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POPULAR HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Administration of Lord Goderich.—Turkey and Greece.—The battle of Navarino.—Resignation of Lord Goderich.—Administration of the duke of Wellington.—Parliament.—The Schoolmaster abroad.—Progress of Education.—Mr. Brougham's speech on Law Reform.—The New Metropolitan Police.—Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts.—Mr. Huskisson's retirement from the Ministry.—Ireland.—Election for Clare of Mr. O'Connell.—Ministerial views on Catholic Emancipation.—Opening of Parliament.—Emancipation referred to in the King's Speech.—The Catholic Relief Bill moved by the duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel.—Continued and violent debates.—The Catholic Relief Bill passed.—Mr. O'Connell's second return for Clare.—Meeting of Parliament.—Motions for Reform.—Illness and death of George the Fourth.

THE death of Mr. Canning placed Lord Goderich at the head of the Government. The composition of the Cabinet was slightly altered. Mr. Huskisson became Colonial Secretary, Mr. Herries Chancellor of the Exchequer. The government was generally considered to be weak, and not calculated for a long endurance. Its greatest accession of strength seemed to be in the acceptance of the office of Commander-in-Chief by the duke of Wellington. Lord Eldon, in serious apprehension that this appointment committed the duke to the support of the administration, wrote to him a letter which called forth this explanation: "If, on the one hand, the administration have no claim upon my services out of my profession, I, on the other hand, can be of no counsel or party against them."* The cabinet of lord Goderich had not a long existence. It lasted scarcely five months, and it fell through the petty jealousies of some of its members, which gave the finishing blow to the tottering fabric.

On the 10th of November it was known in London that despatches had been received at the Admiralty, announcing a great naval battle in the bay of Navarino. If the popular belief in omens of national success or disaster had not nearly passed away,

* Twiss, "Life of Eldon," vol. iii. p. 13.

the public might have looked with trembling anxiety to these despatches, in the dread that the battle would prove a defeat. For, at the lord's mayor's banquet on the 9th of November, a great device of illuminated lamps representing an anchor suddenly fell down upon the dignitaries below, slightly wounding the duke of Clarence and the lord mayor, scattering unwelcome oil over the dresses of the ladies who graced the civic feast, and altogether marring the usual flow of hollow compliment which is so coarsely proffered and so greedily accepted on these occasions. The Gazette soon proclaimed that the Turkish fleet had been nearly annihilated; that the flags of England, France and Russia floated supreme on the shores of the Morea. Nevertheless, politicians shook their heads at what they considered an aggression, which might lead to an interminable war—an aggression which ultra-Toryism regarded as particularly objectionable, inasmuch as it crippled the means of a despotic Power effectually to crush its rebellious subjects. The Sublime Porte had well learnt the lessons taught by the Congresses of Troppau and Laybach when it proclaimed, in its manifesto of the previous June, that "Almighty wisdom, in dividing the universe into different countries, has assigned to each a Sovereign, into whose hands the reins of absolute authority over the nations subject to his dominion are placed."

When the demand under the Treaty of London, which was made by England, France, and Russia, for an immediate armistice, as a preliminary and an indispensable condition to the opening of any negotiation, was announced by the Ambassadors of these Powers at Constantinople, the Divan declined to recognize any interference with its conduct towards its rebellious subjects. The Greeks readily accepted the armistice proposed by the Treaty. Ibrahim Pasha had come from Alexandria with the Egyptian fleet during the period of the discussions at Constantinople. The Allied fleets were lying off Navarino, their admirals being without authority to prevent the junction of the Egyptian fleet with the Turkish, already moored in that harbour. The Egyptian commander was informed by sir Edward Codrington, that he might return, if he chose, with a safe conduct to Alexandria, but that if he entered the harbour he would not be suffered to come out. Ibrahim Pasha made his choice to join the Turkish fleet. On the 25th of September a conference took place between the admirals and Ibrahim Pasha, at which the Egyptian prince entered into a verbal agreement for a suspension of hostilities during twenty days. The English and French commanders, relying upon this agreement, sailed to Zante to obtain fresh provisions. Ibrahim Pasha then came out of the

harbour, with the object of carrying his warfare to some other point in the Morea. Sir Edward Codrington met him near Patras with a small force and compelled him to return. After that, says the Protocol of the three admirals, "the troops of the Pasha have not ceased carrying on a species of warfare more destructive and exterminating than before, putting women and children to the sword, burning their habitations, and tearing up trees by the roots, in order to complete the devastation of the country." The despatch of sir Edward Codrington, dated from H.M.S. Asia, in the port of Navarino, narrates the subsequent decisive event. The Count de Hayden, rear-admiral of Russia, and the French rear-admiral the Chevalier de Rigny, having agreed with him to enter the port in order to induce Ibrahim Pasha to discontinue his brutal war of extermination, took up their anchorage about two o'clock on the afternoon of the 20th of October. The Turkish ships were moored in the form of a crescent. The combined fleet was formed in the order of sailing in two columns, the British and French forming the weather or starboard line, and the Russian the lee line. The Asia led in, followed by the Genoa and Albion, and anchored close alongside a ship of the line bearing the flag of the Capitana Bey. The stations of the French and Russian squadrons were marked out by the English admiral, who was the chief in command. "I gave orders," says Sir Edward, "that no gun should be fired unless guns were fired by the Turks, and those orders were strictly observed." The three British ships passed the batteries, and moored without any act of hostility on the part of the Turks, although they were evidently prepared for a general action. At the entrance of the harbour were six Turkish fire-vessels, which a portion of the English squadron were appointed to watch. On the Dartmouth sending a boat towards one of these vessels her crew was fired upon by musketry. The fire was returned from the Dartmouth and La Syrene, which bore the flag of admiral de Rigny. An Egyptian ship then fired a cannon-shot at the French admiral's vessel, which was immediately returned; "and thus," says Sir Edward Codrington, "very shortly afterwards the battle became general." After describing, with the usual indistinctness, the movements of various ships, he comes to the catastrophe. "This bloody and destructive battle was continued with unabated fury for four hours, and the scene of wreck and devastation which presented itself at its termination was such as has been seldom before witnessed." Of the Egyptian and Turkish fleets, which numbered about a hundred and twenty men-of-war and transports, one-half were sunk, burnt, or driven on shore. The Allied admirals pub-

lished a notice after the battle, that as they did not enter Navarino with a hostile intention, but only to renew propositions to the commanders of the Turkish fleet, they would forbear from destroying what ships of the Ottoman navy might still remain, "now that so signal a vengeance has been taken for the first cannon-shot which has been ventured to be fired on the Allied flags." They threatened that if there were any new act of hostility they would immediately destroy the remaining vessels and the forts of Navarino. The despatch of Sir Edward announcing the victory contains a frank admission that he was not insensible to other feelings than those of professional obedience to his instructions: "When I found that the boasted Ottoman word of honour was made a sacrifice to wanton, savage devastation, and that a base advantage was taken of our reliance upon Ibrahim's good faith, I own I felt a desire to punish the offenders.—But it was my duty to refrain, and refrain I did; and I can assure his royal highness [the duke of Clarence] that I would still have avoided the disastrous extremity, if other means had been open to me."

The differences upon financial measures between Mr. Herries the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Huskisson Secretary of State for the Colonies, could not be reconciled by lord Goderich, and he therefore tendered his resignation to the king on the 9th of January, 1828. His majesty immediately sent to lord Lyndhurst to desire that he and the duke of Wellington should come to Windsor. The king told the duke that he wished him to form a government of which he should be the head. "He said that he thought the government must be composed of persons of both opinions with respect to the Roman Catholic question; that he approved of all his late and former servants; and that he had no objection to anybody excepting to lord Grey."* It was understood that lord Lyndhurst was to continue in office. The duke of Wellington immediately applied to Mr. Peel, who, returning to his post as Secretary of State for the Home Department, saw the impossibility of re-uniting in this administration those who had formed the Cabinet of lord Liverpool. He desired to strengthen the government of the duke of Wellington by the introduction of some of the more important of Mr. Canning's friends into the Cabinet, and to fill some of the lesser offices. The earl of Dudley, Mr. Huskisson, lord Palmerston, and Mr. Charles Grant became members of the new administration. Mr. William Lamb, afterwards lord Melbourne, was appointed chief Secretary for Ireland. The ultra-Tories were greatly indignant at these arrangements. They groaned and re-

* "Memoirs by Sir Robert Peel," part 1. p. 12; letter of the duke.

viled as if the world was unchanged. The duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel had disappointed the country by making a mixed government; Mr. Huskisson was odious to the agricultural and shipping interests; the whole cabinet was composed of a majority of favourers of the Roman Catholic claims; above all, lord Eldon was omitted.* The ex-chancellor considered himself very ill-used, and publicly said, "I don't know why I am not a minister." Mr. Peel, in his private correspondence of this date, shows how clearly he saw that the nation could no longer be governed upon the old exclusive principles. He was fast sliding into that liberality which was incomprehensible to those who had looked upon his previous career. He writes, on the 18th of January, "I care not for the dissatisfaction of ultra-Tories; this country ought not and cannot be governed upon any other principles than those of firmness, no doubt, but of firmness combined with moderation." A fortnight afterwards he asks, in writing to the same correspondent,—What would have been the inevitable fate of a government composed of himself and of some ultra-Tories whom he names, who would indeed be supported by very warm friends, but those very warm friends country gentlemen and fox-hunters, who would attend one night in parliament, but who would quickly weary of sitting up till one, two, or three o'clock in the morning, fighting questions of detail? The greater difficulty was expressed in the fact that the country could no longer be governed by "country gentlemen and fox-hunters." †

On the 29th of January Parliament was opened by Commission. The most important part of the Royal Speech was that which, after reciting the progress of events in the East, and referring to the treaty with France and Russia, says—"With a view to carry into effect the object of the treaty, a collision, wholly unexpected by his Majesty, took place in the port of Navarino between the fleets of the contracting Powers and that of the Ottoman Porte. Notwithstanding the valour displayed by the combined fleet, his Majesty deeply laments that this conflict should have occurred with the naval force of an ancient ally; but he still entertains a confident hope that this untoward event will not be followed by further hostilities, and will not impede that amicable adjustment of the existing differences between the Porte and the Greeks, to which it is so manifestly their common interest to accede." The expression "untoward event" produced angry remonstrances from many quarters—from the Whigs, from some of lord Goderich's ministry, from the friends

* "Diary of Lord Colchester," vol. iii. p. 534.

† "Memoirs by Sir Robert Peel," pp. 16, 17.

of Sir Edward Codrington. But all united in declaring that no blame was attached to that gallant officer. The duke of Wellington, in a few straightforward words, defended the expression. The Treaty of July was not intended to lead to hostilities. The former government thought the object of the treaty would be effected without hostilities. Therefore, I say, that when unfortunately the operations under the treaty did lead to hostilities, it was an untoward circumstance."

In the debate upon the Address in the House of Commons, Mr. Brougham raised very strong objections to the appointment of the duke of Wellington as the head of the government. Though he professed to entertain the highest opinion of the noble duke's military genius, he evidently undervalued his administrative talents. He thought a great soldier's experience was no fit preparation for civil duties. Mr. Brougham had not then the advantage of knowing, through the publication of the duke's "Despatches," how equal he was to the highest statesmanship, with probably the one exception of undervaluing the strength of popular opinion. Mr. Brougham in 1828 thought it unconstitutional that almost the whole patronage of the State should be placed in the hands of a military Premier. With his unflinching power of sarcasm, he considered that there was no validity in the objection that the duke was incapable of speaking in public as a First Minister ought to speak, because he had heard last year the duke declare in another place, that he was unfit for the situation of First Minister, "and he really thought he had never heard a better speech in the whole course of his life." Mr. Brougham wound up his objections to the appointment of the duke of Wellington by a passage of splendid declamation, whose concluding words, especially, were echoed through the country with extraordinary fervour—with an enthusiasm which speedily carried forward the small beginnings of a great change to very decided results which would more than ever make the action of the government in a great degree dependent upon the opinion of the people. When he had called the appointment of the duke of Wellington to the head of the government unconstitutional, let it not be supposed, he said, that he was inclined to exaggerate. "He was perfectly satisfied that there would be no unconstitutional attack on the liberties of the people. These were not the times for such an attempt. There had been periods when the country heard with dismay that the soldier was abroad. That was not the case now. Let the soldier be ever so much abroad, in the present age he could do nothing. There was another per-

son abroad—a less important person—in the eyes of some an insignificant person—whose labours had tended to produce this state of things—the Schoolmaster was abroad." *

It was no idle boast of the orator that education was in various ways raising the moral and intellectual character of the community. There had been a real beginning of this great work. Yet it was only a beginning. To imagine, however, that England had been wholly destitute of the means of education, whilst the schoolmaster was doing his work efficiently in Scotland, is to a certain extent a mistake. When the endowed Grammar-schools were founded, it never entered into the minds of their benefactors that all the people—or, in the language of those ages, that all the poor—should be instructed. A few who were unable to pay for their education were to be selected, and these were to receive forever an education of the highest order. These schools were the natural successors of the schools and charities of the unreformed Church. This was the only system of education in England almost up to the time of the Revolution. The commercial classes had then grown into wealth and importance, and they began to think that schools in which nothing was taught but Latin and Greek were not altogether fitted for those destined to a life of traffic. At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were endowments and subscriptions in most towns, not for new Grammar-schools, but for new Free-schools. During the progress of education in recent years, it has been common to speak with contempt of these schools and of the instruction afforded in them. With a comparatively small population, these Free-schools, we venture to think in opposition to modern authorities, were admirable beginnings of the education of the poorer classes. While the Grammar-schools were making divines and lawyers and physicians out of the sons of the professional classes and the wealthier tradesmen, the Free-schools were making clever handicraftsmen and thriving burgesses out of the sons of the mechanics and the labourers; and many a man who had been a charity-boy in his native town, when he had risen to competence, pointed with an honest pride to the institution which had made him what he was, and drew his purse-strings to perpetuate for others the benefits which he had himself enjoyed. The Reports of the Commissioners for Inquiry into Charities presented in 1842, showed that the annual income of the Grammar-schools (some, however, being exempted from the inquiry) was 152,047*l.*, and the income of the Free-schools 141,385*l.* There was also an income amounting to

* Hansard, vol. xviii. col. 58.

19,112*l.* belonging to charities for general educational purposes. This income was a small educational foundation for the whole population in England and Wales at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first attempt to place the instruction of the poor upon a broader basis was by the establishment of Sunday schools in 1783. Mr. Malthus (in 1803) described these institutions as very few, some objectionable, and all imperfect. But the Parliamentary Returns of 1818 exhibit 5100 Sunday schools, attended by 452,000 children. In 1833 the number of Sunday school scholars exceeded a million and a half. In 1818, the Returns, under a Circular Letter addressed to the ministers of the respective parishes, showed that there were about 15,000 unendowed day-schools, containing about 500,000 scholars. Of these 336,000 were in the ordinary schools,—the private day-schools, such as have always existed amongst us, for the education of the middle and poorer classes. There were only then, when the systems of Bell and Lancaster had been in operation about twelve years, 175,000 scholars receiving instruction partly or wholly gratuitous through the operation of private benevolence. Four years after Mr. Brougham had declared that the Schoolmaster was abroad, the Government Returns showed that both the paying and the non-paying scholars in the unendowed day-schools were more than doubled.

Moving onwards in other roads than that of school education, the Schoolmaster was abroad. "The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" originated with Mr. Brougham in 1826. It had long been felt that books of sound information were, through their dearth, inaccessible to the bulk of the people. Constable, in 1825, was "meditating nothing less than a total revolution in the art and traffic of book-selling." He would issue "a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions."* The sanguine bookseller published his "Miscellany," which led the way in the combination of superior literature with comparative cheapness; but its sale was numbered by hundreds rather than by millions. In 1827 "The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" commenced the publication of their Sixpenny Treatises—valuable manuals, but still far from supplying what the hard-worked classes wanted in the union of goodness and cheapness. Nevertheless the modern epoch of Cheap Literature was commencing. "The London Mechanics' Institution" was inaugurated in 1823 by Dr.

* Lockhart's "Life of Scott," vol. vi. p. 31.

Birkbeck; and gradually similar institutions were founded in populous towns of England and Scotland. In 1828, "The London University" was opened, the building having been in progress, and the organization nearly completed, in 1826 and 1827. To Mr. Brougham belongs the honour of being amongst the most zealous for the formation of this institution for the higher branches of education, independent of religious opinions. The opposite plan of "King's college" was developed at a public meeting in 1828. Unquestionably at this period "the Schoolmaster was abroad." In setting forth upon his mission he had to climb the steepest hill, like the prince of the Arabian story, surrounded by a chorus of hisses and execrations. But he went steadily on his way, stopping his ears to these sounds of impotent fury; and the prize which he won was the power of accomplishing all needful reforms by moral force, so that those who once feared and despised the people should never more be ready to proclaim that "the soldier was abroad."

On the ninth day after the assembling of Parliament, Mr. Brougham took that position which he has ever since maintained, of being the most indefatigable and persevering of Law reformers. The reformation of the Criminal Law was no longer opposed, except by a few whose opinions had very speedily come to be considered as worthless as they were obsolete. A Commission had been appointed to inquire into abuses in Courts of Equity. The course of improvement which was open to Mr. Brougham was to promote an inquiry "into the defects occasioned by time and otherwise in the laws of this realm of England, as administered in the Courts of Common Law." Mr. Brougham introduced his motion in a speech of nearly six hours. It has been said of this speech, "its huge length and unwieldy dimensions compelled attention."* These are not the qualities which usually compel attention in the House of Commons. During that extraordinary exhibition of the rare ability to mass an infinity of details, so as to make each contribute something to the general effect, the attention of the House was uninterruptedly sustained. The first listeners were among the last. Whilst the orator exhibited no signs of physical exhaustion, scarcely one of his audience seemed to feel a sense of weariness.† The peroration of this great effort of memory and judgment was the only portion that could be properly deemed rhetorical:—"It was the boast of Augustus—it formed part of the glare in

* Roebuck, "History of the Whig Ministry," vol. i. p. 50.

† We speak from personal observation, having sat under the gallery with the object of preparing the speech for publication in a more enlarged shape than the reports of the daily papers.

which the perfidies of his earlier years were lost—that he found Rome of brick, and left it of marble; a praise not unworthy a great prince, and to which the present reign has also its claims. But how much nobler will be the sovereign's boast, when he shall have it to say, that he found law dear, and left it cheap; found it a sealed book—left it a living letter; found it the patrimony of the rich—left it the inheritance of the poor; found it the two-edged sword of craft and oppression—left it the staff of honesty and the shield of innocence!" On the adjourned debate of the 29th of February, upon Mr. Brougham's proposition for a Commission, the Government, through the Law Officers and the Home Secretary, expressed its intention so far to concur in the motion as to consent that separate Commissions should issue—one for inquiry into the progress of suits at Common Law; the other into the state of the Laws affecting Real Property. Mr. Brougham concurring in this alteration, the two Commissions were forthwith appointed.

The House of Commons was now fairly engaged in the work of improvement. On the motion of Mr. Peel a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the Public Income and Expenditure; to consider measures for an effectual control on all charges connected with this receipt and expenditure; and also for reducing the expenditure without detriment to the public service. No one can trace the course of our parliamentary history after the close of the war, without feeling how much of the tardy recognition by the government of principles of financial economy was due to the unwearied exertions of Mr. Hume. His views, however they might at times be impracticable, produced as a whole the inevitable triumph of all zealous and continuous labour. Mr. Secretary Peel early in the Session proposed another measure which, he said, might at first sight appear limited in its application, and local in its objects, but which was connected with considerations of the highest importance to the well-being of the country. He proposed that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into the state of the Police of the Metropolis. In the next Session of Parliament Mr. Peel carried his great plan for abolishing the local establishments of nightly watch and police, for forming the Metropolitan Police District, and for appointing a sufficient number of able men under the direction of the Secretary of State to be the police force for the whole of this district. For several years a prodigious clamour was raised against this force, not only by thieves and street walkers, but by respectable upholders of the Ancient Watch, and by zealous friends of the nation's freedom, who dreamt that the New Police would have the certain effect of depriving us of our imme-

morial liberties. The New Police was to be "the most dangerous and effective engine of despotism." Sensible men were satisfied to believe that Mr. Peel's innovation would have no other effect upon our liberties than that of depriving us "of the liberty we have hitherto enjoyed of being robbed and knocked on the head at discretion of their honours the thieves."*

A great parliamentary struggle was at hand in 1828, which was the prelude to a still more important conflict in 1829. This was lord John Russell's motion, on the 26th of February, for a Committee of the whole House to consider of so much of the Acts of the 13 & 25 of Charles II. as requires persons, before admission into any office in corporations, or having accepted any office civil or military, or any place of trust under the Crown, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the practice of the Church of England. The motion was opposed by Mr. Huskisson, lord Palmerston, and Mr. Peel. It was opposed, says sir Robert Peel in his Memoirs, "with all the influence and authority of the Government recently appointed." Nevertheless, on a division on the motion of lord John Russell, it was carried by a majority of forty-four, there being two hundred and thirty-seven in favour of the motion, and one hundred and ninety-three against it. Sir Robert Peel says, in his Memoirs, that the administration considered that they should not be justified in abandoning the service of the Crown in consequence of this defeat, and farther, that it would have been very unwise hastily to commit the House of Lords to a conflict with the House of Commons on a question of this nature. Mr. Peel eventually proposed a measure of compromise—that a declaration should be substituted in place of the Sacramental Test. The Bill as amended passed the House of Commons, and met with very little effectual opposition in the House of Lords, the two Archbishops and three bishops speaking in its favour. Sir Robert Peel says that the conciliatory adjustment of the question was what he earnestly desired; that had any other course been taken by the Government the final result of parliamentary discussion would probably have been the same—namely, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; and that it may fairly be questioned whether the repeal would have taken place under circumstances more favourable to the true interests of the Church, or more conducive to the maintenance of harmony and goodwill amongst the professors of different religious creeds. It was in vain that lord Eldon described the bill to be "as bad, as mischievous, and as revolutionary as the most captious Dissenter could wish it to be." He nevertheless

* Fonblanque, "England under Seven Administrations." vol. i. p. 266.

prophesied truly when he said, "Sooner or later, perhaps in this very year, almost certainly in the next, the concessions to the Dissenters must be followed by the like concessions to the Roman Catholics." * Mr. Huskisson opposed the repeal of the Corporation and Test Act upon the same principle which had determined Mr. Canning's Opposition. "I am convinced," said Mr. Huskisson, "that the present measure, so far from being a step in favour of the Catholic claims, would, if successful, be the means of arraying an additional power against them." However eager for the application of religious toleration to themselves, the greater number of English Dissenters were ready to make common cause with the Brunswick clubs, who, without the slightest reference to political dangers, clung to the extremest assertion of Protestant Supremacy.

The support which Mr. Huskisson's opinions derived from his position as a Minister of the Crown very soon came to an end. He entered the Cabinet as a suspected man who was desirous of carrying forward his policy upon the questions of Corn-laws and commercial restrictions much faster than the head of the Government and the majority in Parliament deemed prudent and profitable. There were two cases of borough corruption before the House of Commons, those of Penryn and East Retford, which imperatively called for disfranchisement. On the discussions with regard to these disfranchisements it had been proposed that the seats of these offending boroughs should be transferred to Manchester and Birmingham. The Ministry opposed the proposition for giving both seats to these great communities. The bill for disfranchising Penryn and giving its seats to Manchester was expected to be thrown out by the Lords. The seats for one borough only would have to be transferred. Mr. Huskisson, in one of these debates, had declared that if there were only one case before the House he would have no hesitation in transferring the franchise to Birmingham. On the 19th of May Mr. Calvert moved that the franchise of East Retford should be extended to the neighbouring hundred. Mr. Huskisson in vain desired the postponement of the question; but when his vote was claimed for Birmingham, upon the ground of consistency, he yielded, and voted with the minority against the Government. He went home, he says, observing the intelligible looks of some, and hearing the audible whispers of others, and perhaps magnifying the impression which his vote might make, wrote, before he went to rest, a letter to the duke of Wellington, offering him the opportunity of placing the office of Colonial Secretary in

* Twiss, vol. iii. p. 38.

other hands, "as the only means in my power of preventing the injury to the king's service which may ensue from the appearance of disunion in his Majesty's councils." The duke immediately took the letter to the king, regarding it as an absolute resignation. The letter was marked "private and confidential." Friends of Mr. Huskisson went to the duke, contending that Mr. Huskisson's letter did not convey a formal resignation; that it was a mistake: "It is no mistake," said the inflexible premier, and the words passed into a common form of speech. Those of Mr. Canning's ministry who had joined the government of the duke of Wellington felt that this stern and resolute attitude was intended to get rid of them altogether. Lord Dudley, Mr. Grant, lord Palmerston, and Mr. Lamb resigned their offices. Sir George Murray succeeded Mr. Huskisson as Secretary of War and the Colonies; sir Henry Hardinge became Secretary at War in the place of lord Palmerston; the earl of Aberdeen Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the place of earl Dudley; and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald President of the Board of Trade in the place of Mr. Charles Grant. Other changes in civil and diplomatic appointments were the necessary consequence of this rupture.

The able French minister, who had ample experience of party conflicts during the term of representative government in his own country, at once assumes that the duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, in eagerly seizing the opportunity of removing the four Canningites from the Cabinet, and of supplying their places with Tories, "thus manifested their anxious desire to rally all Protestants beneath the same standard, and to restore unity of principles and purpose in the government." * A little more than a week before the discussion on the disfranchisement of East Retford, sir Francis Burdett had obtained for the first time in the parliament of 1826 a majority of the House of Commons in favour of the Roman Catholic claims. The resolution was affirmed by a majority of 272 to 266. Sir Robert Peel says in his Memoirs that he should have declined to remain Minister for the Home Department and to lead the House of Commons, being in a minority on the most important of domestic questions. The duke of Wellington's government was in danger from the retirement of Mr. Huskisson and his friends, and Mr. Peel therefore remained to give his support to a Cabinet which now appeared to be wholly constructed upon the principle of hostility to the Catholic claims. The resolution for considering the Catholic claims which had been carried in the House of Commons was debated in the House of Lords on the 9th and 10th of June.

* Guizot, "Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel," p. 37.