

act of public corruption, guilt, and meanness go down to a posterity perhaps as careless as the present race, without its due animadversion, which will be best found in its own acts and monuments. Let my endeavours to save the nation from that shame and guilt be my monument, the only one I will ever have. Let every thing I have done, said, or written be forgotten but this. I have struggled with the great and the little on this point, during the greater part of my active life; and I wish, after death, to have my defiance of the judgment of those who consider the dominion of the glorious empire, given by an incomprehensible dispensation of the Divine Providence into our hands, as nothing more than an opportunity of gratifying, for the lowest of their purposes, the lowest of their passions—and that for such poor rewards, and for the most part indirect and filthy bribes, as indicate even more the folly than the corruption of these infamous and contemptible wretches.—Above all, make out the cruelty of this *pretended acquittal*, but in reality this barbarous and inhuman condemnation of whole tribes and nations, and of all classes they contain. If ever Europe recover its civilization, that work will be useful. Remember! Remember! Remember!"(1)

These dying declarations are full proof of the sincerity of Mr. Burke's principles in the prosecution of Mr. Hastings; nevertheless, his acquittal was not a matter of surprise to many thinking persons. The exalted individuals who had to pass sentence upon him do not consider themselves bound by the rules of inferior courts, in which, when guilt is made apparent, character or services do not influence the verdict. They rather incline to balance useful acts or judicious measures against delinquency, and to acquit the able governor where strict justice would condemn the plunderer or the oppressor.—During the period of which I am now speaking, and while the trial of Mr. Hastings was pending, an event occurred which threw a momentary gloom over the whole kingdom; and as it gave rise to some very important discussions in parliament, it is proper to mention it in this place.

In the year 1788, soon after the parliament had been prorogued, the king and queen repaired to Cheltenham, it being thought advisable by his physicians, that his majesty, whose health had been some time declining, should try the effects of its medicinal springs. They remained about five weeks in that part of the country; but, unhappily, the king was not relieved by the excursion. In the autumn he became more seriously indisposed; and his disorder at length assumed the aspect of mental derangement. Sir George Baker, Dr. Warren, and other eminent physicians, declared, that they were unable to ascertain the cause of his malady, neither could they give a plausible opinion on the subject. But Dr. Willis, from a very particular detail of his majesty's mode of life for twenty-seven years, was of opinion, that the pressure of business, severe exercise (his majesty having been passionately fond of hunting), too great abstemiousness, and little rest, had been too much for his constitution.

The king having been thus by the visitation of God rendered incapable of exercising his political functions, the consideration of a regency occupied the minds of all ranks of the community. Nor can it be a matter of surprise, that so lamentable an event, unprecedented in English history, should produce a general consternation, and occasion extraordinary movements among the heads of parties. Parliament had been prorogued to the 20th of November; and as, under existing circumstances, it could not be officially put off, it met, but was by unanimous consent adjourned for fifteen days longer; and a privy council being held on the day previous to the expiration of that term, the attending physicians were summoned, and three questions put to them, the purport of which will be easily gathered from their answers, namely, that his majesty was incapable of business—that there was great probability of his recovery though it was impossible to limit the time—and that they formed this opinion from experience, having observed that the greater part of those afflicted with the same disease had recovered.

(1) See Mr. Burke's Correspondence with Mr. French Laurence, published in 1837.

Parliament having assembled on the 4th of December, a committee was appointed in each house, for the purpose of ascertaining his majesty's actual state. On the 10th of the same month, Mr. Pitt moved, "that a committee be appointed to examine the journals of the house, and report precedents of such proceedings as may have been resorted to in cases of the personal exercise of the royal authority being prevented or interrupted by infancy, sickness, or otherwise, with a view to provide for the same."

Mr. Fox objected to this motion as nugatory, and productive of unnecessary delay, affirming that his royal highness the prince of Wales had an unquestionable right to the regency, though he allowed that the two houses of parliament were alone competent to decide when he ought to take possession of his right. Mr. Pitt, who appears to have anticipated something of this kind, eagerly caught hold of it, and exclaimed with warmth, that such a declaration nearly amounted to treason against the constitution; and that the prince had no more right to assume the reins of government than any other subject, the right and privilege of selection and appointment being in the lords and commons; and he resolved to submit the point to regular discussion. He indeed allowed that no cases exactly parallel with the present appeared on record. There were instances of occasional incapacity in the sovereign, but there was then no heir-apparent of full age; yet from the manner in which the two houses had formerly supplied the deficiency, it was evident that they claimed the power of acting at discretion. At the revolution also, the chief power of the state was considered by the true friends of the constitution as residing with those assemblies, until they had renewed the integrity of the executive power.

New resolutions, proposed by Mr. Pitt, were adopted by both houses, and carried into effect, under the royal authority delegated by a commission under the great seal. The first merely stated the fact of the king's temporary inability of governing. The second was thus worded: "It is the right and duty of the lords and commons of Great Britain, now assembled, and lawfully and freely representing all the estates of the people of this realm, to provide the means of supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority, in such a manner as the exigency of the case may appear to require." The third resolution was of the following tenor: "for this purpose, and for maintaining entire the constitutional authority of the king, it is necessary that the lords and commons should determine the means whereby the royal assent may be given in parliament to such bill as may be passed by the two houses respecting the exercise of the powers and authorities of the crown, during his majesty's present indisposition." These resolutions, which had passed in a committee, being now brought up, occasioned considerable debates, in which much historical and constitutional knowledge was displayed on both sides; but in conclusion they were agreed to, and ordered to be delivered to the lords at a conference. Similar debates took place in the upper house, but the resolutions were passed, on the 29th of December, by a majority of about one-third: the dukes of York and Cumberland, and forty-six other peers, protesting against them.

The speaker of the house of commons, Mr. Cornwall, died on the 2d of January, 1789; and the house adjourned to the 5th, when two members were proposed for the vacant office: these were, the honourable W. Grenville and sir Gilbert Elliot; but, on a division, the former was chosen by a majority of two hundred and fifteen votes to one hundred and forty-four. The great business of the regency was then resumed; and a re-examination of his majesty's physicians having been agreed on, the report of the committee appointed for this purpose was brought up on January the 13th, from which it appeared, that all those gentlemen were agreed on the probability of the king's recovery, though they were not equally sanguine in their expectations, nor would any of them venture to fix the time when such an event was likely to take place.

Mr. Pitt took up the subject of the regency on the 16th of January, by observing, that what they were to provide for was a deficiency in the execu-

lutely necessary to entwine a thread of French history with the whole fabric of the annals of the reign of George III.

The British parliament had sat so late during the last session, that the members were not convened till the 21st of January, 1790, when the sitting was opened by a speech from the throne, in which the internal commotions that disturbed the tranquillity of the different parts of Europe were lamented in a general way; but a persuasion was expressed, that all would be sensible of the blessings which this nation derived from its excellent constitution. His majesty informed them, that during the recess of parliament he had been under the necessity of adopting measures for preventing the exportation, and facilitating the importation, of corn. The addresses were voted without opposition or debate; and an act of indemnity was proposed and unanimously carried respecting the order of council in reference to grain.

The first weeks of the session glided on without any remarkable parliamentary discussion; but occasion being soon after given in the house of commons to speak of the revolution which had recently taken place in France, which Mr. Fox mentioned in terms of warm commendation, Mr. Burke rose, and in a speech of considerable length employed the powers of his eloquence in a severe and opprobrious censure of the principles and conduct of that event, which drew forth great applause from the ministerial side of the house. He was replied to by Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, who defended the principle of the revolution, while they joined in detestation of the outrages by which it had been accompanied. Mr. Pitt and several other members expressed their entire concurrence with Mr. Burke, and their sense of the obligations he had conferred on his country by the part he had taken. These differences of opinion spread through the kingdom, and parties began to take their respective ground with a spirit of hostility far more acrimonious than that which pervaded the country during the American war. Still it was hoped that England would take no part in the internal concerns of France; and when the army estimates were brought under consideration, February 9th, the military establishments proposed were nearly the same as in the former year.

On the 15th of May, the public was surprised by a message from his majesty to parliament, containing information of acts of violence having been committed on two vessels belonging to his subjects, on the north-western coast of America, by a Spanish naval officer. A subject of the British government had purchased from the Indian chief to whom the district belonged, the privilege of establishing a small settlement for the purposes of commerce at Nootka sound, on the coast of California. In May or June, 1789, two English vessels were seized in that bay by the commander of a Spanish frigate, who made the crews prisoners, took possession of the lands on which the buildings for a settlement were erected, pulling down the British flag and hoisting the Spanish in its stead, with a declaration, that all the lands comprised between Cape Horn and the 60th degree of north latitude belonged to his Catholic majesty. Negotiations respecting this affair had been carried on between the two courts, but had not produced an accommodation; and the king's message on the occasion expressed a determination to support the honour of his crown, and the rights of his people. The house of commons unanimously voted an address to the king, corresponding to this resolution, and passed a vote of credit for a million. Vigorous preparations for war were made on both sides; but the Spaniards not choosing to proceed to extremities, the dispute was adjusted by a convention, in which Spain agreed to restore the settlement at Nootka sound, and to make reparation for the injury sustained. It was farther stipulated, that British subjects should enjoy a free navigation and the rights of fishery in the Pacific Ocean and South Seas, with a proviso, in order to prevent smuggling, that they should not come within ten leagues of any part of the coast already occupied by Spain. On the 10th of June, the session was terminated by a speech from the throne; and on the following day, the parliament was dissolved.

The new parliament resumed its sittings in the month of February, 1791; and on the 21st, Mr. Mitford, an eminent barrister, moved in the house of

commons, with the previous sanction of government, for leave to bring in a bill to relieve the English Catholics from the legal penalties still existing and in force against them. This proposed act of toleration was however confined to such of that denomination as should subscribe a certain declaration or protest against the assumed authority of the pope, drawn up in terms to which it could scarcely be expected that the majority of Catholics could conscientiously assent. Mr. Fox objected to the bill, he said, not for what it did, but for what it did not contain. He entreated that the bill might be made general: let the statute-book, said this great statesman and friend of civil and religious liberty, be revised, and strike out all those laws which attach penalties to mere opinions. Mr. Burke, too, joined in reprobating the absurdity and iniquity of those statutes which impose penalties on any man for worshipping his Creator in his own way, as though he were thereby guilty of treason against the state. The minister commended these sentiments, but doubted the prudence of acting upon them at the present moment; and the bill was carried in its original shape and form.

In the course of the session, Mr. Fox, ever active in the cause of liberty, brought the subject of libels before the consideration of parliament, and moved for leave to bring in a bill to ascertain the rights of juries in cases of that description. With respect to the pretended distinction between law and fact, Mr. Fox remarked, that when a man was accused of murder, a crime consisting of law and fact, the jury every day found a verdict of guilty; and this was also the case in felony, and every other criminal indictment. Libels were the only exception—the single anomaly. He contended, that if the jury had no jurisdiction over libels, the counsel who addressed them on either side as to the criminality of the publication were guilty of a gross and insolent sarcasm; and he put the matter in a luminous point of view, by adverting to the law of treason. It was admitted on all hands, that a writing might be an overt act of treason. In this case, were the court of king's bench to say to the jury, "You are only to consider whether the criminal published the paper—you have nothing to do with the nature of it—you have no concern with the question, whether it correspond to the definition of treason or not,"—would an Englishman, he asked, endure it, that death should be inflicted, without a jury having an opportunity of delivering their sentiments whether the individual was or was not guilty of the crime with which he was charged? The bill passed the commons, but on its examination in the upper house it was opposed on the second reading by the lord-chancellor, under a pretext that it was too late in the session to discuss a measure of such importance. The principle of the bill was ably defended by those great law authorities, Camden and Loughborough, with whom lord Grenville also concurred; but the bill was finally postponed.

The evidence of the slave trade being at length closed, Mr. Wilberforce, on the 18th of April, brought forward his long-expected motion for its abolition. He introduced the subject by a copious and masterly display of the arguments in favour of that measure. The crimes and villainies to which this horrid traffic had given rise were detailed with a minuteness which placed, not merely the persons actually engaged in it, but even human nature itself, in a light the most degrading and detestable. After an affecting detail of the crimes and atrocities connected with this infernal traffic, the history of which, Mr. Wilberforce contended, with all the eloquence of feeling and of truth, was written in characters of blood—he added, "let us turn our eyes for relief from this disgraceful scene to some ordinary wickedness!" In conclusion, he moved for a bill to prevent the farther importation of African negroes into the British colonies. But the time for obtaining relief, and vindicating the claims of humanity and justice, was not yet arrived, for the motion was negatived by a majority of seventy-five voices. To qualify this *veto*, however, a bill was now introduced and passed, for chartering a company for the purpose of cultivating West Indian and other tropical products at Sierra Leone on the coast of Africa, by the use of free negroes; an experiment which in process of time promises to be productive of the most beneficial results.

It had long been a subject of complaint, that the great and extensive province of Canada continued under a government in the highest degree despotic and arbitrary; but a variety of excuses were pleaded to vindicate the continuance of the evil. Mr. Pitt, however, during this session, in pursuance of an intimation from the royal speech, moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal certain parts of the act respecting the government of Canada passed in the fourteenth year of his majesty's reign; and to enact farther provisions for its better government. By the intended bill, the province was to be divided into two distinct governments, by the appellation of Upper and Lower Canada. In each of them, councils nominated by the sovereign, and houses of assembly chosen by the people, were to be established. The habeas corpus act formed a fundamental law of their constitution; and by a very important clause, the British parliament was restrained from imposing taxes of any kind, except such as might be necessary for the regulation of trade and commerce; and to guard against the abuse of this power, the produce of such taxes was to be at the disposal of the respective provincial legislatures. Upon the whole, this bill contained a noble charter of liberty, and reflected great honour on the minister who proposed it, as well as on the assembly which adopted it.

The clauses in the bill which militated against the general principle of it were opposed by Mr. Fox with extraordinary animation and ability. The great object of all popular assemblies, said he, was, that the people should be fairly and fully represented; but when the assembly of one province was to consist of only sixteen, and the other of thirty persons, they deluded the people by a mockery of representation. That these representatives, too, should be elected for the term of seven years, he reprobated as equally inconsistent with freedom. Even in England, where the frequent return of elections was attended with so much real inconvenience, the propriety of the septennial bill was justly doubted; but in a country so differently circumstanced as Canada, there could be no possible objection, he thought, to annual, or at most to triennial elections. Another strong ground of objection with Mr. Fox was, that the legislative councils were unlimited as to numbers by any other restriction than the pleasure of the king; to whom a power was also reserved of annexing to certain honorary and titular distinctions, an hereditary right of sitting in council. As to hereditary honours or hereditary powers, continued Mr. Fox, to say they were good or not, as a general proposition, was difficult; but he saw nothing so good in them as to warrant their introduction into a country where they were not known. He did not think it wise to destroy them where they existed; but to create them where they did not exist, appeared to him exceedingly unwise, nor could he account for it except upon the principle, that, Canada having been formerly a French colony, there might be an opportunity of reviving those titles of honour, the extinction of which some gentlemen so much deplored, and to revive in the West that spirit of chivalry which had fallen into so much disgrace in a neighbouring country.

These hints and allusions were sufficiently intelligible to awaken the indignation of Mr. Burke, who, on the recommitment of the bill, May 6th, rose, as he said, to speak to its general principle. He enlarged upon the importance of the act which they were about to perform. The first consideration was, the competency of the house to such an act. A body of rights, said the honourable gentleman, commonly called "THE RIGHTS OF MAN," had been lately imported from a neighbouring kingdom. The principle of this new code was, that all men were by nature free, and equal in respect of their rights. If this code, therefore, were admitted, the power of the house could extend no farther than to call together the inhabitants of Canada to choose a constitution for themselves. The practical effects of this system might be seen in St. Domingo and the other French islands. They were happy and flourishing till they heard of "the rights of man." As soon as this system arrived among them, Pandora's box, replete with every mortal evil, seemed to fly open—hell itself to yawn, and every demon of mischief to overspread the face of the country. Mr. Burke then commenced an attack upon the

constitution and government of France, launching out into the most violent invectives against them, for which he was repeatedly called to order, and at length compelled to sit down.

When the tumult excited by this philippic had subsided, Mr. Fox, with moderation and firmness, defended his former sentiments relative to the French revolution, and repeated that he thought it upon the whole one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind. In saying this, however, he wished to be understood as referring only to the revolution, and not to the constitution, which still remained to be improved by experience and accommodated to circumstances. As to the rights of man, which Mr. Burke had ridiculed as visionary, they were, he contended, the basis of the British constitution. Our statute-book recognised the original inherent rights of the people as men, which no prescription could supersede, no accident remove or obliterate! These had once been the principles of his right honourable friend, from whom he had learned them. That gentleman had remarked, with equal energy and emphasis, that he knew not how to draw a bill of indictment against a whole people! Having been taught by him that no revolt of a nation was caused without provocation, he could not help rejoicing at the success of a revolution resting upon the same basis with our own—the immutable and unalienable rights of man.

Mr. Burke rose again, and, in vehement terms, insisted that he was perfectly in order; for that the discussion of the Quebec bill was a proper opportunity for putting the country on its guard against those dangerous doctrines which prevailed in France, and which had found so many advocates in our own country. He observed, that he had on many occasions before this differed from Mr. Fox, without the loss of friendship between them. But there was something in the accursed French revolution that envenomed every thing—Here he was interrupted by Mr. Fox, who remarked that "there was no loss of friendship." Mr. Burke insisted that there was—he knew the price of his conduct; he had done his duty, and *their friendship was at an end.*

The attention of the house was now fixed on Mr. Fox, who rose to reply, but his feelings were too powerfully excited for some time to allow him to proceed. All the ideas so long cherished of gratitude, esteem, and affection, rushed upon his susceptible and generous mind, and the tears were observed to steal involuntarily down his cheek. A profound and expressive silence pervaded the whole house. At length, recovering himself, Mr. Fox said, that however recent events might have altered the mind of his right honourable friend, for such he must still call him, he could not so easily consent to relinquish and dissolve that intimate connexion which had for twenty-five years subsisted between them. He hoped Mr. Burke would think on past times; and whatever expressions of his had caused offence, that he would at least believe such was not his intention. These concessions, however, made no visible impression on Mr. Burke; and from that day a schism took place in the politics of the opposition party, which was productive of very important consequences.

The spirit of party raged this year with redoubled violence throughout the kingdom, towards which, indeed, food was constantly administered by the passing events of the French revolution. The unhappy state of anarchy and confusion into which that country was now plunged, gave rise to a succession of changes in the government, which one party among us detested as subversive of all legitimate authority and wholesome subordination, and the other rejoiced in, as the demolition of old prejudices and usurpations, and an assertion of the true principles of civil society. The anniversary of July the 14th was celebrated in various places with no worse consequences than the aggravation of political animosity; but in Birmingham it was the occasion of a dreadful riot. The populace of that town collected in a great mob, and, uncontrolled by the magistrates, burned to the ground some places of worship belonging to the Socinian class of dissenters, and the dwelling-houses also of several of them. In particular, the house, books, papers, and apparatus of Dr. Priestley were consumed, and himself compelled to become

a fugitive in order to preserve his life. This tumult, after raging four days, and extending its direful effects over the adjacent populous district, was quelled by military force. Many of the rioters were apprehended and brought to trial, but three only were capitally punished.

The latter months of the year were passed over in gloomy silence, and the parliament was not convened till the 31st of January, 1792. The speech from the throne announced the marriage of his royal highness the duke of York with the daughter of the king of Prussia; and intimated, that the general state of affairs in Europe promised a continuance of peace, which induced his majesty to hope for an immediate reduction of both the naval and military establishments of the country, and to afford the hope of a gradual relief from a part of the existing taxes. The debates on the address, and several succeeding discussions in both houses, principally turned upon the line of policy pursued by the ministry in their interference in the quarrel between Turkey and Russia, and in the hostility they had displayed towards the latter power. Mr. Jenkinson (the present earl of Liverpool) in a maiden speech, much admired for its extensive views of the existing state of Europe, as bearing upon this country, remarked, that the strength and influence of France being at an end, we certainly had no farther danger to apprehend from that once formidable rival; but a power had succeeded to France, no less deserving of attention from its restless politics and ambitious views, and that power was Russia.

The subject of the abolition of the slave trade was again brought before the commons this session, and all the force of argument was now brought to bear upon it on both sides, in the different discussions that it underwent. The house having resumed itself into a committee on the subject, Mr. Wilberforce, the active and zealous friend of the oppressed Africans, after a minute exposure of the evils and cruelties attending that odious traffic, moved for its immediate and total abolition. He was supported in the debate by both Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, who spoke in favour of the motion as it stood; others supported the trade throughout; while a third class, among whom Mr. Henry Dundas was the leader, pleaded for a gradual abolition, which was carried by a majority of sixty-eight votes. On a following day the subject was resumed, in order to fix the date at which its total cessation should take place. Much of the same ground was again gone over, and the advocates of slavery endeavoured to defer the abolition as long as possible; but a compromise being agreed on, the term was fixed for the 1st of January, 1796.

The resolutions of the commons being carried up to the lords, it appeared that there was much less anxiety about the abolition in that assembly than in the lower house. After a debate, in which the ministerial lords in general spoke against the measure, and even a prince of the blood, the duke of Clarence, avowed himself a friend to the slave trade, a motion was carried for the appointment of a committee to hear evidence on the subject at the bar of that house;—thus the means were given for an indefinite protraction of the decision. During this session of parliament, however, the bill which Mr. Fox had introduced the preceding year, authorizing juries to pronounce a verdict of guilty or not guilty upon the whole matter put to issue in cases of libel, but which had been postponed at the instance of the lord-chancellor, was again brought in by him, and notwithstanding the opposition of the law lords, it was carried, and received the royal assent.

While the dread of that spirit of innovation which the French revolution had fostered, operated as a motive with many to oppose every thing in the shape of reform, there were others who thought that the safest and most rational method would be to conciliate the nation by concession in the matter of parliamentary reform. With this immediate object in view, a society was accordingly now formed under the name of "The Friends of the People," comprehending a number of persons of high character and consequence, among whom were about thirty members of parliament. They published their resolutions on this subject with great freedom; and Mr. Grey, on the 30th of April, gave notice, in the house of commons, of his intention to bring forward the object which the society had in view in the ensuing session.

Mr. Pitt now took the alarm, and inveighed against Mr. Grey's declaration with great warmth. He also took occasion to announce the change of his opinions on this topic, since experience had taught him the danger of altering the established forms of government. And the still more effectually to discountenance every attempt, by writing or association, to excite discontent with any thing sanctioned by the forms of the constitution, a royal proclamation was issued on the 21st of May for preventing seditious meetings and publications, in which magistrates were enjoined to oppose them by all legal means, and the people were strongly exhorted to submission.

These steps occasioned an almost unprecedented ferment throughout the country, and they were generally considered to have been occasioned by Paine's pamphlet, entitled "The Rights of Man," which, at this time, had become a great favourite with the community, and in order to give it the more extensive circulation, it was printed in the cheapest possible forms. When an address was moved in the house of commons, in consequence of the proclamation, several extracts were read from that production, to show its dangerous tendency; while, on the other hand, it was remarked that a whole year had elapsed since its publication, and that if it were really of so noxious a quality, ministers had been highly culpable in not noticing it at an earlier moment. This address, which passed, and the tenor of which was highly loyal, became the model of a great number of others, which were sent up from every part of the country. Prosecutions were now instituted against a great number of persons who were concerned in circulating obnoxious publications, and among others, Thomas Paine himself, who, to avoid the effects consequent on a conviction, prudently took refuge in France, to the affairs of which country I must now once more direct your attention.(1)

LETTER XXIV.

State of Affairs in France, political and military—General Confederacy of the Powers of Europe against France—Dumouriez's Exploits in Belgium and Holland—Reverses of the Army—Struggles of the Mountainists and Girondists—Conspiracy of the 10th of March—Insurrection in La Vendée—Defection of Dumouriez—Fall of the Girondists—Triumph of the Mountainists—Death of the Queen, &c. &c. A. D. 1793, 1794.

THE death of Louis XVI. rendered the parties irreconcilable, and augmented the external enemies of the revolution. The republicans had to combat all Europe, to struggle with the numerous classes of malecontents and with one another. But the Mountainists, who then directed the popular movements, believed themselves already too deeply engaged not to carry things to extremities. To terrify the enemies of the revolution—to excite the fanaticism of the populace by harangues, by the presence of dangers, and by insurrections—to trust every thing to the mob, both the government and the safety of the republic—to communicate to it the most ardent enthusiasm, in the name of liberty, of equality, and of fraternity; to preserve it in this violent state of crisis, in order that they might avail themselves of its passions and its strength: such was the plan of Danton, and of the Mountainists, who had elected him as their chief. It was he who augmented the popular effervescence along with the growing dangers of the republic, and who established under the name of revolutionary government, in place of true liberty, the despotism of the multitude. Robespierre and Marat went still farther, and attempted to erect into a durable government, what Danton had only regarded as a transitory one. The latter was only a political chief, whereas the others were genuine sectaries, of whom the first was ambitious, the other fanatical.

(1) New Annual Register, 1782—1793.—Aikin's Annals of the Reign of George III.—Dr. Bissett's History of the Reign of George III.—Erskine's Causes and Consequences of the War with France.—Woodfall's Debates in Parliament, &c. &c.

tive government for an interval, and, as he hoped, a short one; and also against any embarrassment in the resumption of the royal authority on his majesty's recovery. He therefore proposed to invest the prince of Wales with the royal authority, subject only to certain limitations and restrictions. The first of these was, that the regent should not have the power of creating peers; the second, that he should not grant any place or pension for life or in reversion, other than such place as from its nature is to be held for life or during good behaviour; the third, that he should be restrained from all power over the king's personal property. Besides these resolutions, he proposed one which went to intrust the queen with the entire care of the royal person during his illness, and to place under her authority the whole of the king's household, with full power to dismiss and appoint at her pleasure; and another, for the nomination of a council to assist her majesty with their advice. These five resolutions were then moved in succession; when a warm opposition was made, both to the whole plan of restriction, and to each particular article. The conferring of the whole power and patronage of the household upon the queen was especially objected to, as setting up a party in the court opposed to the administration of the regent; it being well known that an entire change of ministers was contemplated by the prince, while her majesty would naturally be inclined to favour those who had conferred upon her such high authority. The resolutions, however, after several divisions, were agreed to, and ordered to be delivered at a conference to the lords. In the upper house, they underwent a discussion similar to that in the commons; but being at length voted, a protest against them was signed by no less than fifty-seven of the peers.

Mr. Pitt now proposed, that a committee be appointed to wait on the prince of Wales with the resolutions which had been agreed to by parliament, and endeavour to know whether his royal highness was willing to accept of the regency on the terms therein proposed. This motion was not carried without some severe animadversions from the opposition, on the want of respect with which the prince had been treated: a similar motion passed the lords, and the two committees presented the resolutions to the prince and the queen. The answer received from his royal highness contained an assurance, that his duty to the king, his regard for the interests of the people, and his respect for the wishes of the two houses of parliament, outweighing every other consideration, he would undertake the weighty trust proposed to him, in conformity with the resolutions, though sensible of the difficulties that must attend its execution in the peculiar circumstances in which it was committed to his charge, and of which he was acquainted with no other example.

Hitherto the two houses had sat to deliberate merely in convention, but it was now necessary to adopt measures for their acting as a deliberative body; and for this purpose lord Cambden, as president of the council, moved, that letters-patent under the great seal be empowered to be issued by the authority of the two houses in the usual form, appointing commissioners to open the parliament. This being carried in the house of lords, and, after a warm debate, acquiesced in by the commons, Mr. Pitt, on the 3d of February, moved for leave to bring in the regency bill, which being granted, it was read for the first time. This bill consisted of thirty-two clauses, many of which were subjects of debate; but as it never passed into a law, it is unnecessary to trace it in its progress. While it was under discussion in the house of lords, the lord-chancellor, on the 19th of February, after observing that it appeared, from the reports of the physicians, that his majesty for some time past was in a state of convalescence, and that the accounts just received affirmed the improvement to be progressive, said, that in this situation of things he conceived that they could not possibly proceed with the bill before them, and therefore moved for an adjournment. On the 24th, the lord-chancellor acquainted the house, that he had on that day attended his majesty by his express command, and had found him to be perfectly recovered. A farther adjournment now took place till March 10th, when the commons with their speaker attending at the bar of the house of lords, the chancellor

informed them that the king had issued a commission, authorizing the commissioners appointed by former letters-patent to hold that parliament, to open the same. This being done, the chancellor acquainted them, that his majesty, being recovered, and now capable of attending to public affairs, had commanded the commissioners to convey his warmest acknowledgments for the additional proofs they had given of attachment to his person, and of concern for the honour of his crown and the good government of his dominions.—Other topics were then alluded to, as in a usual speech from the throne, and congratulatory addresses were unanimously voted in both houses. This was the termination of the public proceedings in an emergence which will ever stand as an event of high moment in the constitutional history of this country.

The national rejoicings on the happy event of the king's recovery exceeded every thing hitherto witnessed. Illuminations of a more splendid kind than had ever been exhibited, were universal throughout the kingdom. A day of general thanksgiving was appointed, and it was observed with unusual solemnity; and the king in person, attended by the royal family, the great officers of state, and both houses of parliament, went in grand procession to the cathedral church of St. Paul's, to acknowledge the divine clemency in his majesty's restoration.

Before the subject of the king's indisposition is finally dismissed, however, it seems proper to advert briefly to the proceedings which took place in the parliament of Ireland on this affecting occasion. The session was opened on the 5th of February, by the marquis of Buckingham, lord-lieutenant, who informed the houses of his majesty's indisposition, and acquainted them that he had directed all the necessary documents to be laid before them. The secretary then moved in the house of commons, that the house should, on the Monday se'nnight, resolve itself into a committee to take into consideration the state of his majesty's health. This motion being regarded in no other light than that of procuring a delay, to prevent the Irish parliament from coming to any resolutions on the subject, prior to the determinations of the British parliament, it was vehemently opposed as derogatory to the independence of that kingdom; and a motion by Mr. Grattan for the house to meet on the ensuing Wednesday, was carried by a majority of one hundred and twenty-eight to seventy-four. On that day, Mr. Conolly moved, that an address should be presented to the prince of Wales, requesting him to take on himself the government of that kingdom during his majesty's incapacity, which, after a stormy debate, was carried without a division. The earl of Charlemont moved for a similar address in the house of lords, which passed by a majority of nineteen votes; and both houses waited on the lord-lieutenant with their address, requesting him to transmit it to England, which he refused to do. The result was, the appointment, by both houses, of a deputation for the purpose of presenting the address. Mr. Grattan farther moved a vote of censure on the lord-lieutenant for his refusal, which was carried by one hundred and fifteen to eighty-three; and also votes of supply for two months only, which were carried. The deputies arrived in London time enough to present their address to the prince of Wales, who returned them his warmest thanks, at the same time informing them of the king's convalescent state, and of his hopes that within a few days his majesty would be able to resume the functions of government.

The summer of 1789 will always be memorable in the annals of Europe, for having given birth to events of greater importance to the civilized world than any that are recorded in modern history. Causes that had long been operating in secret, and gradually increasing in force, now manifested themselves in the most stupendous effects. It was in this year that the great revolution in France began to show itself; an occurrence which has ever since rendered the affairs of that country, not only the most interesting political spectacle afforded by modern history, but the hinge upon which the principal public events of all Europe have turned. It has, in a very especial manner, influenced the state of Great Britain; so that from this time it becomes abso-