause that he espoused must derive from the name, and authority, and resources, of the first merchant in the world. The inquiry on the side of the petitions was wholly conducted by these two members, and each night presented new objections and new defeats to the Orders in Council, and new advantages to the opposition—by incidental debatings on petitions presented—by discussions arising on evidence tendered—by other matters broached occasionally in connexion with the main subject. The Government at first, conceiving that there was a clamour raised out of doors against their policy, and hoping that this would of itself subside, endeavoured to gain time and put off the hearing of the evidence. But Messrs. Brougham and Baring kept steadily to their purpose, and insisted on calling in their witnesses at the earliest possible hour. They at length prevailed so far as to have it understood that the hearing should proceed daily at half-past four o’clock, and continue at the least till ten, by which means they generally kept it on foot till a much later hour, all but those who took a peculiar interest in the subject having earlier left the house.

On the 11th of May, a most lamentable catastrophe deprived the world of the Minister who was the chiefstay of Mr. Stephen’s system. Mr. Perceval was walking arm in arm with that gentleman from Downing Street to the House, when he was met by a messenger whom the Secretary of the Treasury had dispatched to hasten him, the opposition having refused to suspend the examination longer, as the hour appointed to begin had some time passed. Mr. Perceval, with his wonted activity, darted forward to obey the sum-

* Now Earl of Derby. ‡ Now Lord Ashburton.
mons; and was shot as he entered the lobby of the House. It was remarked that had Mr. Stephen, who walked on his left, been still with him, he would have been most exposed to the blow of the assassin. At that moment the inquiry had been recommenced, and Mr. Brougham was examining a witness, when he thought he heard a noise as if a pistol had gone off in some one's pocket—such at least was the idea which instantaneously passed through his mind, but did not interrupt his interrogation. Presently there were seen several persons in the gallery running towards the doors; and before a minute more had passed, General Gascoigne rushed up the House, and announced that the Minister had been shot, and had fallen on the spot dead. The House instantly adjourned. Examinations were taken of the wretch who had struck the blow, and he was speedily committed for trial by Mr. M. A. Taylor, who acted as a magistrate for Middlesex, where the murder was committed. On that day week, Bellingham, having been tried and convicted, was executed, to the eternal disgrace of the Court which tried him, and refused an application for delay, grounded on a representation that were time given, evidence of his insanity could be obtained from Liverpool, where he had resided and was known. It cannot with any truth be said that the popular ferment, which so astonishing and shocking an event occasioned, had at all subsided on the trial, the fourth day after the act was committed, and the day on which the Judge and Jury were called upon—calm in mind—inaccessible to all feelings—above all outward impressions—to administer strict and impartial justice.

The opponents of the Orders in Council refused peremptorily to suspend their proceedings, in consequence of this lamentable event. Indeed the suspension of all other business which it occasioned, was exceedingly favourable to the object of those who were anxious for an opportunity to produce their proofs and obtain a decision. A vast mass of evidence was thus brought forward, shewing incontestably the distressed state of trade and manufactures all over the country, and connecting this by clear indications with the operation of the impolitic system which had been resorted to for "protecting our commerce, and retorting on the enemy the evils of his own injustice." At length, on the 16th of June, Mr. Brougham brought forward his motion for an address to the Crown to recall the obnoxious Orders; and the following was the speech which he delivered upon that occasion. The course of the Government was inexplicable. The absence of Mr. Stephen from his place, where
he had attended every hour of the preceding inquiry, and
taken a most active part in supporting the ministerial mea-
sure, plainly shewed that a determination had been come to
which he could not approve. Yet if it was resolved to strike
—if the system was abandoned—there seemed no intelligible
reason why the leader of its adversaries should be heard to
describe the mischiefs that had flowed from it, and to place
its authors before the people as the cause of all they were
enduring under it. This, however, was the plan resolved
upon; and after Mr. Brougham had been heard in support
of his motion, and Mr. Rose in defence of the system, and
when Mr. Baring had followed, Lord Castlereagh, on the
part of the Government, announced that the motion needed
not be pressed to a division, because the Crown had been
advised immediately to rescind the Orders. The effects pro-
duced by the numerous petitions—by the discussions to which
these gave rise—by the meetings in different places—by the
testimony of the witnesses,—were so apparent within the
last fortnight, that there remained no doubt of the motion
being carried, and hence the determination to which the Mi-
ners deemed it prudent that they should come.

Mr. Stephen's absence on such an occasion was certainly
not easily to be accounted for, unless upon the supposition
that he could not have been in his place without expressing
his dissatisfaction in terms so strong, possibly so contemptu-
ous as might not suit the precarious position in which the
Government now were placed, deprived of Mr. Perceval,
and opposed by Mr. Canning, as well as the Whig party.
To this Government Mr. Stephen adhered, regarding it as
the remnant of his friend Mr. Perceval's administration, and
as regulated, generally speaking, by principles the same as
his own. He never was accused, at any time, of unworthy
sacrificing those principles for any consideration; and three
years afterwards he gave a memorable proof of his public
virtue, by at once abandoning the Ministry, and resigning
his seat in Parliament, because they pursued a course which
he disapproved, upon the great subject of Colonial Slavery.
He retired into private life, abandoned all the political ques-
tions in which he took so warm an interest, gave up the pub-
lic business in which he still had strength sufficient to bear
a very active part, and relinquished without a struggle or a
sigh all the advantages of promotion both for himself and his
family, although agreeing with the Government in every o-
ther part of their policy, because on that which he believed
conscientiously to be the most important of all their prac-
tical views, they differed from his own. It would indeed be
well if we had now and then instances of so rare a virtue; and they who looked down upon this eminent and excellent person as not having answered the expectations formed of his parliamentary career, or sneered at his enthusiastic zeal for opinions in his mind of paramount importance, would have done well to respect at a distance merit which they could not hope to imitate—perhaps could not well comprehend—merit, beside which the lustre of the statesman's triumphs and the orator's fame grows pale.
SPEECH

UPON THE PRESENT

STATE OF COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES,

AND

THE ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

JUNE 16, 1812.

Sir,—I rise to bring before the House a proposition regarding the subject, which has recently occupied so large a share of our attention—the present state of Trade and Manufactures, and the sufferings of the people of England. And I am confident I shall not be accused of exaggeration when I say, that it is by far the most interesting and momentous topic which can at this crisis engage the attention of Parliament. After six weeks spent in the inquiry—after a mass of evidence unparalleled in extent has been collected—the time is at length arrived, when we are called upon for the result of our investigation, for our determination in behalf of the country, and our advice to the Crown upon the mighty interests which we have been examining. But while I dwell upon the importance of this subject, I am by no means disposed to follow the practice usual upon such occasions, and to magnify its extent or its difficulty. The question is indeed one of unexampled interest, but of extremely little intricacy. Its points are few in number—they lie within a narrow range—they are placed near the surface—and involved in no obscurity or doubt. Its materials are only massive in outward appearance, and when viewed at a distance. There seems to be a huge body of details. This load of papers—these eight or nine hundred folios of evidence—together with the bulk of papers and petitions lying on your table, would naturally enough frighten a careless observer with the notion that the subject is vast and complicated. Yet I will venture to assert, that I shall not have proceeded many minutes, before I have convinced not only those who assisted in the labours
of the Committee—not those merely who have read the result of the Inquiry on our minutes—but those who now for the first time give their attention to the question, and come here wholly ignorant of its merits, that there has seldom been a subject of a public nature brought before this House, through which the path was shorter and surer, or led to a decision more obvious and plain.

There is, however, Sir, one task which meets me in the outset, and one of so painful a nature, that I would fain recede from it. It is my severe duty this night to make you acquainted with the distresses of the people, and principally of the lower orders, that is to say, the most numerous and industrious classes of our countrymen. To handle the question without entering into these afflicting details, or to travel amongst them without the deepest uneasiness, would require an ingenuity or an insensibility which are equally foreign to my nature. For to whom could the scenes which we positively witnessed in the Committee be so distressing, as to those whose anxiety for the welfare of the lower orders impelled them to devote their days and nights to the labours of the Inquiry? And it is now my hard task to give those who were not there to see and hear, some idea of what passed before our very eyes—the strange and afflicting sight of respectable ancient men, the pillars of the trade and credit of the country, coming forth to lament, not that they saw wasting away beneath the fatal policy of our Government the hard-earned fruits of their honest and industrious lives—not that they were approaching to old age stripped of the support which they had been providing for that season—but because they no longer had the means of saving from absolute want the thousands of unhappy persons dependent upon them for subsistence—because they had no longer wages to give the thousands, who were eager to work for any pittance to sustain life—because, having already exhausted their whole means, all the accumulations of their lives, in the charitable offices of employing those poor people, they were now brought to the brink of that dreadful alternative, either of leaving them to perish, or of shutting their cars to the waists of connexions that had still stronger claims. These are things which I cannot pass over; but I willingly delay entering upon them for some little time; and at present I should prefer calling your attention to more general circumstances, which less directly, though with equal force, prove the unexampled calamities of the times.

And here, Sir, I do not allude merely to the numerous petitions preferred to Parliament, setting forth the distress-
DES of the country, and praying for a repeal of the Orders in Council. I will not dwell upon these, nor ground my inferences upon them. And yet I well might avail myself of such an argument on the present occasion. For if the system was adopted for the express purpose of relieving our trade and manufactures, what better proof of its inefficacy, than the loud and general complaints of our merchants and workmen against it? If the very ground and justification of those measures has always been the necessity of affording relief to the commerce and industry of the country, what can be more in point, while they are urging the merits of the plan, than the fact, that Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Warwickshire, all the great districts of our manufactures, joined formerly in expressing their fears of the relief you were offering them; and now, after four years’ trial of its virtues, loudly pray to be saved from such a remedy, imploring you for pity sake to abandon them to the hostility of their enemies, and spare them the merciless kindness of the protection under which they are groaning? Yet I will forego whatever support the cause may derive from the fact of these petitions, in order to dwell upon the more indirect and unexpected, and therefore wholly unsuspicious testimony, which it derives from other quarters. I would beseech the House to cast its eye abroad upon the various projects for obtaining relief, to which of late the people have in different parts of the country had recourse—the attempts and devices to which, in the restlessness of their sufferings, they have been resorting, with the vain hope of shifting or shaking off from them the load of calamity under which they labour. Some of those schemes, I know, are most inadequate to the object—some are nugatory and absurd—some are positively hurtful to them, and deserving of reprobation. But they all proceed from the feverish uneasiness, the impatience of rest, which forms an undoubted symptom of the prevailing malady. Take, for example, the disorders which in different districts have given rise to short-sighted attacks upon machinery and other private property. Of these it is impossible to speak without blame; but when we reflect on the misery which brought on this state of violence, it is hard to avoid mingling pity with our censure. Another remedy, as short-sighted, though unhappily perfectly legal, I have myself had occasion to see attempted in the course of my professional employment—I mean the applications which numerous bodies of manufacturers have made to courts of justice, for enforcing one of the most impolitic laws on the statute-book, the act of Elizabeth, re-
quiring magistrates to fix the rate of wages—a law which has been absurdly permitted to subsist, on the pretence that it was not likely to be acted upon, and which, as might have been expected, stands ready to promote mischief at the moment when it may be most dangerous, without the possibility of ever doing good. A third expedient has been thought of, in application to this House for the abolition of sinecure places, or the appropriation of their profits to the expenses of the war. Of this remedy I by no means think so lightly as some do; it would indeed only afford a trifling relief, but it would go far to prevent the recurrence of the evil, by diminishing the interest of many persons in the continuance of hostilities, and would disarm, I believe, some of the most warlike characters of the time.

But I would particularly entreat you to consider the numberless petitions from almost every part of the country which now crowd your table, against continuing the East India Company's monopoly. That some of those applications are founded in the most just and politic views of the subject, I am far from denying; that the great and once opulent city of Liverpool, for instance, the second in the empire, would derive material relief from that participation in the East India trade, to which it has undoubted right, cannot be doubted; and Glasgow, Bristol, and one or two other places, are in the same predicament. But is this the case with all the other towns, I might almost say villages, which have preferred the same prayer to us in equally urgent terms? Is it the case with any considerable proportion of them? What think you, Sir, of places demanding a share of this trade, which have neither commerce nor manufactures? I will give you a specimen of others which have something to export, but not exactly of the quality best suited to those Eastern markets. One district has petitioned for a free exportation to the East Indies, which to my knowledge raises no earthly produce but black horned cattle. The Potteries have demanded permission to send freely their proclain to China; and the ancient and respectable city of Newcastle, which grows nothing but pit coal, has earnestly entreated that it may be allowed to ship that useful article to supply the stoves and hot-houses of Calcutta. All these projects prove nothing less than the incompetence of their authors to find out a remedy for their sufferings; but they do most distinctly demonstrate how extensive and deep-seated the evil must be, and how acute the sufferings which seek relief from such strange devices. They remind one of the accounts which have been handed down to us of the great pestilence which
once visited this city. Nothing in the story of that awful time is more affecting, than the picture which it presents of the vain efforts made to seek relief; miserable men might be seen rushing forth into streets, and wildly grasping the first passenger they met, to implore his help, as if by communicating the poison to others, they could restore health to their own veins, or life to its victims whom they had left stretched before it. In that dismal period there was no end of projects and nostrums for preventing or curing the disease, and numberless empirics every day started up with some new delusion, rapidly made fortunes of the hopes and terrors of the multitude, and then as speedily disappeared, or were themselves borne down by the general destroyer. Meanwhile the malady raged until its force was spent; the attempts to cure it were doubtless all baffled; but the eagerness with which men hailed each successive contrivance, proved too plainly how vast was their terror, and how universal the suffering that prevailed.

So might I now argue, from the complaints and projects which assail us on every hand, how deeply seated and widely spread is the distress under which the people are suffering; but unhappily we have to encounter its details in many other shapes. Although it is not my intention to travel through the mass of evidence on your table, the particulars of which I may safely leave to my honourable friend,* who has so laudably devoted his time and abilities to this investigation. Let me only, Sir, remind the House of the general outline of the Inquiry. We have examined above a hundred witnesses, from more than thirty of the great manufacturing and mercantile districts. These men were chosen almost at random, from thousands whom we could have brought before you with less trouble than it required to make the selection; the difficulty was to keep back evidence, not to find it; for our desire to state the case was tempered by a natural anxiety to encroach as little as possible on the time of the House, and to expedite by all means the conclusion of an inquiry, upon the result of which so many interests hung in anxious suspense. In all this mass of evidence there was not a single witness who denied, or doubted—I beg your pardon, there was one—one solitary and remarkable exception, and none other even among those called in support of the system, who even hesitated in admitting the dreadful amount of the present distresses. Take, for example, one of our great staples, the Hardware, and

* Mr. Baring, now Lord Ashburton.
look to Warwickshire, where it used to flourish. Birmingham and its neighbourhood, a district of thirteen miles round that centre, was formerly but one village, I might say one continued workshop, peopled with about four hundred thousand of the most industrious and skilful of mankind. In what state do you now find that once busy hive of men? Silent, still, and desolate during half the week; during the rest of it miserably toiling at reduced wages, for a pittance scarcely sufficient to maintain animal life in the lowest state of comfort, and at all times swarming with unhappy persons, willing, anxious to work for their lives, but unable to find employment. He must have a stout heart within him who can view such a scene and not shudder. But even this is not all, matters are getting worse and worse; the manufacturers are waiting for your decision, and if that be against them they will instantly yield to their fate, and turn adrift the people whom they still, though inadequately, support with employment. Upon your vote of this night the destiny of thousands in that district alone depends; and I ask you before you give it to tell me what must become of those thousands, or of the country in which they shall be turned loose? I am aware that the language I use may be misinterpreted—it may be perverted into a threat; but I speak of incontrovertible facts from the evidence before you, when I affirm, that if you, this night say "no" to the petitions against the Orders in Council, you let loose upon the country thousands and thousands—I will not say of riotous, or disorderly, seditious, or even discontented people—but only of hungry men who must either find food or perish. Look now to Yorkshire,—to the clothing country. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the only conversation I had the honour of holding with him upon this question, was very, confident that the case of the petitioners, would fail in these districts; you have proved it, said he, as far as these respects hardware, but, you will do nothing in the Woollen trade. Sir, we have now gone through the case, and how stand the facts? It is still stronger with respect to the clothing than the hardware! It is more various in its features and more striking in the result, because the trade is more extensive, and employs both larger capitals and a more numerous people. One gentleman tells you that he has twenty, another twenty-five thousand pounds locked up in unsaleable, unprofitable stock, which load his warehouses. A third has about thirty, and a fourth no less than ninety thousand pounds thus disposed of. In the warehouses of one merchant there are eighty thousand pounds worth of Cottons,
and in those of another at Liverpool from two to three thousand packages, chiefly Woollens and Cottons, valued on the lowest computation at two hundred thousand pounds, every article of which was destined for the American market, and can find no other vent. In the West Riding thousands have been thrown out of all employment—but this is nothing compared with the fearful apprehensions which are there entertained, if you this night refuse them relief. I pass lightly over this ground—but the fact is known that in that populous county, the applications to the parish officers have so alarmingly increased, that they have given repeated warnings to the master manufacturers, and I believe to the higher authorities, of their utter inability to relieve the increasing distress or to answer for its consequences. Among other circumstances which marked this part of the case, there was one peculiarly affecting to every one who heard it.—It had been proved that at Kidderminster, where the great Carpet manufacture is almost entirely destroyed, the wants of the poor became so pressing that they were forced to part with their little stock of furniture, which used to make their cottages in some degree comfortable, and even the clothes off their backs, to raise food, until the pawnbrokers, having already loaded themselves with such deposits, refused to issue any more tickets. But at Sheffield, the same feature recurred in an heightened and still more striking form. The workmen in the Cutlery trade, unable to obtain any longer their usual market, from the master dealers and merchants or brokers refusing to purchase any more, were compelled to pawn their articles at a very low valuation, for money, and even for food and clothes—so that this extraordinary state of things arose—the pawnbrokers came into the London market with the goods, and there met the regular dealers, whom they were able greatly to undersell; in such wise as to supply in a considerable degree the London and other markets, to the extreme augmentation of the distresses already so severely pressing upon this branch of trade.

I might detain you, Sir, in an endless repetition of this same tale of misery, through its different shapes, were I to describe its varieties in the other districts to which the evidence applies—but I shall only refer to the Cotton trade; and that, not for the sake of stating that here too the same picture was presented of capital locked up—men of great nominal wealth living without income—trading, or seeming to trade, without profits—numberless workmen dismissed—those who remain employed earning only half or quarter wages—parish rates increasing—charitable supplies failing.
from the reduced means of the upper classes, and the hourly augmented claims upon their bounty—and the never-ceasing feature of this case in all its parts, the impending necessity of instantaneously disbanding those who are only now retained in the hopes of your favourable decision; but I would draw your attention to the Cotton districts, merely to present one incidental circumstance which chanced to transpire respecting the distresses of the poor in those parts. The food which now sustains them is reduced to the lowest kind, and of that there is not nearly a sufficient supply; bread, or even potatoes, are now out of the question; the luxuries of animal food, or even milk, they have long ceased to think of. Their looks, as well as their apparel, proclaim the sad change in their situation. One witness tells you, it is only necessary to look at their haggard faces, to be satisfied what they are suffering;—another says that persons who have recently returned, after an absence of some months from those parts, declare themselves shocked, and unable to recognise the people whom they had left. A gentleman largely concerned in the Cotton trade, to whose respectability ample testimony was borne by an honourable Baronet*—I cannot regularly name him—but in a question relating to the Cotton trade, it is natural to think of the house of Peel—that gentleman whose property in part consists of cottages and little pieces of ground let out to work-people, told us that lately he went to look after his rents—and when he entered those dwellings, and found them so miserably altered—so strait of their wonted furniture and other little comforts—and when he saw their inhabitants sitting down to a scanty dinner of oatmeal and water, their only meal in the four and twenty hours, he could not stand the sight, and came away unable to ask his rent. These feelings so honourable to him—so painful to us who partook of them—were not confined to that respectable witness. We had other sights to endure in that long and dismal inquiry. Masters came forward to tell us how unhappy it made them to have no more work to give their poor men, because all their money, and in some cases their credit too, was already gone in trying to support them. Some had involved themselves in embarrassments for such pious purposes. One again, would describe his misery at turning off people whom he and his father had employed for many years. Another would say how he dreaded the coming round of Saturday, when he had to pay his hands their reduced wages, incapable of supporting them; how he kept out of

* Sir R. Peel.
their way on that day, and made his foreman pay them. While a third would say that he was afraid to see his people, because he had no longer the means of giving them work, and he knew that they would flock round him and implore to be employed at the lowest wages; for something wholly insufficient to feed them. Indeed, said one, our situation is greatly to be pitied; it is most distressing, and God only knows what will become of us, for it is most unhappy! These things, and a vast deal more—a vast deal which I will not attempt to go through, because I absolutely have not the heart to bear it, and I cannot do it—these things, and much more of the same melancholy description, may be seen in the minutes by such as did not attend the Committee; or as far as I have been able to represent them, they may be understood by those who have not heard the evidence. But there were things seen in the Committee which cannot be entered on its records; which were not spoken in words, and could not be written down; which I should in vain attempt to paint—which to form any idea of, you must have been present, and seen and heard. For I cannot describe to you the manner in which that affecting evidence was given. I cannot tell you with what tones and looks of distress it was accompanied. When the witnesses told the story of the sufferings of their work-people and their own sufferings on their account, there was something in it which all the powers of acting could not even imitate; it was something which to feel as I now feel it, you must have seen it as I saw. The men to whom I am now alluding belonged to the venerable Society of Friends—that amiable body of persons—the friends indeed of all that is most precious to man—the distinguished advocates of humanity, justice, and peace, and the patterns, as well as promoters of all the kindest charities of our nature. In their manner of testifying to this cause, there was something so simple and so touching, that it disarmed for a season the habitual indignation of the learned father of the system,* and seemed to thaw the cold calculations of its foster parent,† and his followers of the Board of Trade and Shipping Interest.‡

Sir, there is one circumstance in these melancholy details, which I have refrained from touching upon, because it seemed always to excite a peculiar degree of soreness: I mean the scarcity. We have often been taunted with this topic. We have been triumphantly asked, "What! is the scarcity too, owing to the Orders in Council?" Certainly we

* Mr. Stephen. † Mr. Rose. ‡ Mr. Marryatt, &c.
never thought of ascribing the wet summer, and the bad crop, to the present commercial system; but as for scarcity, I imagine there may be two kinds of it equally inconvenient to the people—a scarcity of food, and a scarcity of money to buy food with. All the witnesses whom we examined, were, without exception, asked this question, "Do you recollect the scarcity of 1800 or 1801?" Yes, was the answer, we do remember it; the dearth was then great, greater than at present, for there where two failing crops." But when we asked, whether the distress was as great, they flung up their hands and exclaimed—"O nothing like it, for then the people had plenty of work and full wages, whereas now the want of money meets the want of food." But further, Sir, have you not taken away the only remedy for this scarcity—the only relief to which we can look under a bad harvest—by closing the corn market of America? Did we not always say, in arguing upon these measures prospectively; "Where are you if a bad season comes, and there is a risk of a famine?" Well—unhappily this calamity has come, or approaches; the season is bad, and a famine stares us in the face, and now we say as we did before—"Where are you with your Orders in Council, and your American quarrel?" Why, Sir, to deny that those measures affect the scarcity, is as absurd as it would be to deny that our Jesuit's bark bill exasperated the misery of the French hospitals, for that the wretches there died of the ague and not of the bill—True, they died of the ague; but your murderous policy withheld from them that kindly herb which the providence that mysteriously inflicted the disease, mercifully bestowed for the relief of suffering humanity.

Before I quit this subject, let me entreat of the House to reflect how it bears upon the operations now carrying on in the Peninsula. Our armies there are fed from America; supplies to the amount of eight or nine millions a-year, are derived by them from thence; the embargo t'other day raised the price of flour in the Lisbon market above fifty per cent.; and when the news of this advance reached London, you heard from one witness that it occasioned in one morning, within his own knowledge, an export from this port of six thousand barrels of flour to supply the Portuguese market. Our operations in Spain and Portugal then depend upon the intercourse with America, and yet we madly persist in cutting that intercourse off! And is it indeed come to this? Are we never to lose sight of the Spanish war, except when America is concerned? To that contest what sacrifices have we not cheerfully made? To its paramount importance what
perpetual tribute have we not been paying? Has it not for years been the grand object of our hopes as of our efforts; the centre upon which all our politics, external and domestic, have hinged; the point which regulated every thing, from the negotiation of a public treaty to the arrangement of a Cabinet? Upon this contest what millions of money, what profusion of British blood have we not lavished, without ever stopping to count the cost, so self-evident have we ever deemed its advantages or rather its necessity to be? Yet now are we prepared to abandon it—to sacrifice all our hopes of its future profit—to throw away every advance that we have already made upon it, because it can no longer be prosecuted without involving us in the costs and dangers of—a reconciliation with America! For this war, for this same bootless war we hesitate, not to neglect every interest, every domestic tie—to cripple, oppress, starve, and grind down our own people; but all attention to it, all thought of it, suddenly leaves us the moment we ascertain that, in order to carry it on, we must abandon an unjust and ruinous quarrel with our kinsmen in America, and speedily relieve the unparalleled distresses of our own countrymen! Now, and now only, and for this reason and none other, we must give up for ever the cherished object of all our hopes, and no longer even dream of opposing any resistance to France upon the Continent of Europe—because by continuing to do so we should effectually defeat her machinations in America!

I have now, Sir, slightly and generally touched upon the heads of that case of deep distress which the evidence presents to our view; and I here stop to demand by what proofs this evidence has been met on the other side of the House? Not a question did the honourable gentlemen, who defend the system, venture to put by way of shaking the testimony, the clear and united testimony to which I have been alluding; not a witness did they call on their part with the view of rebutting it, save only one, and to this one person's evidence it is necessary that I should call your attention, because from a particular circumstance it does so happen that it will not be found upon the minutes, and can therefore only be known to those who heard it, by whom, I well know, it never can be forgotten. This man, whom I will not name, having denied that any great distress prevailed among the lower orders in the manufacturing districts, it was fit that I should examine him a little more closely, seeing that he took upon himself to contradict the statement unanimously given by the most respectable merchants and manufacturers in the country but a few days before. I therefore asked whether he meant
to say, that the artisans had the same wages as usual—And then was disclosed a scene the most revolting, the most disgusting, that it is possible to conceive, insomuch, indeed, that I was immediately afterwards implored by the gentlemen opposite to allow the evidence to be expunged, that it might not remain on our Journals to defile them. This man in substance told us, that the people had enough of wages—that they had no right to more—that when their wages were at the former rate they had three times as much as they ought to have!—What? did he really dare to say that the food which we had heard with sorrow described by the Lancashire witnesses was enough for the support of Englishmen, or that this miserable fare was all that the lower people of this country have a right to—the lower people to whom we owe all our national greatness? Did he venture to tell the representatives of that people—us who are sent here by them—who meet here only to consult for their interests—who only exist by and for them—that a short allowance of oatmeal and water (for such is the fact) was the fit fare for them?* Sir, this man sprang, I make no doubt, himself from the same class of the community, and at any rate now became by their labour, I am ashamed to say, one of the most affluent merchants in the city of London—this local man, for he began his evidence with an attack upon Jacobinism and imputed the present distresses to the seditious machinations of party men in this town, I rather think he meant to insinuate in this house—an attack which was also ordered to be expunged from the minutes—this very person standing in this Commons House of Parliament,—was shameless enough to insinuate that Englishmen must be fed low to keep them quiet; for he distinctly stated, that if you gave them more, you pampered them, or as he termed it, accustomed them to “luxuries irrelevant to their condition,” and unhinged (as he phrased it in the jargon of his loyalty) “unhinged the frame of society.” Sir, I yielded to the united entreaties of the gentlemen opposite, and for the sake of peace and the credit of our records, I consented to this disgraceful evidence being expunged. I now repent me of what I did; for I ought rather to have suffered the contamination to remain that it might record by what sort of witnesses this system is upheld, and according to what standard of popular rights and national happiness the defence of the system is framed. So much, however, for the first and last attempt which was made to impeach the facts brought forward by my witnesses.

* See evidence of Mr. Wood, Mr. Bentley, &c.
Driven from this ground then, the right honourable gentlemen retreats to his well known hold, and takes refuge in the Custom-house books—in the accounts of the Inspector General. I could have wished that he had brought that worthy and respectable officer himself to the bar, because then we might have learned more accurately how those returns are made up; at present we have only a meagre note of a few lines describing the errors of this proceeding. But, with respect to these returns, I must in the first place observe, that we cannot in this stage of the inquiry rely on such evidence; the period is gone by when they might have been admissible. I shall explain myself in a moment upon this point. Accounts of exports and imports are resorted to, and most properly, in order to estimate the trade of the country when we have no better data; because those accounts give something like an approximation or rough guess at the state of the trade, and are in ordinary cases the only means we have of getting at a knowledge of the state of the country in point of commercial prosperity. But when we know from other sources of the most unquestioned authority every thing relating to this very point—when we have by actual inquiry learned in what state the commerce of the country is—when we have gone to the fountain head and seen the situation of things with our own eyes—it is idle and preposterous to run after lists of exports and imports, which are only the less perfect evidence—the indirect sign or symptom, and utterly out of time after we have examined the thing itself. We have seen that the people are starving all over the manufacturing districts, and the master manufacturers ruined; after this to produce an array of Custom-house figures, for the purpose of shewing whether manufactures are flourishing or not, is stark nonsense—such an array is superfluous, if it coincides with the better proofs; if it contradicts them, what man alive will listen to them for one moment? But I confess, Sir, that with me, at any stage of the inquiry, the credit of those Custom-house tables would be but small, after the account of them which appears in evidence. The Inspector himself has stated in his Memorandum, that the method of making up the account of exports cannot be safely relied upon, in those instances where no payment is made; and by one of the returns it appears, that of twenty-seven millions, the average yearly value of exports, only ten millions are subject to duty on exportation; and that above eight millions neither pay duty, nor receive bounty or drawback; upon this sum at least, then, all the inaccuracy admitted in this minute must attack. But the
evidence sufficiently explains on which side of the scale the error is likely to lie: There is, it would seem, a fellow-feeling between the gentlemen at the Custom-house, and their honoured masters at the Board of Trade; so that when the latter wish to make blazing statements of national prosperity, the former are ready to find the fuel. The managing clerk of one of the greatest mercantile houses in the city, tells you that he has known packages entered at $5,000 which were not worth $50; that those sums are entered at random, and cannot be at all relied upon. Other witnesses, particularly from Liverpool, confirmed the same fact; and I know, as does my Right Honourable Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was present, that the head of the same respectable house, a few days ago mentioned at an official conference with him, an instance of his own clerks being desired at the Custom-house to make a double entry of an article for export. After such facts as these, I say it is in vain to talk of Custom-house returns, even if they were contradicted in no respect by other evidence. After shewing one such flaw in them, I am absolved from all further trouble; I am not bound to follow their details and prove them false step by step; I have shewn enough to destroy their credit as documents, and with this irreparable damage on their face, I might here leave them. But strange to tell, after all the boasting of the gentlemen opposite—in spite of every contrivance to conceal the real fact—and notwithstanding the essentially vicious mode of preparing those documents, it does so happen, that the falling off in our trade is too great even for the machinery of the Custom-house to sustain, or cover it over; and, with every effort to prevent its appearance, here it breaks out upon the face of the Custom-house papers themselves! At first, the methods I have spoken of were, no doubt, successful. When the defalcation was confined within certain limits, those methods might conceal it, and enable the Ministers to delude this House and the country, with details of our flourishing commerce. But that point has been passed, and no resources of official skill can any more suppress the melancholy truth, that the trade of the country has gone to decay. I hold in my hand the latest of these annual returns; and by its details we find that, comparing the whole amount of trade, both exports and imports (which is the only fair way of reckoning), in 1809, with its amount in 1811, there is a falling off in the latter year to the amount of no less than thirty-six millions compared with 1810, the falling off is thirty-eight millions. If we confine our view only to the export of British manu-
factsures, we find, that the falling off in 1811, as compared with either of the former years, (for they are nearly equal,) amounts to sixteen millions. And if we take in the export of foreign and colonial produce also, the falling off in 1811, compared with 1809, is twenty-four, and compared with 1810, no less than twenty seven millions! Then, Sir, we need not object to the evidence afforded by those papers—they make most strongly in favour of our argument—they are evidence for us, if any evidence from such a quarter were wanted—and, whatever credit you may give to the testimony by which I have been impeaching their authenticity—how little soever you may be inclined to agree with me in doubting their accuracy, and in imputing exaggeration to them—I care not ever if you should wholly deny that any such flaws are to be found in their construction, and that any such abatement as I have described is to be made from their total results; I say, corrected or uncorrected, they prove my case—and I now rely on them, and hold them up in refutation of the Board of Trade, because they distinctly demonstrate an immense, an unparalleled diminution in our commerce, during the last eighteen months, and wholly coincide with both our evidence and our argument.

Of the positions advanced by the defenders of this system, one of the most noted is, that what we may have lost by its operation in one quarter, we have gained elsewhere—and that if the United States are no longer open to us, we have extended our trade in the other parts of America, and in some new European channels. To this argument, however, the returns which I have just been dwelling upon furnish a most triumphant, if it were not rather a melancholy, answer. For you will observe, Sir, that the mighty falling off, which those accounts exhibit, is upon the whole trade of the country—that it includes South America, Heligoland, the Baltic, and the Mediterranean, as well as the United States, and the dominions of France. If, therefore, upon the whole trade there has been this great defalcation, it is idle to talk of compensation and substitutes. The balance is struck—the deficiency is proved, after all the substitutes have been taken into the account, and credit has been given for them all. Every such allowance being fully made, there is still a total loss of trade in one year to the enormous amount of eight and thirty millions sterling. In like manner do these returns dispose of another famous argument—that the deficit of last year is only apparent; that it arises from making a comparison with 1810, the greatest year ever known: but
that, compared with former years, there was no falling off at all. What now becomes of this assertion! The falling off in the last year, as compared with 1810, being thirty-seven millions; it is thirty-five, as compared with 1809; and the deficit of exports of British manufactures is very nearly the same in both those comparisons. So much for the assertions of honourable gentlemen, and the real results of the Custom-house documents.

But let us attend a little more closely to the much-boasted substitutes for our American trade, which are to be found in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the South, and in our own settlements in the North. Almost all the witnesses who were examined knew something of these branches of commerce; and it was the constant practice on this side of the House to ask them, how far they had found relief from them? We generally began with inquiring, whether they had tried the South American markets, and there was always the same sort of answer: it was in most cases given with an air and manner sufficiently significant, independent of the words; there was generally a something which I should distinguish by a foreign expression, if I might be permitted to use it, where we have none at home that will convey the meaning—a sort of naïveté—an arch and humorous simplicity, which some now present must recollect. "Try the South American market?—Aye, that we have!" Or, "Know the Brazil trade?—We know it full well!" Some who had not personal experience of it, on being asked, "Whether they knew of any others who had tried the South American trade?" said, "They never wished to know any such people, or to have any thing to do with them." Most of them told us, that their disappointments were owing to Sir Home Popham's circular; and when we desired explanation, and demanded what profits they had turned on those adventures, whether twenty or only ten per cent.—they said they had always lost fifty or sixty, or more in the hundred, and never sold for prime cost; frequently abandoning the goods to their fate, to save further charges in inquiring after them. Thus much appeared when I examined them; being myself no trader I could only question them generally and diffeidently: accordingly, in my hands, they came off easily and safely enough—not so when the Vice-President of the Board of Trade took up the tale, which he never failed to do as soon as I laid it down. Then was seen all the closeness of a practical scrutineneer; he took them to task as a real merchant, dealer and chapman; he spoke to them in their own language, and rated them in a manner so alarming to them—but to my honour-
able friend* and myself so amusing, that even now it is
some merriment to recollect the dialogue:—"What!" he
would say, "did you suffer a loss from the great South
American market?" "Yes," was the answer, "a loss of
fifty or sixty per cent." "Indeed," said the oracle of
trade, sharply enough, "why, what sort of cargoes did you
send?"—"Woollens," they would answer, "or flannels,
or calicoes," as the case might be:—"Woollens," he would
reply, "why, how could you think of such a thing?—Woollens!—no wonder that you lost."—So that all comes of
their bad trading, and not of the bad market.—"While you
are left to yourselves," says the right honourable gentleman,
"no wonder that you make a losing speculation of it: What
can your ordinary traders know of such fine markets as our
South Sea bubble?—Come to us—repair to our Board of
Trade—let us assort your cargoes—take a hint from my noble
colleague in trade† and me, who carry on the commerce of
the country—Come to the licence shop, and we will teach you
the sure way—not perhaps of making a profit, for in these
times that is not to be expected—but of reducing your los-
ses, so that you shall only lose thirty or perhaps not more
than twenty per cent. on each adventure!"—But grant that
these merchants have really mistaken the right honourable
gentleman's grand market, and have not exactly hit upon
the articles that suit it; is it nothing against this new mar-
ket that none of the real traders—nobody but Lord Ba-
thurst, and his Board in Downing-street, can find out what
things answer for it? Is certainty and steadiness no longer
a desirable quality in trade? Are we to value commerce for
its changeableness? Is variety now the great beauty of
traffic? Is that line of employment for capital to be prefer-
red which gives the most precarious returns, where the haz-
ards are the greatest, and the obstacles the most difficult?
as if the merchant was in search of amusement, or of that
kind of unnatural delight which gamesters are said to take,
in the risks and dangers of their unworthy occupation?
Really, Sir, I speak as one ignorant of the subject, practi-
cally; I am not like the gentlemen of the Board, an adept
in the mysteries of commerce; but from every thing I had
heard, I did imagine that there was some merit in the old-
fashioned qualities which were conceived foolishly I imagine,
and ignorantly, to distinguish a good market, and that it was
nothing the worse for being accessible—plain enough to
enable traders to find out what suited it—large enough not
to be soon glutted—regular enough to be confided in more

* Mr. Baring. † Lord Bathurst.
years than one—and gainful enough to yield some little profit, and not a large loss upon each adventure.

Then comes the other great substitute, the market of British North America, and here the same proofs of a complete glut are to be found in every part of the evidence. At first, indeed, when the people of the United States did not go hand in hand with the Government, and unwillingly supported, or endeavoured to evade the prohibitory laws, it was found easy to smuggle in our goods through Canada, to a considerable amount. But this outlet too we have now taken especial care to close up, by persisting in the same measures which rendered such a round about trade necessary, until we exasperated the people of the United States as well as their Government, and enabled the latter to take whatever steps might be requisite for completing the exclusion of our trade—those measures having been adopted—the contraband in Canada is at an end, and there is no longer that vent in British North America, which the Board fondly imagined it had so silly provided for our commerce; a vent which, at the best, must have been a most wretched compensation for the loss of the American traffic, in its direct and full course.

But, Sir, we are talking of substitutes; and I must here ask how much of the South American or European trade is really a substitute for that of the United States?—because, unless it is strictly speaking so substituted in its place, that it would be destroyed were the North American trade restored, no possible argument can be drawn from its amount, against the measures which I now recommend for regaining the market of the United States. It is pretended that the export to North America used to be much greater than the consumption of that country, and that a large part of it was ultimately destined for the consumption of South America and the West Indies; from whence the inference is drawn, that as we now supply those markets directly, the opening of the North American market would not be so large an increase as is supposed. The fact is quite otherwise. It is proved in evidence by a respectable witness* who has resided for years in America, and by the official returns before Congress, that not above a thirteenth in value of the amount of the goods sent from this country to the United States, is in the whole re-exported to South America and the West Indies; and of this not above a half can be British manufacture. There will only be then a diminution of half a million in the export to North America from this cause, and that must have been much more than supplied by the in-

*Mr. P. C. White.
crease of the North American market since the trade was
stopt. So too the markets of Brazil, and of Spain and Portu-
gal, which are spoken of as substitutes for our North Ameri-
can commerce, will most unquestionably continue as at
present after that commerce shall have been restored. All
the deductions that we have any right to make are too con-
temptible to be mentioned. No proof is offered or even at-
ttempted to be given, that these pretended substitutes, are in
fact substitutes; that they would not continue to exist in their
present extent after the revival of the branches in the place
of which they are absurdly said to be substituted. There-
fore I need not argue as to the extent or the excellence of
those new markets. Be they ever so valuable—be they as
fine as the Vice-President and his Board can dream of, my
argument is not touched by them, until it be shewn, that we
must lose them by restoring our intercourse with the United
States.

Since the pressure then which the loss of our foreign
trade has occasioned, have we discovered in the course of
the inquiry any relief? The gentlemen opposite eagerly fly
to the home market; and here their disappointment is, I
grieve to say, speedy and signal. On this branch of the
question the evidence is most striking and harmonious. In
all the trades which we examined, it appeared that the home
market was depressed in an unexampled degree. And
this effect has been produced in two ways. Goods des-
tined for the foreign market, no longer finding that vent,
have been naturally thrown more or less into the home
markets, so as to glut, or at least greatly overstock it.
And again, those places which depended for part of their
support upon the foreign market, have been so c.rippled
by the loss of it, that their consumption of articles of com-
fort and luxury has been materially contracted. This is
remarkably illustrated in the evidence respecting the cutlery
trade; which, from the nature of its articles, is pecu-
liary calculated to explain both the circumstances I have
alluded to. Not only do the dealers in that line find the
home market unusually loaded with their goods, but they tell
you that they find a much smaller demand than formerly for
the goods, in all places which used to be engaged in the
American trade. Evidence of the same kind is to be found
touching another article of luxury, or at least comfort, the
Kidderminster manufactory; and the respectable and intel-
ligent witnesses from Spitalfields explained fully how the
diminution of their staple manufacture, from what causes
soever arising, never failed to effect all the other branches of
industry in that district, down to the bricklayer and common
day-labourer. It must be so; the distribution of wealth,
the close connexion and mutual dependency of the various
branches of industry, will not permit it to be otherwise.

While I am speaking of the home trade, Sir, I must, call
your attention in passing, to one species of relief which is
more apparent than real, arising to that branch of our com-
merce out of the war and its expenditure. It is certain that
at present great part of the trade which remains to us is not
a regular, lucrative, and if I may so speak, wholesome and
natural trade—but a mere transference of money from the
tax-payer through the tax gatherer to the manufacturer or
merchant—a mere result of the operations of supply within
this House, and the operations of war out of it. I speak
now, not only of the three millions a year paid to the ship-
ing interest for the transport service—nor of the vast amount
of our expenditure in the Peninsula and Mediterranean;
which delusively augment by many millions the apparent ex-
ports of the country, but I will take an instance from the pa-
pers on your table, and it shall be from Birmingham. Half
of the trade there being now gone, there remains manufac-
ture, we are told, of goods to the amount of £1,200,000 a
year, for home consumption. But this home consumption
includes the demand of that great and extravagant consumer
the Government. The Ordnance accounts shew that above
£700,000 are paid in one year for gun and pistol barrels
made at Birmingham; so that only half a million is the
real and genuine extent of the remaining manufacture.
The rest no doubt relieves the manufacturers and work-
men, but it is a relief at the expense of the other members
of the community; and the expense goes to feed the war
—to support soldiers and sailors, who in return, though
doubtless they perform great and precious services to the
country, yet do not at all contribute to augment its wealth,
or maintain its revenues, as workmen and peasants would do
if the same sums were expended upon them. A similar ob-
servation may be applied to the expenses of clothing the Ar-
my and Navy. In Yorkshire, and some parts of Scotland,
these demands have been found to constitute the bulk of
the remaining trade. Their amount I know not with any
accuracy, as the returns which I moved for are not yet pro-
duced; but it is easy to conjecture that six or seven hundred
thousand men cannot be clothed at a very small expense.
All these demands must be deducted from the account, if we
wish to exhibit a fair view of the actual state of our manu-
factures.
Suffer me, Sir, before leaving this part of the subject, to state a circumstance, connected with the Home trade, which is peculiarly striking, and argues to shew clearly, that thing are in such a state that any relief obtained in one quarter must be at the expense of another. In the clothing districts it was stated that about a year and a-half ago, a considerable extension of trade had been experienced in many branches, and no sooner was the circumstance mentioned than the Vice-President’s countenance brightened up, as if he had at length begun to see daylight, and the tide was really turning in his favour: so he greedily pursued the inquiry. It turned out, however, that this relief, (and it was the only one of which we met with any trace during our whole investigation,) was owing to a change of fashions, which about that time was introduced, the ladies having taken to wearing cloth pelisses during that winter. But soon after came the sequel of the same tale; for we were examining the Spitalfields weavers on some other points, and upon their stating that they were never so badly off as about a year and a-half ago, we inquired to what this was owing, and it turned out that it arose entirely from the change of fashions among the ladies, who no longer wore silk pelisses. Thus the clothiers were relieved entirely at the expense of the weavers, and the only instance which this long and various inquiry affords of the universal sufferings being interrupted by any more favourable events—the only diminution to the distresses that is any where to be met with—is one which increases those miseries precisely in the same degree in some other quarter, equally deserving our protection and our pity.

But there is one ground which the advocates of the system always retreat to, when they are driven out of the facts, and find themselves unable either to deny the miseries which their projects have occasioned, or to contend that there are any practicable means of relief. They allow that our commerce is destroyed—they admit that the people are impoverished—but there are other considerations, they contend, which a great nation should entertain—there are more valuable possessions than trade and wealth—and we are desired to consider the dignity and honour of the country. Sir, there is no man within these walls to whom such an appeal could be made with more effect than to him who is now addressing you. Let it but be shewn to me that our national honour is at stake—that it is involved in this system—nay that it touches it in any one point—and my opposition from that moment is at an end—only prove to me, that although our trade is gone, or turned into confined, uncertain and suspici-
ous channels—although our manufacturers are ruined and our people starving—yet all these sacrifices and sufferings are necessary for our character and name—I shall be the first to proclaim that they are necessary and must be borne, because I shall ever be the foremost to acknowledge that honour is power and substantial inheritance to a great people, and that public safety is incompatible with degradation. Let me but see how the preservation of our maritime rights, paramount as I hold them to every other consideration, is endangered by the repeal of the Orders in Council—and I sit down and hold my peace. But I now urge you to that repeal, because I hold it most conscientiously to be, not injurious but essential to the preservation and stability of those rights, and of the naval power which protects them; and I must therefore crave your leave to step aside for a while from the details in which I have been engaged, in order to remove, as I well know I speedily can, all idea of the necessity of the Orders in Council to the security of our Naval rights. This explanation is due both to the question itself, to the numerous parties who are now in breathless anxiety awaiting its decision, and if I may presume to say so, to my own principles and character.

On the foundation of our pretensions as at the present time urged I am loth to enter, because, whether they are just or not, according to my view of the question, the maintaining or abandoning of them, even of the most untenable among them, is quite foreign to the discussion. I will not therefore stop to examine the value, or the justice of our claim to unlimited blockade—what is significantly termed paper blockade. I might ask since when this has been introduced or sanctioned by even our own Courts of Public Laws? I might refer you to the beginning of last war, when our commanders in the West Indies having declared the ports of Martinico under blockade, the highest authority in matters of prize, the Lords of Appeal, without hesitation decided this blockade to be contrary to the Law of Nations, and refused to support it. But as my argument requires no such position, as it leads me quite clear of this question, I wish not to embarrass myself at all with it, and I will freely grant every thing that can be asked upon the question of right. I will admit that we have a right to blockade, by a few lines in the Gazette, whole islands, coasts, continents, nay, the entire world and all its harbours, without sending a single sloop of war to enforce the order. This admission, I should think, is sufficient to satisfy the most blockading appetite in the House, though I perceive, by the smile of distrust on the
ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

Chancellor of the Exchequer’s countenance, that it falls short of his notions. I will also pass over the still more material question, how far we have a right to blockade, for purposes not belligerent but mercantile, that is, to exclude neutrals from trading with our enemy, not with the view of reducing that enemy to submission, and terminating the contest more speedily, for the general good, but upon the speculation of stinting the enemy’s trade and encouraging our own. Lastly, I shall say nothing of the most obvious of all these questions—how far we have a right to blockade the enemy, exclude the neutral, for the purpose of breaking our own blockade and engrossing the trade with the enemy, from which we keep the neutral out—a question ably stated the first time I had the honour of bringing forward this subject, by a right honourable gentleman on the opposite side. All these questions I pass from, however strong my opinion may be upon some of them; and I do not even stop to show what the evidence does at every step substantiate, that the Orders in Council do in no respect tend to secure any one even of those pretended advantages for our own trade over the enemy’s; but I hasten to grapple with the substance of the argument on the other side, by which the Orders in Council are connected with these maritime rights, all of which I am now admitting. It is said, that if we repeal those Orders, and wave or relinquish for the present and for our own evident advantage, the rights on which they are founded, then we sacrifice those rights for ever, and can never again, happen what may, enforce them. Is it really so, Sir? Then woe betide us and our rights! for which of all our maritime rights have we not at one time or another relinquished? Free ships make free goods, says, the enemy, and so say many other powers. This we strenuously deny, and we deem our denial the very corner-stone of our maritime system. Yet at the peace of Utrecht we gave it up, after a war of unexampled success, a series of uninterrupted triumphs, in which our power was extended, and France and her allies humiliated. The famous rule of the war of 1756, has had the same fate—that principle out of which the Orders in Council unquestionably sprung. The name by which it is known shews that it is but a modern invention; but it seems to have been waved or relinquished almost as soon as it was discovered; for in the American war it was given up, not only in practice, but by repeated decisions in our Prize Courts: I allude especially to the well-known judgments of Sir James Marriott upon this point. In the

*Mr. Canning.*
last war it was also departed from, by express acts of the
government in 1793 and 1794; yet, by a strange coincidence,
the very person who now tells us that to refrain from forcing
a right and to abandon it for ever, are one and the same
thing, was he who contributed more than any other man to
revive the rule of the war 1756; he who gave to the world
an able and learned work, certainly,—but one which I deep-
ly lament ever saw the light,—I mean the tract known by
the name of "War in Disguise." Another, and, in my op-
inion, by far the most valuable of our maritime rights, is the
right of search for contraband of war; it is one of the
most unquestionable, too, for it is strictly a belligerent
principle. But have we invariably exercised it? Nay, have
we not offered to give it up? Recollect the first armed neu-
trality, at the close of the American war; Mr. Fox was
then engaged in negotiating away this very right; and by a
fatality as remarkable as that which I have just spoken of,
this very statesman (and a greater has never ruled in this
kingdom, nor one more alive to the true honour of his coun-
try) was the very man who first extended the right of block-
ade, in May 1806; and his colleagues, regulated by his prin-
ciples, were the authors of the coasting blockade, the first step
to the famous Orders in Council. How, then, can any man
who has a memory about him, pretend to tell us, that if we
for a moment cease to exercise those rights, we never can
again enforce them, when you find that we have not merely
abstained from exercising, but actually surrendered at dif-
ferent times all the maritime principles which we now hold
most sacred and most essential? Is it necessary always to do
a thing because you have the right to do it? Can a right
not be kept alive except by perpetually using it, whether
hurtful or beneficial? You might just as well say, that be-
cause I may have a clear right of way through my neigh-
bour's close, therefore I must be eternally walking to and
from in the path, upon pain of losing my right, should I ever
cease to perform this exercise. My honourable and learned
friend* would run up and tell me, if he saw me resting my-
self, or eating, or sleeping, or walking to church,—"Why,
what are you about? You are leaving, relinquishing, aban-
doning your inviolable and undoubted right; if you do not
instantly return and constantly walk there, you are an undone
man." It is very possible that this may be destructive of
my comforts, nay, absolutely ruinous to me, but still I must
walk, or my right of way is gone. The path may lead to a
precipice or a coal-pit, where I may possibly break my neck

* Mr. Stephen.
in groping after my sacred rights. What then? My grandchildren, long after I shall have been destroyed in preserving this claim, may have to thank me for some pleasant or profitable walk, which it seems there was no other way of keeping possession of but by my destruction: This is precisely the argument applied to the present question. I will maintain that every right may safely be waved, or abandoned for reasons of expediency, and resumed when those reasons cease. If it is otherwise—if a right must be exerted, whether beneficial or ruinous to him who claims it, you abuse the language by calling it a right—it becomes a duty, an obligation, a burden. I say, if your interest requires the relinquishment of the rights in question, abstain from enforcing them—give them up under protest—do not abandon them—do not yield them in such a way that you may seem to acknowledge yourselves in the wrong—but with all the solemnities which can be devised, with as many protestations and other formalities as the requisite number of civilians can invent; state that you are pleased to wave the exercise of the right for the present, or until further notice; and that for your own interest, and with views of your own, you are content to refrain from enforcing this chapter of the maritime code. Their brain must be filled with whimsies, and not with ideas of right, who can imagine that a conduct like this would place our pretensions in jeopardy, or throw a single obstacle in the way of exerting on the morrow the very same rights, of which next Saturday's Gazette should contain the waiver. Always let it be remembered, that I ask no surrender, no acknowledgment. I say keep fast hold of your rights—on no account yield them up—but do not play the part of madness, and insist on always using those rights even when their use will infallibly work your ruin.

In entering, Sir, upon the discussion of our maritime system, I have been drawn aside from the course of my statement respecting the importance of the commerce which we are sacrificing to those pure whimsies, I can call them nothing else, respecting our abstract rights. That commerce is the whole American market—a branch of trade in comparison of which, whether you regard its extent, its certainty, or its progressive increase, every other sinks into insignificance. It is a market which in ordinary years may take off about thirteen millions worth of our manufactures; and in steadiness and regularity is unrivalled. In this respect, or indeed in any other, it very little resembles the right honourable gentleman's* famous South

* Mr. Rose.
American market. It has none of the difficulty and uncertainty which it seems are now among the characteristics of a good trade; neither has it that other remarkable quality of subjecting those who use it to a loss of fifty or sixty per cent, unless they put their speculations and assortments under the fostering care of the Board of Trade. All such properties I disclaim on the part of the American commerce; it is sure and easy, and known, and gives great and steady profits. The returns are indeed as sure, and the bad debts as few, as they used to be even in the trade of Holland. These returns are also grown much more speedy. Of this you have ample proof before you, not merely from the witnesses actually examined, who have all said that the payment was now as quick as in any other line, and that the Americans often preferred ready money bargains for the discount; but the same thing is exemplified in the omissions of the case brought forward by the petitioners. Four years ago they told you, and proved it at your bar, that were the intercourse with the United States cut off we should lose above twelve millions, or a year and a half's payments, that being the sum then due from America to this country. Now they have no such case to urge; for they well know, that were a balance struck between the two nations to-morrow, it would be considerably in favour of the Americans, so greatly have they increased in wealth, and so rapidly has this immense trade been growing, as it were, under our very eyes!

There are some political facts, which we must take as facts, because they are proved to us, without being able to account for them, or to trace them to their origin, and explain their causes. But the extent, and swift and regular progress of the American market for British goods is not of this number; we can easily and clearly account for it. In the nature of things it can be no otherwise, and the reason lies on the very surface of the fact. America is an immense agricultural country, where land is plentiful and cheap; men and labour, though quickly increasing, yet still scarce and dear when compared with the boundless regions which they occupy and cultivate. In such a country, manufacturers do not naturally thrive; every exertion, if matters be left to themselves, goes into other channels. This people is connected with England by origin, language, manners, and institutions; their tastes go along with their convenience, and they come to us as a matter of course for the articles which they do not make themselves. Only take one fact as an example: The negroes in the Southern States are clothed in English made goods, and it takes forty shillings a-year
thus to supply one of those unfortunate persons. This
will be admitted to be the lowest sum for which any person
in America can be clothed; but take it as the average, and
make deduction for the expenses above prime cost—you
have a sum upon the whole population of eight millions,
which approaches the value of our exports to the United
States. But it is not merely in clothing; go to any house
in the Union, from their large and wealthy cities to the
most solitary cabin or log-house in the forests—you find in
every corner the furniture, tools, and ornaments of Stafford-
shire, of Warwickshire, and of the northern counties of
England. The wonder ceases when we thus reflect for a
moment, and we plainly perceive that it can be no otherwise.
The whole population of the country is made up of customers,
who require and who can afford to pay for our goods. This,
too, is peculiar to that nation, and it is a peculiarity as hap-
py for them as it is profitable to us. I know the real or
affected contempt with which some persons in this country
treat our kinsmen of the west. I fear some angry and jeal-
ous feelings have survived our former more intimate con-
nexion with them—feelings engendered by the event of its
termination, but which it would be wiser as well as more
manly to forget. Nay, there are certain romantic spirits
who even despise the unadorned structure of their massive
democratic society. But to me I freely acknowledge the
sight of one part of it brings feelings of envy, as an English-
man; I mean the happy distinction, that over the whole ex-
tent of that boundless continent, from Canada to the Gulph
of Mexico, and from the Mississippi to the Atlantic Ocean,
there is not one pauper to be found. Such are the customers
whom America presents to us. The rapid increase of their
culture and population too, doubling in twenty-five or thirty
years, must necessarily augment this demand for our goods
in the same proportion. Circumstanced as the two countries
are, I use no figure of speech, but speak the simple fact
when I say, that not an axe falls in the woods of America
which does not put in motion some shuttle, or hammer, or
wheel in England. Look at Mr. Parkes's evidence, and you
will see that the changes which happen in the New World,
or the political proceedings of the two governments, their or-
ders, and manifestoes, and negotiations, may be perceptibly
traced in their instantaneous effects in this country—in the in-
creased or diminished velocity (I speak to the letter) of the
wheels which are moving in the different districts where
English manufactures used to flourish.

But let us merely pause upon the broad fact of the pre-
sent amount of the American market, and let us keep our eye for a moment upon the numerical expression of its demand—thirteen millions sterling by the year! Why, Sir, only conceive any event which should give an opening in the north of Europe, or the Mediterranean for but a small part of this vast bulk—some change or accident by which a thirteenth, aye, or a thirtieth of this enormous value of British goods could be thrown into the enemy's countries! Into what transport of delight would the Vice President be flung! I verily believe he would make but one step from his mansion to his office—all Downing-street, and all Dukes'-place would be in an uproar of joy. Bless me, what a scene of activity and business should we see! What Cabinets—what Boards!—What amazing conferences of Lords of Trade?—What a driving together of Ministers!—What a rustling of small clerks!—What a mighty rushing of brokers!—Circulars to the manufacturing towns—harangues upon 'Change, performed by eminent naval characters—triumphal processions of dollars and volunters in St. James's-square!—Hourly deputations from the merchants—courteous and pleasing answers from the Board—a speedy importation into Whitehall, to a large amount, of worthy knights representing the city—a quick return cargo of licences and hints for cargoes—the whole craft and mystery of that licence trade revived, with its appropriate perjuries and frauds—new life given to the drooping firms of dealers in forgery, whom I formerly exposed to you—answered by corresponding activity in the Board of Trade and its clerks—slips of the pen worth fifteen thousand pounds*—judicious mistakes well-considered oversights—elaborate inadvertencies—Why, Sir, so happily constituted is the Right Honourable Gentlemen's† understanding, that his very blunders are more precious than the accuracies of other men; and it is no metaphor, but a literal mercantile proposition, to say, that it is better worth our while to err with him than to think rightly with the rest of mankind!—And all this life, and activity, and machinery for what?—To snatch at a miserable export—occasional—fleeting—irregular—ephemeral—very limited in amount—unlikely to recur—uncertain in its return—precarious in its continuance—beneficial to the enemy—exposed to his caprices, and liable by his nod to be swept at once into the fund of his confabulations—enjoyed while he does permit it, by his sufferance for his ends—enriching his subjects—manning his fleets—

* Mr. Baring had stated, that by two mistakes at one time licences were rendered so valuable, that he would have given that sum for them.
† Mr. Rose.
nursing up for him a navy which it has already taken the utmost efforts of our unconquerable marine to destroy! —Good God! the incurable perverseness of human folly! —always straining after things that are beyond its reach, of doubtful worth and discreditable pursuit, and neglecting objects of immense value, because in addition to their own importance, they have one recommendation which would make viler possessions desirable—that they can be easily obtained, and honestly as well as safely enjoyed!—It is this miserable, shifting, doubtful, hateful traffic that we prefer, to the sure, regular, increasing, honest gains of American commerce; to a trade which is placed beyond the enemy's reach—which besides encircling ourselves in peace and honour, only benefits those who are our natural friends, over whom he has no control, but who if they were ever so hostile to us, could not annoy us—which supports at once all that remains of liberty beyond the seas, and gives life and vigour to its main pillar within the realm, the manufactures and commerce of England!

And now, Sir, look to the other side of this picture.—See to what sources of supply you are driving the Americans, when you refuse them your own markets—Why, you are forcing them to be wholly dependent on themselves! The eighteenth century closed with a course of violence and folly, which in spite of every natural tie, dissolved their political connection with the crown; and, as if the cup of our infatuation was not full, we must begin the nineteenth with the phrenzy of severing them from all connexion, and making them, contrary to the course of nature itself, independent of our manufacturers and merchants! I will not go through the evidence upon this important branch of the case, for I feel myself already too much exhausted to attempt it; but whoever reads it will find it uniformly in every page shewing the effects of our system, in forcing manufactures all over America to rival our own. There is not one branch of the many in which we used quietly, and without the least fear of competition to supply them, that is not now to a certain degree cultivated by themselves; many have wholly taken rise since 1807—all have rapidly sprung up to a formidable maturity. To give but a few examples.—In New-York there are now forty thousand looms going—glass is made in a way that we ourselves witnessed, for we saw the specimen produced—wool, cards are now made there which used regularly to be imported from hence—and there is a considerable exportation of cotton twist to the South of Europe, from the country which possesses the most abundantly the raw material. I
say nothing of their wool, and the excellent Merino breed they have obtained from Spain. Look only to one striking fact—Pittsburgh is a town remotely situated in the most western part of the Union. Eighteen years ago it was a hamlet, so feeble and insecure that the inhabitants could scarcely defend themselves from their Indian neighbours, and durst hardly quit the place for fear of being scalped. Now there are steam engines and a large glass work in the same town, and you saw the product of its furnaces. It stands on a stratum of coal fifteen feet thick, and within a few inches of the surface, which extends over all the country west of the Alleghany chain. Coal there sells for six shillings the chaldron, and the same precious mineral it to be found in the Atlantic States, at Richmond, and elsewhere, accessible by sea. It is usual to see men on 'Change in the large towns with twenty, thirty, and fifty thousand pounds in trade—Companies are established for manufactures, insurance, and other mercantile speculations, with large capitals, one as high as L. 120,000 sterling—The rate of interest is six per cent., and the price of land in some places as high as in England. I do not enumerate these things to prove that America can already supply herself,—God forbid!—If she could, the whole mischief would be done, and we could not now avert the blow; but though too much has indeed been effected by our impolicy, a breathing time yet is left, and we ought at least to take advantage of it, and regain what has been thrown away—in four or five years' time it will be gone for ever.

But I shall here be told, as I often have been, that these counsels spring from fear, and that I am endeavouring to instil a dread of American manufactures, as the ground of our measures—Not so, Sir,—I am inculcating another fear—the wholesome fear of utter impolicy mixed with injustice—of acting unfairly to others for the purpose of ruining yourselves. And after all, from what quarter does this taunt proceed? Who are they by whom I am upbraided for preaching up a dread of rival American manufactures?—The very men whose whole defence of the system is founded upon a fear of competition from European manufactures—who refuse to abandon the blockade of France, from an apprehension (most ridiculous as the evidence shows) of European manufactures rivalling us through American commerce—who blockade the Continent from a dread that the manufactures of France, by means of the shipping of America, will undersell our own—the men whose whole principle is a fear of the capital, industry and skill of England being outdone by the
trumpery wares of France, as soon as her market is equally open to both countries!—Sir, little as I may think such alarms worthy of an Englishman, there is a kind of fear which I would fain urge—a fear too of France; but it is of her arms and not her arts. We have in that quarter some ground for apprehension, and I would have our policy directed solely with a view to removing it. Look only at the Spanish war in its relation to the American trade.—In that cause we have deeply embarked—we have gone on for years, pouring into it our treasures and our troops, almost without limit, and all the profit is yet to come. We have still to gain the object of so many sacrifices, and to do something which may shew they have not been made in vain. Some great effort it seems resolved to make, and though of its result others are far more sanguine than I am able to feel, I can have little hesitation in thinking, that we had better risk some such attempt once for all, and either gain the end in view, or, convinced that it is unattainable, retire from the contest. If then this is our policy, for God’s sake let the grand effort be made, single and undivided—undistracted by a new quarrel, foreign to the purpose, and fatally interfering with its fulfilment.—Let us not for the hundredth time commit the ancient error which has so often betrayed us, of frittering down our strength—of scattering our forces in numerous and unavailing plans.—We have no longer the same excuse for this folly which we once had to urge. All the colonies in the world are our own—sugar Islands and spies Islands there are none from Martinico to Java, to conquer—we have every species of unsaleable produce in the gross, and all noxious climates without stint. Then let us not add a new leaf to the worst chapter of our book, and make for ourselves new occasions, when we can find none, for persisting in the most childish of all systems. While engaged heartily on our front in opposing France, and trying the last chance of saving Europe, let us not secure to ourselves a new enemy, America, on our flank. Surely language wants a name for the folly which would, at a moment like the present, on the eve of this grand and decisive and last battle, reduce us to the necessity of feeding Canada with troops from Portugal—and Portugal with bread from England.

I know I shall be asked, whether I would recommend any sacrifice for the mere purpose of conciliating America. I recommend no sacrifice of honour for that or for any purpose; but I will tell you, that I think we can well and safely for our honour afford to conciliate America. Never did we stand so high since we were a nation, in point of military
character. We have it in abundance, and even to spare. This unhappy and seemingly interminable war, lavish as it has been in treasure, still more profuse of blood, and barren of real advantage, has at least been equally lavish of glory; its feats have not merely sustained the warlike fame of the nation, which would have been much; they have done what seemed scarcely possible; they have greatly exalted it; they have covered our arms with immortal renown. Then I say use this glory—use this proud height on which we now stand, for the purpose of peace and conciliation with America. Let this and its incalculable benefits be the advantage which we reap from the war in Europe; for the sake of that war enables us safely to take it;—And who, I demand, give the most disgraceful counsels—they who tell you we are in military character but of yesterday—we have yet a name to win—we stand on doubtful ground—we dare not do as we list for fear of being thought afraid—we cannot without loss of name stoop to pacify our American kinsmen! Or I, who say we are a great, a proud, a warlike people—we have fought every where, and conquered wherever we fought—our character is eternally fixed—it stands too firm to be shaken—and on the faith of it we may do towards America, safely for our honour, that which we know our interests require!—This perpetual jealousy of America! Good God! I cannot with temper ask on what it rests! It drives me to a passion to think of it—Jealousy of American! I should as soon think of being jealous of the tradesmen who supply me with necessaries, or the clients who entrust their suits to my patronage. Jealousy of America! whose armies are yet at the plow, or making, since your policy has willed it so, awkward (though improving) attempts at the loom—whose assembled navies could not lay siege to an English sloop of war:—Jealousy of a power which is necessarily peaceful as well as weak, but which, if it had all the ambition of France and her armies to back it, and all the navy of England to boot, nay, had it the lust of conquest which marks your enemy, and your own armies as well as navy to gratify it—is placed at so vast a distance as to be perfectly harmless! And this is the nation of which for our honour's sake we are desired to cherish a perpetual jealousy, for the ruin of our best interests!

I trust, Sir, that no such phantom of the brain will scare us from the path of our duty. The advice which I tender is not the same which has at all times been offered to this country. There is one memorable era in our history, when other uses were made of our triumphs from those which I
recommend. By the treaty of Utrecht, which the execrations of ages have left inadequately censured, we were content to obtain at the whole price of Ramillies and Blenheim, an additional share of the accursed slave trade. I give you other counsels. I would have you employ the glory which you have won at Talavera and Corunna, in restoring your commerce to its lawful, open, honest course; and rescue it from the mean and hateful channels in which it has lately been confined. And if any thoughtless boaster in America or elsewhere should vaunt that you had yielded through fear, I would not bid him wait until some new achievement of our arms put him to silence, but I would counsel you in silence to disregard him.

Sir, I move you, "That an humble address be presented to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, representing to His Royal Highness that this House has, for some time past, been engaged in an inquiry into the present depressed state of the manufactures and commerce of the country, and the effects of the Orders in Council issued by his Majesty in the years 1807 and 1809; assuring His Royal Highness, that this House will at all times support His Royal Highness to the utmost of its power, in maintaining those just maritime rights which have essentially contributed to the prosperity and honour of the realm—but beseeching His Royal Highness, that he would be graciously pleased to recall or suspend the said Orders, and to adopt such measures as may tend to conciliate Neutral Powers, without sacrificing the rights and dignity of His Majesty's crown."
SPEECH

AT

THE LIVERPOOL ELECTION.

1812.

INTRODUCTION.

MR. ROSCOE.—MR. CREEVEY.

In consequence of Mr. Brougham's connexion, both in 1808 and 1812, with the commercial interests of Liverpool, especially those persons engaged in the American trade, he was invited to attend a public dinner after the termination of the Northern Circuit, in August 1812. Mr. Roscoe presided, and the Lord Lieutenant, the late Lord Derby, as well as the present Earl, the Lord Stanley, with Lord Sefton, and many others of the Lancashire country gentlemen who favoured liberal principles, attended. Dr. Shepherd, the able, learned, and enlightened friend of every cause connected with the interests of civil and religious liberty, also honoured the meeting with his presence. A requisition was soon after sent inviting Mr. Brougham to stand as candidate for the borough at the approaching general election, and it was immediately manifest that one of the present members, General Tarleton, had no chance of success, should Mr. Brougham accept the invitation, which he immediately did.

But a further resolution was taken, which has been, in consequence of the eventual failure, the subject of much animadversion upon the Whig leaders of Liverpool. Not satisfied with returning one member, they brought forward a second in the person of their fellow-townsman, Mr. Creevey, then member for Thetford, for which place he was again returned during the Liverpool election. The first effect of this proceeding was to confirm the Tory party in an intention which they had already been discussing among themselves, that of bringing forward Mr. Canning, together with Gene-
ral Gascoigne, who stood upon the old corporation interest. Mr. Canning accepted the invitation of the great and spirited body of Tory merchants not immediately connected with that municipal body, and there were thus four candidates in the field standing upon four several interests,—General Gascoigne, upon that of the Corporation,—Mr. Canning upon the Tory Independent interest,—Mr. Brougham and Mr. Creevey, upon the Whig interest—and General Tarleton, upon such support as might remain to him among his former adherents.

Those who were acquainted with Liverpool well knew that the Whig interest, at least in later times, had never returned even a single member but once, when Mr. Roscoe was chosen with General Gascoigne in 1806, the Grenville ministry being then in power; for though General Tarleton was commonly ranked as one of Mr. Fox’s friends, he yet owed his seat as much to Tory support as to Whig, being chosen from local and personal connexion with the place. No one, therefore, at all acquainted with Liverpool politics, and whose judgment was left calm and unbiased by the passing events, especially the late victory against the Orders in Council, had any very sanguine expectation that the Whig interest could defeat entirely all the Tory power, the Corporation interest, and the Government influence; and the total defeat of the opposition party seemed inevitable, unless one of their candidates should be withdrawn.

Mr. Roscoe was the principal advocate of the measure now under consideration,—and certainly there was no man whose opinion better deserved to be consulted, whose wishes had more claims to compliance, or whose errors, if such they were, had a greater right to indulgence. He was in some respects one of the most remarkable persons that have of late years appeared in either the political or the literary world. Born in the most humble station, for his parents were menial servants in the fine country mansion which afterwards was his own, he had risen to the highest rank in a laborious and useful profession, having become one of the most eminent of the Lancashire Solicitors,—a class of practitioners distinguished among those of the kingdom at large by great knowledge of their profession, and admirable skill in the conduct of their clients’ affairs. Struggling with all the disadvantages of narrow circumstances, and of an education necessarily restricted, he had not only accomplished himself in the legal walks of his profession, but educated himself in more classical studies, so as to have become a great proficient in pursuits seldom if ever
before combined with the practice of an attorney. His taste was cultivated and refined by familiarity with Roman literature, and his mind was still farther enriched by a thorough acquaintance with the monuments of Italian genius. He devoted himself notwithstanding the constant interruption of his business, to the study of all modern, as well as of Latin poetry; and with the rare exception of Mr. Mathias, it may be affirmed, that no one on this side the Alps has ever been more intimately acquainted with the writers, especially the poets, of modern Italy. The natural elegance of his mind, connected in a great measure with his honest simplicity of character, and the unruffled gentleness of his bland and kindly temper, was soon displayed in some poetical productions, among which his celebrated song on the early progress of the French Revolution acquired the greatest reputation.

But he united with the exercise of this talent a love of historical research, and an exercise of critical power, which combined with his poetical resources and his knowledge of languages, to form in him the most accomplished cultivator of literary history that ever appeared in any age. For although Muratori first and afterwards Tiraboschi, in Italy, some others in France, and many in Germany, have left monuments of greater research—have thoroughly traced the progress of letters in various ways—have compiled their annals with that industry which can hardly be said to have survived them—and have bequeathed to after ages rich mines wherein to quarry, rather than galleries of finished works to gaze at, —we shall in vain search their numerous volumes for that grace and ease, that mixture of history and anecdote, that interposition of philosophy with narrative, that combination of sagacity in commenting upon characters and events with taste in describing and in judging the productions of the fine arts, which lend such a charm to the Lives of Lorenzo de Medici and Leo X; while their interest is still further heightened by the rich vein of the most felicitous poetical translation which runs through the whole of these admirable works, and leaves the less learned reader hardly a right to lament, because it scarcely lets him feel, his ignorance of the original tongues. The sensation caused by the life of the great Prince-Merchant of Tuscany appearing to enlighten the literary hemisphere, is still remembered by many. It seemed as if a new pleasure had been invented, a new sense discovered. Criticism was dumb; men had only time to be pleased and to be gratified; and at a period when the dignity of the Senate, even of its Lower Chamber, never allowed any allusion to the contemporary productions of the press, a Peer who had
twice been minister, and was still a great party chief,* begged their Lordships to devote as much time as they might be able to spare from Lorenzo de Medici, to the study of an important state affair. By these works Mr. Roscoe not only laid deep and solid the foundations of an enduring fame for himself, but founded also a school, in which Dr. Shepherd, author of the Life of Poggio Bracciolini, and others have since distinguished themselves, and enriched the republic of letters.

Although it is by the productions of his pen that Mr. Roscoe's name has been made famous throughout Europe, yet were his merits and his claims to the gratitude of mankind of a more various kind. An ardent devotion from pure principle to the best interests of humanity, was the unvarying and the constant guide of his public conduct, as the most strict discharge of every duty marked each step of his walk in private life. A solicitor in extensive practice, he was the advocate of all sound law reform. An attorney in the Borough Courts, he was the stern uncompromising enemy of chicane, the fearless defender of the oppressed. A man of business under a wealthy and powerful corporation, he was ever the implacable denouncer of jobs and abuses. A confidential adviser among the aristocracy of the most Tory county in England, he was the most uncompromising enemy of tyranny, the friend of the people, the apostle of even democratic opinions. A leader among the parties who most gained by the war, he was throughout its whole course the zealous preacher of peace; and standing high among the traders of Liverpool, and at the head of its society, he was the unflinching enemy of the African Slave Trade, the enthusiastic advocate of its abolition. When he rose in fame, and threw in wealth—when he became one of the great bankers of the place, and was courted by all the leading men in its society—when his fame was spread over the world, and his native town became known in many remote places, as having given him birth—when he was chosen to represent her in Parliament, and associated with the first statesmen of the age,—this truly excellent person's unaffected modesty, his primitive simplicity of manners, never deserted him. As his rise in life had been rapid and easy, he bore his good fortune with an equal mind; and when the commercial distresses of the country involved his affairs in ruin, the clouds which overcast the evening of his days disturbed not the serenity of his mind; the firmness which could maintain itself against the gales of prosperity, found the storms

* Marquis of Lansdowne, father of the present Lord.
of adverse fortune, though more boisterous, much louder in their noise, yet not at all deceitful, and really less rude in their shock. His latter years were passed in his much loved literary leisure,—consoled by the kindness of his friends,—happy in the bosom of his amiable family,—universally respected by his countrymen,—by all the wise admired,—beloved by all the good.

Mr. Roscoe had satisfied his own mind that if Liverpool only sent one Whig with one Tory member to Parliament, the votes of the two neutralizing each other, she would be unrepresented—a fallacy plausible enough when thus stated, but easily exposed, by reflecting that if each constituency had been so represented, the Tory government must be at once overthrown. His councils, however, assisted by the great victory recently obtained in Parliament, and with which this contest was intimately connected, prevailed with the party. Mr. Creevey was brought into the field, and the contest proceeded with a violence until then unprecedented.

Of Mr. Canning, the champion of the Tory party, it is unnecessary here to speak. His great talents, his extensive accomplishments—the happy events which connected him with the liberal party, first upon the question of religious toleration, then upon foreign policy—the accident of his becoming the instrument by which mainly the old Tory party in this country was broken up,—are all fresh in any reader's recollection. His connexion with Liverpool was not without its influence, both upon the course of those great events, and upon his political character. It took its latter shade very much from the contact with the people into which he was for the first time in his life brought at Liverpool; and if the disposition to take popular courses which he then acquired, tended to alienate from him the confidence of the Court party, who not only deserted, but ill-used and even persecuted him during his latter years, it is equally certain that from this source we may trace much of the good which has in late times been accomplished for the cause of the people and of liberal policy.

But of Mr. Creevey, it is fit that something should here be said, as upon his share in the contest of 1812, although assuredly not from any the least desire on his own part to mix in it, the issue, of the election finally turned. When a second candidate was resolved upon, there could be no doubt where to look for him. Mr. Creevey was a native of Liverpool, well known to the chief men of the place, on very intimate habits with many of them, with their leader Mr. Roscoe, especially, and recommended to the people by a
long and consistent course of the most steady, disinterested attachment to the principles of the liberal party. For he had been ten years in parliament, during which time he had, at great personal sacrifices, devoted himself to the strenuous assertion of popular rights, the exposure of all abuses in the management of affairs, the promotion of retrenchment and economy in all departments of the public service, the restoration of peace, and the furtherance of constitutional principles after the Whig or Foxite model. His opinions coincided with those of the Whig aristocracy on questions of Parliamentary Reform, being friendly to that policy, but not carrying it to any great length, and regarding many abuses in the elective system, such as the bribery and expenses of election where there are two or three hundred voters, as far worse in themselves, and much more pernicious in their consequences, both to the character of the voters and to the structure of the Parliament, than those flaws of rotten and nomination boroughs, which look far worse, and on all but abstract principle, are much more difficult to defend. But on other matters he had many wide differences with the regular leaders of his party. He despised the timidity which so often paralysed their movements; disliked the jealousies, the personal predilections and prejudices which so frequently distracted their councils; he abhorred the spirit of intrigue, which not rarely gave some inferior man, or some busy meddling woman, probably unprincipled, a sway in the destiny of the party, fatal to its success, and all but fatal to its character; he held in utter ridicule the squeamishness both as to persons and things, which emasculated so many of the genuine, regular Whigs; and no considerations of interest—no relations of friendship—no regard for party discipline (albeit in other respects a decided and professed party man, and one thoroughly sensible of the value of party concert)—could prevail with him to pursue that course so ruinous to the Whig opposition, of half-and-half resistance to the Government; marching to the attack with one eye turned to the Court, and one askance to the Country, nor ever making war upon the ministry without regarding the time when themselves might occupy the position, now the object of assault.

This manly, straightforward view of things, not unaccompanied with expressions both as to men and measures, in which truth and strength seemed more studied than courtesy, gave no little offence to the patrician leaders of the party, who never could learn the difference between 1810 and 1780, —still fancied they lived "in times before the flood" of the
French Revolution, when the heads of a few great families could dispose of all matters according to their own good pleasure,—and never could be made to understand how a feeble motion, prefaced by a feeble speech, if made by an elderly lord, and seconded by a younger one, could fail to satisfy the country, and shake the Ministry. But Mr. Creevey, and those who thought with him, such as Lord Folkestone (now Radnor) and General Ferguson, did not confine their dissidence to criticism, complaint, remonstrance. Their conduct kept pace with their language, and was framed upon the sentiments to which we have referred. Carefully avoiding any course that might give a victory to the common enemy, or retard the progress of their principles, they nevertheless often took a line of their own, bringing forward motions which were deemed to strong, as well as expressing opinions supposed to be too vehement, and opposing a resistance to many errors and abuses of the Government which the more aristocratic portion of the Whig party were inclined either feebly to impugn or altogether to pass over. On all that regarded the economy of the public money, still more on every instance of abuse, most of all on official corruption or delinquency of any kind, they were inexorable; nor did any sort of questions tend more to sow dissension between them and the party at large, than questions of this description which involved considerations of economy and abuse, and of necessity led to personal charges often against men in high rank and station. The inquiries respecting the Duke of York, and those cognate questions respecting public corruption, which grew out of that famous passage, first banded together this party, jocularly termed "The mountain," and drew a line of demarcation between them and the more regular portion of the Whigs. Nor were the marks of this separation ever well effaced until the enjoyment of office for several years had reconciled men's minds to their lot, and smoothed, without wholly planing down, the asperities of the line denoted by the junction of the two parts whereof the party was composed.

Mr. Creevey was a man of strong natural sense, without much cultivation, though extremely well informed upon all political subjects. His judgment being so much more remarkable than his imagination, he was apt to hold every thing in contempt which betokened either fancy or refinement. Preferring the shortest and the plainest road to his point, either looking down upon the ornamental parts of eloquence with contempt, or seeing them from a distance which he never aspired to pass, his style of speaking was that of a
plain, reasoning, sensible person, who never left statements of fact and of reason, except to deal in somewhat fluent if not coarse invective. Even his invective consisted more in stating plain facts of an unpleasant nature, than in mere vituperative declamation. His taste, with all this contempt for refinement and delicacy, was perfectly correct; perhaps too severe and unbending; certainly defective in classing the flights of oratory, however sustained, with the less chaste productions of the rhetorician. Frequently in public, always in private society, his distinguishing excellence was a broad, inimitable, most successful humour; for he had a quick sense of the ridiculous in character; and a lively relish of the ludicrous, nor was he slow to indulge in the gratification of it. Mob oratory was never in much estimation with him; yet he was sure to succeed in it, when he tried, as at the Liverpool election—where his description of the meaning of the Previous Question was much noted, and conveys an idea of his manner. "You often hear when any of our irregular partisans having framed a motion against some public defaulter, that it is said to have been got rid by the Previous Question. Now you may just as well know what this means. It is, that the whole House says, 'All these things are very true, and we have no answer to make, and therefore the less that's said about the matter the better.'" He had some defects of temper which made him an undervaluer of all who differed from him in opinion, and a somewhat fierce enemy. He took more pleasure in censure than in praise, and was not very patient of the candour towards adversaries in others, which he so much wanted himself. But if he was a prejudiced antagonist and a strong hater, he was also a warm supporter and a steady friend, nor grudged any trouble, nor shrank from any hazard in defence of those to whom he was attached. He is said to have left a minute Journal of political as well as personal occurrences, which he kept for above thirty years of his life; and although it will require to be read with large allowances for the force of his personal prejudices, it is likely to contain more interesting materials for secret, and indeed for general history, than any collection of the kind which has ever appeared in this country.

After the election had gone on for some days, the Tories who supported Mr. Canning, made a direct proposition for a junction with Mr. Brougham's party, on the footing of the former giving up General Gascoigne, and the latter withdrawing Mr. Creevey. But this proposal was rejected, neither Mr. Brougham nor Mr. Creevey giving any opinion
upon the subject, nor expressing any wish; except that the latter desired to be put wholly out of the question, the more especially as his seat was already secured by his being returned for Thetford. The proposition was rejected, and the election was lost; General Gascoigne being then supported by Mr. Canning’s friends, and returned along with him. Mr. Brougham was in consequence thrown out of parliament, and no seat could be found for him among all the Whig boroughs, until, after an exclusion of three sessions, he was, by Lord Darlington’s (Duke of Clevelands’s) interest, at the request of his steady and faithful friend, Lord Grey, returned for Winchelsea, which he represented until 1830, when he was returned first for Knaresborough upon the Duke of Devonshire’s interest, and then for Yorkshire upon his own.

The following speech was addressed to the people at Liverpool on the close of the poll, on the evening of the fourth day—being a very critical moment of the contest, and the night before the proposal above referred to came from the other party.
SPEECH
AT
THE LIVERPOOL ELECTION.

Friday, Oct. 8, 1812.

Gentlemen,—I feel it necessary after the fatigues of this long and anxious day, to entreat, as I did on a former occasion, that you would have the goodness to favour me with as silent a hearing as possible, that I may not by over-exertion in my present exhausted state, destroy that voice which I hope I may preserve to raise in your defence once more hereafter.

Gentlemen, I told you last night when we were near the head of the poll, that I for one at least, would never lose heart in the conflict, or lower my courage in fighting your battles, or despair of the good cause although we should be fifty, a hundred, or even two hundred behind our enemies. It has happened this day, that we have fallen short of them, not quite by two hundred, but we have lost one hundred and seventy votes: I tell you this with the deepest concern, with feelings of pain and sorrow which I dare not trust myself in attempting to express. But I tell it you without any sensation approaching to despondency. This is the only feeling which I have not now present in my breast. I am overcome with your unutterable affection towards me and my cause. I feel a wonder mingled with gratitude, which no language can even attempt to describe, at your faithful, unwearied, untameable exertions in behalf of our common object. I am penetrated with an anxiety for its success, if possible more lively than any of yourselves can know who are my followers in this mighty struggle—an anxiety cruelly increased by that which as yet you are ignorant of, though you are this night to hear it. To my distinguished friends who surround me, and connect me more closely with you, I am thankful beyond all expression. I am lost in admiration of the honest and courageous men amongst you who have resisted all threats as well as all bribes, and persevered in giving me their free unbought voices. For those unhappy
persons who have been scared by imminent fear on their own and their children’s behalf from obeying the impulse of their conscience, I feel nothing of resentment—nothing but pity and compassion. Of those who have thus opposed us, I think as charitably as a man can think in such circumstances. For this great town, (if it is indeed to be defeated in the content, which I will not venture to suppose) for the country at large whose cause we are upholding—whose fight we are fighting—for the whole manufacturing and trading interests—for all who love peace—all who have no profit in war—I feel moved by the deepest alarm lest our grand attempt may not prosper. All these feelings are in my heart at this moment—they are various—they are conflicting—they are painful—they are burthensome—but they are not overwhelming! and amongst them all, and I have swept round the whole range of which the human mind is susceptible—there is not one that bears the slightest resemblance to despair. I trust myself once more into your faithful hands—I fling myself again on you for protection—I call aloud to you to bear your own cause in your hearts—I implore of you to come forth in your own defence—for the sake of this vast town and its people—for the salvation of the middle and lower orders—for the whole industrious part of the whole country—I entreat you by your love of peace—by your hatred of oppression—by your weariness of burthensome and useless taxation—by yet another appeal to which those must lend an ear who have been deaf to all the rest—I ask it for your families—for your infants—if you would avoid such a winter of horrors as the last! It is coming fast upon us—already it is near at hand—yet a few short weeks and we may be in the midst of those unspeakable miseries, recollection of which now rends your very souls. If there is one freeman amongst this immense multitude who has not tendered his voice,—and if he can be deaf to this appeal,—if he can suffer the threats of our antagonists to frighten him away from the recollections of the last dismal winter,—that man will not vote for me. But if I have the happiness of addressing one honest man amongst you, who has a care left for his wife and children, or for other endearing ties of domestic tenderness, (and which of us is altogether without them?) that man will lay his hand on his heart when I now bid him do so,—and with those little threats of present spite ringing in his ear, he will rather consult his fears of greater evil by listening to the dictates of his heart, when he casts a look towards the dreadful season through which he lately passed—and will come bravely forward to place those men
in Parliament whose whole efforts have been directed toward the restoration of peace, and the revival of trade.

Do not, gentlemen, listen to those who tell you the cause of freedom is desperate;—they are the enemies of that cause and of you,—but listen to me,—for you know me,—and I am one who has never yet deceived you,—I say, then, that it will be desperate if you make no exertions to retrieve it. I tell you that your languor alone can betray it,—that it can only be made desperate through your despair. I am not a man to be cast down by temporary reverses, let them come upon me as thick, and as swift, and as sudden as they may. I am not the one who is daunted by majorities in the outset of a struggle for worthy objects,—else I should not now stand here before you to boast of triumphs won in your cause if your champions had yielded to the force of numbers,—of gold,—of power,—if defeat could have dismayed them,—then would the African Slave Trade never have been abolished,—then would the cause of Reform, which now bids fair to prevail over its enemies, have been long ago sunk amidst the desertions of its friends,—then would those prospects of peace have been utterly be-nighted, which I still devoutly cherish, and which even now brighten in our eyes,—then would the Orders in Council which I overthrew by your support, have remained a disgrace to the British name, and an eternal obstacle to our best in-terests. I no more despond now than I have done in the course of those sacred and glorious contentions,—but it is for you to say whether to-morrow shall not make it my duty to despair. To-morrow is your last day,—your last efforts must then be made;—if you put forth your strength the day is your own,—if you desert me, it is lost. To win it I shall be the first to lead you on, and the last to forsake you.

Gentlemen, when I told you a little while ago that there were new and powerful reasons to-day for arden-tly desiring that our cause might succeed, I did not sport with you,—yourselves shall now judge of them. I ask you,—Is the trade with America of any impor-tance to this great and thickly peopled town? (cries of Yes! yes!) Is a continuance of the rupture with America likely to destroy that trade? (loud cries of, It is! it is!) Is there any man who would deeply feel it, if he heard that the rupture was at length converted into open war? It there a man present who would not be somewhat alarmed if he supposed that we should have another year without the American trade? Is there any one of nerves so hardy, as calmly to hear that our Government have given up all negotiation—
abandoned all hopes of speedy peace with America? Then I tell that man to brace up his nerves,—I bid you all be prepared to hear what touches you all equally. We are by this day's intelligence at war with America in good earnest,—our Government have at length issued letters of marque and reprisal against the United States! (universal cries of, God help us! God help us!) Aye, God help us! God of his infinite compassion take pity on us! God help and protect this poor town,—and this whole trading country!

Now, I ask you whether you will be represented in Parliament by the men who have brought this grievous calamity on your heads, or by those who have constantly opposed the mad career which was plunging us into it? Whether will you trust the revival of your trade—the restoration of your livelihood—to them who have destroyed it, or to me whose counsels, if followed in time, would have averted this unnatural war, and left Liverpool flourishing in opulence and peace? Make your choice—for it lies with yourselves which of us shall be commissioned to bring back commerce and plenty,—they whose stubborn infatuation has chased those blessings away,—or we, who are only known to you as the strenuous enemies of their miserable policy, the fast friends of you best interests.

Gentlemen, I stand up in this contest against the friends and followers of Mr. Pitt, or, as they partially designate him, the immortal statesman now no more, Immortal in the miseries of his devoted country! Immortal in the wounds of her bleeding liberties! Immortal in the cruel wars which sprang from his cold miscalculating ambition! Immortal in the intolerable taxes, the countless loads of debt which these wars have flung upon us—which the youngest man amongst us will not live to see the end of! Immortal in the triumphs of our enemies, and the ruin of our allies, the costly purchase of so much blood and treasure! Immortal in the afflictions of England, and the humiliation of her friends, through the whole results of his twenty years' reign, from the first rays of favour with which a delighted Court gilded his early apostacy, to the deadly glare which is at this instant cast upon his name by the burning metropolis of our last ally!* But may no such immortality ever fall to my lot—let me rather live innocent and inglorious; and when at last I cease to serve you, and to feel for your wrongs, may I have an humble monument in some nameless stone, to tell that beneath it there rests from his labours in your service, "an

---

* The news of the burning of Moscow had arrived by that day's post.

r 1 2
enemy of the immortal statesman—a friend of peace and of the people."

Friends! you must now judge for yourselves, and act accordingly. Against us and against you stand those who call themselves the successors of that man. They are the heirs of his policy; and if not of his immortality too, it is only because their talents for the work of destruction are less transcendent than his. They are his surviving colleagues. His fury survives in them, if not his fire; and they partake of all his infatuated principles, if they have lost the genius that first made those principles triumphant. If you chuse them for your delegates, you know to what policy you lend your sanction—what men you exalt to power. Should you prefer me, your choice falls upon one who, if obscure and unambitious, will at least give his own age no reason to fear him, or posterity to curse him—one whose proudest ambition it is to be deemed the friend of Liberty and of Peace.