

Letters on a Regicide Peace

By Edmund Burke

Selected and Edited by George Grinnell

From Letter 1:

We are in a war of a peculiar nature. It is not with an ordinary community, which is hostile or friendly as passion or as interest may veer about; not with a State which makes war through wantonness, and abandons it through lassitude. We are at war with a system, which, by its essence, is inimical to all other Governments, and which makes peace or war, as peace and war may best contribute to their subversion. It is with an *armed doctrine* that we are at war. It has, by its essence, a faction of opinion, and of interest, and of enthusiasm, in every country. To us it is a Colossus which bestrides our channel. It has one foot on a foreign shore, the other upon the British soil. Thus advantaged, if it can at all exist, it must finally prevail. Nothing can so completely ruin any of the old Governments, ours in particular, as the acknowledgment, directly or by implication, of any kind of superiority in this new power. This acknowledgment we make, if in a bad or doubtful situation of our affairs, we solicit peace; or if we yield to the modes of new humiliation, in which alone she is content to give us an hearing. By that means the terms cannot be of our choosing; no, not in any part.

It is laid in the unalterable constitution of things—none can aspire to act greatly, but those who are of force greatly to suffer. They who make their arrangements in the first run of misadventure, and in a temper of mind the common fruit of disappointment and dismay, put a seal on their calamities. To their power they take a security against any favours which they might hope from the usual inconstancy of fortune. I am therefore, my dear friend, invariably of your opinion (though full of respect for those who think differently) that neither the time chosen for it, nor the manner of soliciting a negotiation, were properly considered; even though I had allowed (I hardly shall allow) that with the horde of Regicides we could by any selection of time, or use of means, obtain any thing at all deserving the name of peace.

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In one point we are lucky. The Regicide has received our advances with scorn. We have an enemy, to whose virtues we can owe nothing; but on this occasion we are infinitely obliged to one of his vices. We owe more to his insolence than to our own precaution. The haughtiness by which the proud repel us, has this of good in it; that in making us keep our distance, they must keep their distance too. In the present case, the pride of the Regicide may be our safety. He has given time for our reason to operate; and for British dignity to recover from its surprise. From first to last he has rejected all our advances. Far as we have gone, he has still left a way open to our retreat.

There is always an augury to be taken of what a peace is likely to be, from the preliminary steps that are made to bring it about. We may gather something from the time in which the first overtures are made; from the quarter whence they come; from the manner in which they are received. These discover the temper of the parties. If your enemy offers peace in the moment of success, it indicates that he is satisfied with something. It shews that there are limits to his ambition or his resentment. If he offers nothing under misfortune, it is probable, that it is more painful to him to abandon the prospect of advantage than to endure calamity. If he rejects solicitation, and will not give even a nod to the suppliants for peace, until a change in the fortune of the war threatens him with ruin, then I think it evident, that he wishes nothing more than to disarm his adversary to gain time. Afterwards a question arises, which of the parties is likely to obtain the greater advantages, by continuing disarmed and by the use of time.

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With these few plain indications in our minds, it will not be improper to re-consider the conduct of the enemy together with our own, from the day that a question of peace has been in agitation. In considering this part of the question, I do not proceed on my own hypothesis. I suppose, for a moment, that this body of Regicide, calling itself a Republick, is a politick person, with whom something deserving the name of peace may be made. On that supposition, let us examine our own proceeding. Let us compute the profit it has brought, and the advantage that it is likely to bring hereafter. A peace too eagerly sought, is not always the sooner obtained. The discovery of vehement wishes generally frustrates their attainment; and your adversary has gained a great advantage over you when he finds you impatient to conclude a treaty. There is in reserve, not only something of dignity, but a great deal of prudence too. A sort of courage belongs to negotiation, as well as to operations of the field. A negotiator must often seem willing to hazard the whole issue of his treaty, if he wishes to secure any one material point.

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The Regicides were the first to declare war. We are the first to sue for peace. In proportion to the humility and perseverance we have shewn in our addresses, has been the obstinacy of their arrogance in rejecting our suit. The patience of their pride seems to have been worn out with the importunity of our courtship. Disgusted as they are with a conduct so different from all the sentiments by which they are themselves filled, they think to put an end to our vexatious solicitation by redoubling their insults.

It happens frequently, that pride may reject a public advance, while interest listens to a secret suggestion of advantage. The opportunity has been afforded. At a very early period in the diplomacy of humiliation, a gentleman was sent on an errand, of which, from the motive of it, whatever the event might be, we can never be ashamed. Humanity cannot be degraded by humiliation. It is it's very character to submit to such things. There is a consanguinity between benevolence and humility. They are virtues of the same stock. Dignity is of as good a race; but it belongs to the family of Fortitude. In the spirit of that benevolence, we sent a gentleman to beseech the Directory of Regicide, not to be quite so

prodigal as their Republick had been of judicial murder. We solicited them to spare the lives of some unhappy persons of the first distinction, whose safety at other times could not have been an object of solicitation. They had quitted France on the faith of the declaration of the rights of citizens. They never had been in the service of the Regicides, nor at their hands had received any stipend. The very system and constitution of government that now prevails was settled subsequent to their emigration. They were under the protection of Great Britain, and in his Majesty's pay and service. Not an hostile invasion, but the disasters of the sea, had thrown them upon a shore more barbarous and inhospitable than the inclement ocean under the most pitiless of it's storms. Here was an opportunity to express a feeling for the miseries of war; and to open some sort of conversation, which (after our publick overtures had glutted their pride), at a cautious and jealous distance, might lead to something like an accommodation. What was the event? A strange uncouth thing, a theatrical figure of the opera, his head shaded with three-coloured plumes, his body fantastically habited, strutted from the back scenes, and after a short speech, in the mock-heroic falsetto of stupid tragedy, delivered the gentleman who came to make the representation into the custody of a guard, with directions not to lose sight of him for a moment; and then ordered him to be sent from Paris in two hours.

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Next they tell us, as a condition to our treaty, that "this Government must abjure the unjust hatred it bears to them, and at last open it's ears to the voice of humanity." Truly this is even from them an extraordinary demand. Hitherto, it seems, we have put wax into our ears, to shut them up against the tender, soothing strains, in the *affettuoso* of humanity, warbled from the throats of Reubel, Carnot, Tallien, and the whole chorus of Confiscators, Domiciliary Visitors, Committee-men of Research, Jurors and Presidents of Revolutionary Tribunals, Regicides, Assassins, Massacrers, and Septembrizers. It is not difficult to discern what sort of humanity our Government is to learn from these syren singers. Our Government also, (I admit, with some reason,) as a step towards the proposed fraternity, is required to abjure the unjust hatred which it bears to this body of honour and virtue. I thank God I am neither a Minister nor a leader of Opposition. I protest I cannot do what they desire, if I were under the guillotine, or as they ingeniously and pleasantly express it, "looking out of the little national window." Even at that opening I could receive none of their light. I am fortified against all such affections by the declaration of the Government, which I must yet consider as lawful, made on the 29th of October 1793, and still ringing in my ears. This declaration was transmitted not only to all our commanders by sea and land, but to our Ministers in every Court of Europe. It is the most eloquent and highly finished in the style, the most judicious in the choice of topicks, the most orderly in the arrangement, and the most rich in the colouring, without employing the smallest degree of exaggeration, of any state paper that has ever yet appeared. An ancient writer, Plutarch, I think it is, quotes some verses on the eloquence of Pericles, who is called "the only orator that left stings in the minds of his hearers." Like his, the eloquence of the declaration, not contradicting, but enforcing sentiments of the truest humanity, has left stings that have penetrated more than skin-deep into my mind; and never can they be extracted by all the surgery of murder; never can the

throbbings they have created, be assuaged by all the emollient cataplasms of robbery and confiscation.

The third point which they have more clearly expressed than ever, is of equal importance with the rest; and with them furnishes a complete view of the Regicide system. For they demand as a condition without which our ambassador of obedience cannot be received with any hope of success, that he shall be "provided with full powers to negotiate a peace between the French Republick and Great Britain, and to conclude it *definitively* BETWEEN THE TWO POWERS." With their spear they draw a circle about us. They will hear nothing of a joint treaty. We must make a peace separately from our allies. We must, as the very first and preliminary step, be guilty of that perfidy towards our friends and associates, with which they reproach us in our transactions with them our enemies. We are called upon scandalously to betray the fundamental securities to ourselves and to all nations. In my opinion, (it is perhaps but a poor one) if we are meanly bold enough to send an ambassador, such as this official note of the enemy requires, we cannot even dispatch our emissary without danger of being charged with a breach of our alliance. Government now understand the full meaning of the passport.

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If I am asked how I would be understood in the use of these terms, Regicide, Jacobinism, Atheism, and a system of correspondent manners and their establishment, I will tell you.

I call a commonwealth *Regicide*, which lays it down as a fixed law of nature, and a fundamental right of man, that all government, not being a democracy, is an usurpation; that all Kings, as such, are usurpers, and for being Kings, may and ought to be put to death, with their wives, families, and adherents. The commonwealth which acts uniformly upon those principles; and which after abolishing every festival of religion, chooses the most flagrant act of a murderous Regicide treason for a feast of eternal commemoration, and which forces all her people to observe it—this I call *Regicide by establishment*.

Jacobinism is the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against it's property. When private men form themselves into associations for the purpose of destroying the pre-existing laws and institutions of their country; when they secure to themselves an army by dividing amongst the people of no property, the estates of the ancient and lawful proprietors; when a state recognizes those acts; when it does not make confiscations for crimes, but makes crimes for confiscations; when it has it's principal strength, and all it's resources in such a violation of property; when it stands chiefly upon such a violation; massacring by judgments, or otherwise, those who make any struggle for their old legal government, and their legal, hereditary, or acquired possessions—I call this *Jacobinism by Establishment*.

I call it *Atheism by Establishment*, when any State, as such, shall not acknowledge the existence of God as a moral Governor of the World; when it shall offer to Him no religious or moral worship: when it shall abolish the Christian religion by a regular decree; when it shall persecute with a cold, unrelenting, steady cruelty, by every mode of confiscation, imprisonment, exile, and death, all it's ministers; when it shall generally

shut up, or pull down, churches; when the few buildings which remain of this kind shall be opened only for the purpose of making a profane apotheosis of monsters whose vices and crimes have no parallel amongst men, and whom all other men consider as objects of general detestation, and the severest animadversion of law. When, in the place of that religion of social benevolence, and of individual self-denial, in mockery of all religion, they institute impious, blasphemous, indecent theatric rites, in honour of their vitiated, perverted reason, and erect altars to the personification of their own corrupted and bloody Republick; when schools and seminaries are founded at publick expence to poison mankind, from generation to generation, with the horrible maxims of this impiety; when wearied out with incessant martyrdom, and the cries of a people hungering and thirsting for religion, they permit it, only as a tolerated evil—I call this *Atheism by Establishment*.

When to these establishments of Regicide, of Jacobinism, and of Atheism, you add the *correspondent system of manners*, no doubt can be left on the mind of a thinking man, concerning their determined hostility to the human race. Manners are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or sooth, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them. Of this the new French Legislators were aware; therefore, with the same method, and under the same authority, they settled a system of manners, the most licentious, prostitute, and abandoned that ever has been known, and at the same time the most coarse, rude, savage, and ferocious. Nothing in the Revolution, no, not to a phrase or a gesture, not to the fashion of a hat or a shoe, was left to accident. All has been the result of design; all has been matter of institution. No mechanical means could be devised in favour of this incredible system of wickedness and vice, that has not been employed. The noblest passions, the love of glory, the love of country, have been debauched into means of it's preservation and it's propagation. All sorts of shews and exhibitions calculated to inflame and vitiate the imagination, and pervert the moral sense, have been contrived. They have sometimes brought forth five or six hundred drunken women, calling at the bar of the Assembly for the blood of their own children, as being royalists or constitutionalists. Sometimes they have got a body of wretches, calling themselves fathers, to demand the murder of their sons; boasting that Rome had but one Brutus, but that they could shew five hundred. There were instances in which they inverted and retaliated the impiety, and produced sons, who called for the execution of their parents. The foundation of their Republick is laid in moral paradoxes. Their patriotism is always prodigy. All those instances to be found in history, whether real or fabulous, of a doubtful publick spirit, at which morality is perplexed, reason is staggered, and from which affrighted nature recoils, are their chosen, and almost sole examples for the instruction of their youth.

The whole drift of their institution is contrary to that of the wise Legislators of all countries, who aimed at improving instincts into morals, and at grafting the virtues on the stock of the natural affections. They, on the contrary, have omitted no pains to eradicate every benevolent and noble propensity in the mind of men. In their culture it is a rule

always to graft virtues on vices. They think everything unworthy of the name of publick virtue, unless it indicates violence on the private. All their new institutions, (and with them every thing is new,) strike at the root of our social nature. Other Legislators, knowing that marriage is the origin of all relations, and consequently the first element of all duties, have endeavoured, by every art, to make it sacred. The Christian Religion, by confining it to the pairs, and by rendering that relation indissoluble, has, by these two things, done more towards the peace, happiness, settlement, and civilization of the world, than by any other part in this whole scheme of Divine Wisdom. The direct contrary course has been taken in the Synagogue of Antichrist, I mean in that forge and manufactory of all evil, the sect which predominated in the Constituent Assembly of 1789. Those monsters employed the same, or greater industry, to desecrate and degrade that State, which other Legislators have used to render it holy and honourable. By a strange, uncalled-for declaration, they pronounced, that marriage was no better than a common civil contract. It was one of their ordinary tricks, to put their sentiments into the mouths of certain personated characters, which they theatrically exhibited at the bar of what ought to be a serious Assembly. One of these was brought out in the figure of a prostitute, whom they called by the affected name of "a mother without being a wife." This creature they made to call for a repeal of the incapacities, which in civilized States are put upon bastards. The prostitutes of the Assembly gave to this their puppet the sanction of their greater impudence. In consequence of the principles laid down, and the manners authorised, bastards were not long after put on the footing of the issue of lawful unions. Proceeding in the spirit of the first authors of their constitution, succeeding assemblies went the full length of the principle, and gave a licence to divorce at the mere pleasure of either party, and at a month's notice. With them the matrimonial connexion is brought into so degraded a state of concubinage, that, I believe, none of the wretches in London, who keep warehouses of infamy, would give out one of their victims to private custody on so short and insolent a tenure. There was indeed a kind of profligate equity in thus giving to women the same licentious power. The reason they assigned was as infamous as the act; declaring that women had been too long under the tyranny of parents and of husbands. It is not necessary to observe upon the horrible consequences of taking one half of the species wholly out of the guardianship and protection of the other.

The practice of divorce, though in some countries permitted, has been discouraged in all. In the East polygamy and divorce are in discredit; and the manners correct the laws. In Rome, whilst Rome was in it's integrity, the few causes allowed for divorce amounted in effect to a prohibition. They were only three. The arbitrary was totally excluded; and accordingly some hundreds of years passed, without a single example of that kind. When manners were corrupted, the laws were relaxed; as the latter always follow the former, when they are not able to regulate them, or to vanquish them. Of this circumstance the Legislators of vice and crime were pleased to take notice, as an inducement to adopt their regulation: holding out an hope, that the permission would as rarely be made use of. They knew the contrary to be true; and they had taken good care, that the laws should be well seconded by the manners. Their law of divorce, like all their laws, had not for it's object the relief of domestick uneasiness, but the total corruption of all morals, the total disconnection of social life.

It is a matter of curiosity to observe the operation of this encouragement to disorder. I have before me the Paris paper, correspondent to the usual register of births, marriages, [76] and deaths. Divorce, happily, is no regular head of registry among civilized nations. With the Jacobins it is remarkable, that divorce is not only a regular head, but it has the post of honour. It occupies the first place in the list. In the three first months of the year 1793, the number of divorces in that city amounted to 562. The marriages were 1785; so that the proportion of divorces to marriages was not much less than one to three; a thing unexampled, I believe, among mankind. I caused an enquiry to be made at Doctor's Commons, concerning the number of divorces; and found, that all the divorces, (which, except by special Act of Parliament, are separations, and not proper divorces) did not amount in all those Courts, and in a hundred years, to much more than one fifth of those that passed, in the single city of Paris, in three months. I followed up the enquiry relative to that city through several of the subsequent months until I was tired, and found the proportions still the same. Since then I have heard that they have declared for a revival of these laws: but I know of nothing done. It appears as if the contract that renovates the world was under no law at all. From this we may take our estimate of the havock that has been made through all the relations of life. With the Jacobins of France, vague intercourse is without reproach; marriage is reduced to the vilest concubinage; children are encouraged to cut the throats of their parents; mothers are taught that tenderness is no part of their character; and to demonstrate their attachment to their party, that they ought to make no scruple to rake with their bloody hands in the bowels of those who came from their own.

To all this let us join the practice of *cannibalism*, with which, in the proper terms, and with the greatest truth, their several factions accuse each other. By cannibalism, I mean their devouring, as a nutriment of their ferocity, some part of the bodies of those they have murdered; their drinking the blood of their victims, and forcing the victims themselves to drink the blood of their kindred slaughtered before their faces. By cannibalism, I mean also to signify all their nameless, unmanly, and abominable insults on the bodies of those they slaughter.

As to those whom they suffer to die a natural death, they do not permit them to enjoy the last consolations of mankind, or those rights of sepulture, which indicate hope, and which meer nature has taught to mankind in all countries, to soothe the afflictions, and to cover the infirmity of mortal condition. They disgrace men in the entry into life; they vitiate and enslave them through the whole course of it; and they deprive them of all comfort at the conclusion of their dishonoured and depraved existence. Endeavouring to persuade the people that they are no better than beasts, the whole body of their institution tends to make them beasts of prey, furious and savage. For this purpose the active part of them is disciplined into a ferocity which has no parallel. To this ferocity there is joined not one of the rude, unfashioned virtues, which accompany the vices, where the whole are left to grow up together in the rankness of uncultivated nature. But nothing is left to nature in their systems.

The same discipline which hardens their hearts relaxes their morals. Whilst courts of justice were thrust out by revolutionary tribunals, and silent churches were only the funeral monuments of departed religion, there were no fewer than nineteen or twenty

theatres, great and small, most of them kept open at the publick expence, and all of them crowded every night. Among the gaunt, haggard forms of famine and nakedness, amidst the yells of murder, the tears of affliction, and the cries of despair, the song, the dance, the mimick scene, the buffoon laughter, went on as regularly as in the gay hour of festive peace. I have it from good authority, that under the scaffold of judicial murder, and the gaping planks that poured down blood on the spectators, the space was hired out for a shew of dancing dogs. I think, without concert, we have made the very same remark on reading some of their pieces, which, being written for other purposes, let us into a view of their social life. It struck us that the habits of Paris had no resemblance to the finished virtues, or to the polished vice, and elegant, though not blameless luxury, of the capital of a great empire. Their society was more like that of a den of outlaws upon a doubtful frontier; of a lewd tavern for the revels and debauches of banditti, assassins, bravos, smugglers, and their more desperate paramours, mixed with bombastick players, the refuse and rejected offal of strolling theatres, puffing out ill-sorted verses about virtue, mixed with the licentious and blasphemous songs, proper to the brutal and hardened course of life belonging to that sort of wretches. This system of manners in itself is at war with all orderly and moral society, and is in it's neighbourhood unsafe. If great bodies of that kind were any where established in a bordering territory, we should have a right to demand of their Governments the suppression of such a nuisance. What are we to do if the Government and the whole community is of the same description? Yet that Government has thought proper to invite ours to lay by its unjust hatred, and to listen to the voice of humanity as taught by their example.

The operation of dangerous and delusive first principles obliges us to have recourse to the true ones. In the intercourse between nations, we are apt to rely too much on the instrumental part. We lay too much weight upon the formality of treaties and compacts. We do not act much more wisely when we trust to the interests of men as guarantees of their engagements. The interests frequently tear to pieces the engagements; and the passions trample upon both. Entirely to trust to either, is to disregard our own safety, or not to know mankind. Men are not tied to one another by papers and seals. They are led to associate by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies. It is with nations as with individuals. Nothing is so strong a tie of amity between nation and nation as correspondence in laws, customs, manners, and habits of life. They have more than the force of treaties in themselves. They are obligations written in the heart. They approximate men to men, without their knowledge, and sometimes against their intentions. The secret, unseen, but irrefragable bond of habitual intercourse, holds them together, even when their perverse and litigious nature sets them to equivocate, scuffle, and fight about the terms of their written obligations.

As to war, if it be the means of wrong and violence, it is the sole means of justice amongst nations. Nothing can banish it from the world. They who say otherwise, intending to impose upon us, do not impose upon themselves. But it is one of the greatest objects of human wisdom to mitigate those evils which we are unable to remove. The conformity and analogy of which I speak, incapable, like every thing else, of preserving perfect trust and tranquillity among men, has a strong tendency to facilitate accommodation, and to produce a generous oblivion of the rancour of their quarrels. With

this similitude, peace is more of peace, and war is less of war. I will go further. There have been periods of time in which communities, apparently in peace with each other, have been more perfectly separated than, in later times, many nations in Europe have been in the course of long and bloody wars. The cause must be sought in the similitude throughout Europe of religion, laws, and manners. At bottom, these are all the same. The writers on public law have often called this aggregate of nations a Commonwealth. They had reason. It is virtually one great state having the same basis of general law; with some diversity of provincial customs and local establishments. The nations of Europe have had the very same christian religion, agreeing in the fundamental parts, varying a little in the ceremonies and in the subordinate doctrines. The whole of the polity and oeconomy of every country in Europe has been derived from the same sources. It was drawn from the old Germanic or Gothic customary; from the feudal institutions which must be considered as an emanation from that customary; and the whole has been improved and digested into system and discipline by the Roman law. From hence arose the several orders, with or without a Monarch, which are called States, in every European country; the strong traces of which, where Monarchy predominated, were never wholly extinguished or merged in despotism. In the few places where Monarchy was cast off, the spirit of European Monarchy was still left. Those countries still continued countries of States; that is, of classes, orders, and distinctions, such as had before subsisted, or nearly so. Indeed the force and form of the institution called States, continued in greater perfection in those republican communities than under Monarchies. From all those sources arose a system of manners and of education which was nearly similar in all this quarter of the globe; and which softened, blended, and harmonized the colours of the whole. There was little difference in the form of the Universities for the education of their youth, whether with regard to faculties, to sciences, or to the more liberal and elegant kinds of erudition. From this resemblance in the modes of intercourse, and in the whole form and fashion of life, no citizen of Europe could be altogether an exile in any part of it. There was nothing more than a pleasing variety to recreate and instruct the mind, to enrich the imagination, and to meliorate the heart. When a man travelled or resided for health, pleasure, business or necessity, from his own country, he never felt himself quite abroad.

The whole body of this new scheme of manners, in support of the new scheme of politicks, I consider as a strong and decisive proof of determined ambition and systematick hostility. I defy the most refining ingenuity to invent any other cause for the total departure of the Jacobin Republick from every one of the ideas and usages, religious, legal, moral, or social, of this civilized world, and for her tearing herself from its communion with such studied violence, but from a formed resolution of keeping no terms with that world. It has not been, as has been falsely and insidiously represented, that these miscreants had only broke with their old Government. They made a schism with the whole universe; and that schism extended to almost every thing great and small. For one, I wish, since it is gone thus far, that the breach had been so compleat, as to make all intercourse impracticable; but, partly by accident, partly by design, partly from the resistance of the matter, enough is left to preserve intercourse, whilst amity is destroyed or corrupted in it's principle.

This violent breach of the community of Europe we must conclude to have been made, (even if they had not expressly declared it over and over again) either to force mankind into an adoption of their system, or to live in perpetual enmity with a community the most potent we have ever known. Can any person imagine, that in offering to mankind this desperate alternative, there is no indication of a hostile mind, because men in possession of the ruling authority are supposed to have a right to act without coercion in their own territories? As to the right of men to act any where according to their pleasure, without any moral tie, no such right exists. Men are never in a state of *total* independence of each other. It is not the condition of our nature: nor is it conceivable how any man can pursue a considerable course of action without it's having some effect upon others; or, of course, without producing some degree of responsibility for his conduct. *Thesituations* in which men relatively stand produce the rules and principles of that responsibility, and afford directions to prudence in exacting it.

Distance of place does not extinguish the duties or the rights of men; but it often renders their exercise impracticable. The same circumstance of distance renders the noxious effects of an evil system in any community less pernicious. But there are situations where this difficulty does not occur; and in which, therefore, these duties are obligatory, and these rights are to be asserted. It has ever been the method of publick jurists, to draw a great part of the analogies on which they form the law of nations from the principles of law which prevail in civil community. Civil laws are not all of them merely positive. Those which are rather conclusions of legal reason, than matters of statutable provision, belong to universal equity, and are universally applicable. Almost the whole praetorian law is such. There is a *Law of Neighbourhood* which does not leave a man perfect master on his own ground. When a neighbour sees a *new erection*, in the nature of a nuisance, set up at his door, he has a right to represent it to the judge; who, on his part, has a right to order the work to be staid; or if established, to be removed. On this head, the parent law is express and clear; and has made many wise provisions, which, without destroying, regulate and restrain the right of *ownership*, by the right of *vicinage*. No *innovation* is permitted that may redound, even secondarily, to the prejudice of a neighbour. The whole doctrine of that important head of praetorian law, "*De novi operis nunciacione*," is founded on the principle, that no *new* use should be made of a man's private liberty of operating upon his private property, from whence a detriment may be justly apprehended by his neighbour. This law of denunciation is prospective. It is to anticipate what is called *damnum infectum*, or *damnum nondum factum*, that is a damage justly apprehended but not actually done. Even before it is clearly known whether the innovation be damageable or not, the judge is competent to issue a prohibition to innovate, until the point can be determined. This prompt interference is grounded on principles favourable to both parties. It is preventive of mischief difficult to be repaired, and of ill blood difficult to be softened. The rule of law, therefore, which comes before the evil, is amongst the very best parts of equity, and justifies the promptness of the remedy; because, as it is well observed, *Res damni infecti celeritatem desiderat et periculosa est dilatio*. This right of denunciation does not hold, when things continue, however inconveniently to the neighbourhood, according to the *antient* mode. For there is a sort of presumption against novelty, drawn out of a deep consideration of human nature

and human affairs; and the maxim of jurisprudence is well laid down, *Vetustas pro lege semper habetur*.

Such is the law of civil vicinity. Now where there is no constituted judge, as between independent states there is not, the vicinage itself is the natural judge. It is, preventively, the assertor of its own rights; or remedially, their avenger. Neighbours are presumed to take cognizance of each other's acts. *Vicini vicinorum facta praesumuntur scire*. This principle, which, like the rest, is as true of nations as of individual men, has bestowed on the grand vicinage of Europe a duty to know, and a right to prevent, any capital innovation which may amount to the erection of a dangerous nuisance. Of the importance of that innovation, and the mischief of that nuisance, they are, to be sure, bound to judge not litigiously; but it is in their competence to judge. They have uniformly acted on this right. What in civil society is a ground of action, in politick society is a ground of war. But the exercise of that competent jurisdiction is a matter of moral prudence. As suits in civil society, so war in the political, must ever be a matter of great deliberation. It is not this or that particular proceeding, picked out here or there, as a subject of quarrel, that will do. There must be an aggregate of mischief. There must be marks of deliberation; there must be traces of design; there must be indications of malice; there must be tokens of ambition. There must be force in the body where they exist; there must be energy in the mind. When all these circumstances combine, or the important parts of them, the duty of the vicinity calls for the exercise of it's competence; and the rules of prudence do not restrain, but demand it.

In describing the nuisance erected by so pestilential a manufactory, by the construction of so infamous a brothel, by digging a night-cellar for such thieves, murderers, and house-breakers, as never infested the world, I am so far from aggravating, that I have fallen infinitely short of the evil. No man who has attended to the particulars of what has been done in France, and combined them with the principles there asserted, can possibly doubt it. When I compare with this great cause of nations, the trifling points of honour, the still more contemptible points of interest, the light ceremonies, the undefinable punctilios, the disputes about precedency, the lowering or the hoisting of a sail, the dealing in a hundred or two of wild-cat skins on the other side of the globe, which have often kindled up the flames of war between nations, I stand astonished at those persons who do not feel a resentment, not more natural than politick, at the atrocious insults that this monstrous compound offers to the dignity of every nation, and who are not alarmed with what it threatens to their safety.

I have therefore been decidedly of opinion, with our declaration at Whitehall, in the beginning of this war, that the vicinage of Europe had not only a right, but an indispensable duty, and an exigent interest, to denunciate this new work before it had produced the danger we have so sorely felt, and which we shall long feel. The example of what is done by France is too important not to have a vast and extensive influence; and that example, backed with it's power, must bear with great force on those who are near it; especially on those who shall recognize the pretended Republick on the principle upon which it now stands. It is not an old structure which you have found as it is, and are not to dispute of the original end and design with which it had been so fashioned. It is a recent wrong, and can plead no prescription. It violates the rights upon which not only the

community of France, but all communities, are founded. The principles on which they proceed are *general* principles, and are as true in England as in any other country. They who (though with the purest intentions) recognize the authority of these Regicides and robbers upon principle, justify their acts, and establish them as precedents. It is a question not between France and England. It is a question between property and force. The property claims; and its claim has been allowed. The property of the nation is the nation. They who massacre, plunder, and expel the body of the proprietary, are murderers and robbers. The State, in its essence, must be moral and just: and it may be so, though a tyrant or usurper should be accidentally at the head of it. This is a thing to be lamented: but this notwithstanding, the body of the commonwealth may remain in all its integrity and be perfectly sound in its composition. The present case is different. It is not a revolution in government. It is not the victory of party over party. It is a destruction and decomposition of the whole society; which never can be made of right by any faction, however powerful, nor without terrible consequences to all about it, both in the act and in the example. This pretended Republick is founded in crimes, and exists by wrong and robbery; and wrong and robbery, far from a title to any thing, is war with mankind. To be at peace with robbery is to be an accomplice with it.

Mere locality does not constitute a body politick. Had Cade and his gang got possession of London, they would not have been the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council. The body politick of France existed in the majesty of its throne; in the dignity of its nobility; in the honour of its gentry; in the sanctity of its clergy; in the reverence of its magistracy; in the weight and consideration due to its landed property in the several bailliages; in the respect due to its moveable substance represented by the corporations of the kingdom. All these particular *moleculae* united, form the great mass of what is truly the body politick, in all countries. They are so many deposits and receptacles of justice; because they can only exist by justice. Nation is a moral essence, not a geographical arrangement, or a denomination of the nomenclator. France, though out of her territorial possession, exists; because the sole possible claimant, I mean the proprietary, and the Government to which the proprietary adheres, exists and claims. God forbid, that if you were expelled from your house by ruffians and assassins, that I should call the material walls, doors and windows of ———, the ancient and honourable family of ———. Am I to transfer to the intruders, who not content to turn you out naked to the world, would rob you of your very name, all the esteem and respect I owe to you? The Regicides in France are not France. France is out of her bounds, but the kingdom is the same.

To illustrate my opinions on this subject, let us suppose a case, which, after what has happened, we cannot think absolutely impossible, though the augury is to be abominated, and the event deprecated with our most ardent prayers. Let us suppose then, that our gracious Sovereign was sacrilegiously murdered; his exemplary Queen, at the head of the matronage of this land, murdered in the same manner: that those Princesses whose beauty and modest elegance are the ornaments of the country, and who are the leaders and patterns of the ingenuous youth of their sex, were put to a cruel and ignominious death, with hundreds of others, mothers and daughters, ladies of the first distinction; that the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, princes the hope and pride of the nation, with all their brethren, were forced to fly from the knives of assassins; that the whole body of our

excellent Clergy were either massacred or robbed of all, and transported; the Christian Religion, in all its denominations, forbidden and persecuted; the law totally, fundamentally, and in all its parts destroyed; the judges put to death by revolutionary tribunals; the Peers and Commons robbed to the last acre of their estates; massacred if they staid, or obliged to seek life in flight, in exile, and in beggary; that the whole landed property should share the very same fate; that every military and naval officer of honour and rank, almost to a man, should be placed in the same description of confiscation and exile; that the principal merchants and bankers should be drawn out, as from an [88] hen-coop, for slaughter; that the citizens of our greatest and most flourishing cities, when the hand and the machinery of the hangman were not found sufficient, should have been collected in the publick squares, and massacred by thousands with cannon; if three hundred thousand others should have been doomed to a situation worse than death in noisome and pestilential prisons—in such a case, is it in the faction of robbers I am to look for my country? Would this be the England that you and I, and even strangers, admired, honoured, loved, and cherished? Would not the exiles of England alone be my Government and my fellow-citizens? Would not their places of refuge be my temporary country? Would not all my duties and all my affections be there and there only? Should I consider myself as a traitor to my country, and deserving of death, if I knocked at the door and heart of every potentate in Christendom to succour my friends, and to avenge them on their enemies? Could I, in any way, shew myself more a patriot? What should I think of those potentates who insulted their suffering brethren; who treated them as vagrants, or at least as mendicants; and could find no allies, no friends, but in Regicide murderers and robbers? What ought I to think and feel, if being geographers instead of Kings, they recognized the desolated cities, the wasted fields, and the rivers polluted with blood, of this geometrical measurement, as the honourable member of Europe, called England? In that condition, what should we think of Sweden, Denmark, or Holland, or whatever Power afforded us a churlish and treacherous hospitality, if they should invite us to join the standard of our King, our Laws, and our Religion, if they should give us a direct promise of protection—if after all this, taking advantage of our deplorable situation, which left us no choice, they were to treat us as the lowest and vilest of all mercenaries? If they were to send us far from the aid of our King, and our suffering Country, to squander us away in the most pestilential climates for a venal enlargement of their own territories, for the purpose of trucking them, when obtained, with those very robbers and murderers they had called upon us to oppose with our blood? What would be our sentiments, if in that miserable service we were not to be considered either as English, or as Swedes, Dutch, Danes, but as outcasts of the human race? Whilst we were fighting those battles of their interest, and as their soldiers, how should we feel if we were to be excluded from all their cartels? How must we feel, if the pride and flower of the English Nobility and Gentry, who might escape the pestilential clime, and the devouring sword, should, if taken prisoners, be delivered over as rebel subjects, to be condemned as rebels, as traitors, as the vilest of all criminals, by tribunals formed of Maroon negro slaves, covered over with the blood of their masters, who were made free and organized into judges, for their robberies and murders? What should we feel under this inhuman, insulting, and barbarous protection of Muscovites, Swedes, or Hollanders? Should we not obtest Heaven, and whatever justice there is yet on earth? Oppression makes wise men mad; but the distemper is still the madness of the wise, which is better than the sobriety

of fools. Their cry is the voice of sacred misery, exalted, not into wild raving, but into the sanctified phrensy of prophecy and inspiration. In that bitterness of soul, in that indignation of suffering virtue, in that exaltation of despair, would not persecuted English loyalty cry out, with an awful warning voice, and denounce the destruction that waits on Monarchs, who consider fidelity to them as the most degrading of all vices; who suffer it to be punished as the most abominable of all crimes; and who have no respect but for rebels, traitors, Regicides, and furious negro slaves, whose crimes have broke their chains? Would not this warm language of high indignation have more of sound reason in it, more of real affection, more of true attachment, than all the lullabies of flatterers, who would hush Monarchs to sleep in the arms of death? Let them be well convinced, that if ever this example should prevail in it's whole extent, it will have it's full operation. Whilst Kings stand firm on their base, though under that base there is a sure-wrought mine, there will not be wanting to their levées a single person of those who are attached to their fortune, and not to their persons or cause. But hereafter none will support a tottering throne. Some will fly for fear of being crushed under the ruin; some will join in making it. They will seek in the destruction of Royalty, fame, and power, and wealth, and the homage of Kings, with *Reubel*, with *Carnot*, with *Revellière*, and with the *Merlins* and the *Talliens*, rather than suffer exile and beggary with the *Condés*, or the *Brogliés*, the *Castries*, the *D'Avrais*, the *Serrents*, the *Cazalés*, and the long line of loyal, suffering Patriot Nobility, or to be butchered with the oracles and the victims of the laws, the *D'Ormessons*, the *d'Espremesnils*, and the *Malesherbes*. This example we shall give, if, instead of adhering to our fellows in a cause which is an honour to us all, we abandon the lawful Government and lawful corporate body of France, to hunt for a shameful and ruinous fraternity with this odious usurpation that disgraces civilized society and the human race.

And is then example nothing? It is every thing. Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other. This war is a war against that example. It is not a war for Louis the Eighteenth, or even for the property, virtue, fidelity of France. It is a war for George the Third, for Francis the Second, and for all the dignity, property, honour, virtue, and religion of England, of Germany, and of all nations.

I know that all I have said of the systematick unsociability of this new-invented species of republick, and the impossibility of preserving peace, is answered by asserting that the scheme of manners, morals, and even of maxims and principles of state, is of no weight in a question of peace or war between communities. This doctrine is supported by example. The case of Algiers is cited, with an hint, as if it were the stronger case. I should take no notice of this sort of inducement, if I had found it only where first it was. I do not want respect for those from whom I first heard it—but having no controversy at present with them, I only think it not amiss to rest on it a little, as I find it adopted with much more of the same kind, by several of those on whom such reasoning had formerly made no apparent impression. If it had no force to prevent us from submitting to this necessary war, it furnishes no better ground for our making an unnecessary and ruinous peace.

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I *am* their neighbour; I *may* become their subject. Have the gentlemen who borrowed this happy parallel, no idea of the different conduct to be held with regard to the very same evil at an immense distance, and when it is at your door? When it's power is enormous, as when it is comparatively as feeble as it's distance is remote? When there is a barrier of language and usages, which prevents corruption through certain old correspondences and habitudes, from the contagion of the horrible novelties that are introduced into every thing else? I can contemplate, without dread, a royal or a national tyger on the borders of Pegu. I can look at him, with an easy curiosity, as prisoner within bars in the menagerie of the Tower. But if, by *habeas corpus*, or otherwise, he was to come into the lobby of the House of Commons whilst your door was open, any of you would be more stout than wise, who would not gladly make your escape out of the back windows. I certainly should dread more from a wild cat in my bed-chamber, than from all the lions that roar in the deserts behind Algiers. But in this parallel it is the cat that is at a distance, and the lions and tygers that are in our ante-chambers and our lobbies. Algiers is not near; Algiers is not powerful; Algiers is not our neighbour; Algiers is not infectious. Algiers, whatever it may be, is an old creation; and we have good data to calculate all the mischief to be apprehended from it. When I find Algiers transferred to Calais, I will tell you what I think of that point. In the mean time, the case quoted from the Algerine reports, will not apply as authority. We shall put it out of court; and so far as that goes, let the counsel for the Jacobin peace take nothing by their motion.

When we voted, as you and I did, with many more whom you and I respect and love, to resist this enemy, we were providing for dangers that were direct, home, pressing, and not remote, contingent, uncertain, and formed upon loose analogies. We judged of the danger with which we were menaced by Jacobin France, from the whole tenor of it's conduct; not from one or two doubtful or detached acts or expressions. I not only concurred in the idea of combining with Europe in this war; but to the best of my power ever stimulated Ministers to that conjunction of interests and of efforts. I joined with them with all my soul, on the principles contained in that manly and masterly state-paper, which I have two or three times referred to, and may still more frequently hereafter. The diplomattick collection never was more enriched than with this piece. The historick facts justify every stroke of the master. "Thus painters write their names at Co."

Various persons may concur in the same measure on various grounds. They may be various, without being contrary to, or exclusive of each other. I thought the insolent, unprovoked aggression of the Regicide upon our ally of Holland, a good ground of war. I think his manifest attempt to overturn the balance of Europe, a good ground of war. As a good ground of war, I consider his declaration of war on his Majesty and his kingdom. But though I have taken all these to my aid, I consider them as nothing more than as a sort of evidence to indicate the treasonable mind within. Long before their acts of aggression, and their declaration of war, the faction in France had assumed a form, had adopted a body of principles and maxims, and had regularly and systematically acted on them, by which she virtually had put herself in a posture, which was in itself a declaration of war against mankind.

Letter 2

My ideas and my principles led me, in this contest, to encounter France, not as a State, but as a Faction. The vast territorial extent of that country, its immense population, its riches of production, its riches of commerce and convention—the whole aggregate mass of what, in ordinary cases, constitutes the force of a State, to me were but objects of secondary consideration. They might be balanced; and they have been often more than balanced. Great as these things are, they are not what make the faction formidable. It is the faction that makes them truly dreadful. The faction is the evil spirit that possesses the body of France; that informs it as a soul; that stamps upon its ambition, and upon all its pursuits, a characteristic mark, which strongly distinguishes them from the same general passions, and the same general views, in other men and in other communities. It is that spirit which inspires into them a new, a pernicious, and desolating activity. Constituted as France was ten years ago, it was not in that France to shake, to shatter, and to overwhelm Europe in the manner that we behold. A sure destruction impends over those infatuated Princes, who, in the conflict with this new and unheard-of power, proceed as if they were engaged in a war that bore a resemblance to their former contests; or that they can make peace in the spirit of their former arrangements or pacification. Here the beaten path is the very reverse of the safe road.

As to me, I was always steadily of opinion that this disorder was not in its nature intermittent. I conceived that the contest, once begun, could not be laid down again to be resumed at our discretion; but that our first struggle with this evil would also be our last. I never thought we could make peace with the system; because it was not for the sake of an object we pursued in rivalry with each other, but with the system itself, that we were at war. As I understood the matter, we were at war, not with its conduct, but with its existence; convinced that its existence and its hostility were the same.

The faction is not local or territorial. It is a general evil. Where it least appears in action, it is still full of life. In its sleep it recruits its strength, and prepares its exertion. Its spirit lies deep in the corruptions of our common nature. The social order which restrains it, feeds it. It exists in every country in Europe; and among all orders of men in every country, who look up to France as to a common head. The centre is there. The circumference is the world of Europe wherever the race of Europe may be settled. Everywhere else the faction is militant; in France it is triumphant. In France is the bank of deposit, and the bank of circulation, of all the pernicious principles that are forming in every State. It will be a folly scarcely deserving of pity, and too mischievous for contempt, to think of restraining it in any other country whilst it is predominant there. War, instead of being the cause of its force, has suspended its operation. It has given a reprieve, at least, to the Christian World.

The true nature of a Jacobin war, in the beginning, was, by most of the Christian Powers, felt, acknowledged, and even in the most precise manner declared. In the joint manifesto, published by the Emperor and the King of Prussia, on the 4th of August 1792, it is expressed in the clearest terms, and on principles which could not fail, if they had

adhered to them, of classing those monarchs with the first benefactors of mankind. This manifesto was published, as they themselves express it, "to lay open to the present generation, as well as to posterity, their motives, their intentions, and the *disinterestedness* of their personal views; taking up arms for the purpose of preserving social and political order amongst all civilized nations, and to secure to *each* state its religion, happiness, independence, territories, and real constitution." "On this ground, they hoped that all Empires, and all States, ought to be unanimous; and becoming the firm guardians of the happiness of mankind, that they cannot fail to unite their efforts to rescue a numerous nation from it's own fury, to preserve Europe from the return of barbarism, and the Universe from the subversion and anarchy with which it was threatened." The whole of that noble performance ought to be read at the first meeting of any Congress which may assemble for the purpose of pacification. In that piece "these Powers expressly renounce all views of personal aggrandizement," and confine themselves to objects worthy of so generous, so heroic, and so perfectly wise and politick an enterprise. It was to the principles of this consideration, and to no other, that we wished our Sovereign and our Country to accede, as a part of the commonwealth of Europe. To these principles, with some trifling exceptions and limitations, they did fully accede. And all our friends who did take office acceded to the Ministry (whether wisely or not) as I always understood the matter, on the faith and on the principles of that declaration.

As long as these powers flattered themselves that the menace of force would produce the effect of force, they acted on those declarations: but when their menaces failed of success, their efforts took a new direction. It did not appear to them that virtue and heroism ought to be purchased by millions of rix-dollars. It is a dreadful truth, but it is a truth that cannot be concealed; in ability, in dexterity, in the distinctness of their views, the Jacobins are our superiors. They saw the thing right from the very beginning. Whatever were the first motives to the war among politicians, they saw that it is in it's spirit, and for it's objects, a *civil war*; and as such they pursued it. It is a war between the partizans of the ancient, civil, moral, and political order of Europe against a sect of fanatical and ambitious atheists which means to change them all. It is not France extending a foreign empire over other nations: it is a sect aiming at universal empire, and beginning with the conquest of France. The leaders of that sect secured the *centre of Europe*; and that secured, they knew, that whatever might be the event of battles and sieges, their *cause* was victorious. Whether it's territory had a little more or a little less peeled from it's surface, or whether an island or two was detached from it's commerce, to them was of little moment. The conquest of France was a glorious acquisition. That once well laid as a basis of empire, opportunities never could be wanting to regain or to replace what had been lost, and [105] dreadfully to avenge themselves on the faction of their adversaries.

They saw it was a *civil war*. It was their business to persuade their adversaries that it ought to be a *foreign war*. The Jacobins every where set up a cry against the new crusade; and they intrigued with effect in the cabinet, in the field, and in every private society in Europe. Their talk was not difficult. The condition of Princes, and sometimes of first Ministers too, is to be pitied. The creatures of the desk, and the creatures of favour, had

no relish for the principles of the manifestoes. They promised no governments, no regiments, no revenues from whence emoluments might arise, by perquisite or by grant. In truth, the tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal and prospective view of the interests of States passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of their senses. The jesters and buffoons shame them out of every thing grand and elevated. Littleness, in object and in means, to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit, but that which they can handle; which they can measure with a two-foot rule; which they can tell upon ten fingers.

Without the principles of the Jacobins, perhaps without any principles at all, they played the game of that faction. There was a beaten road before them. The Powers of Europe were armed; France had always appeared dangerous; the war was easily diverted from France as a faction, to France as a state. The Princes were easily taught to slide back into their old habitual course of politicks. They were easily led to consider the flames that were consuming France, not as a warning to protect their own buildings, (which were without any party wall, and linked by a contignation into the edifice of France,) but as an happy occasion for pillaging the goods, and for carrying off the materials of their neighbour's house. Their provident fears were changed into avaricious hopes. They carried on their new designs without seeming to abandon the principles of their old policy. They pretended to seek, or they flattered themselves that they sought, in the accession of new fortresses, and new territories, a *defensive* security. But the security wanted was against a kind of power, which was not so truly dangerous in it's fortresses nor in it's territories, as in it's spirit and it's principles. They aimed, or pretended to aim, at *defending* themselves against a danger, from which there can be no security in any *defensive* plan. If armies and fortresses were a defence against Jacobinism, Louis the Sixteenth would this day reign a powerful monarch over an happy people.

This error obliged them, even in their offensive operations, to adopt a plan of war, against the success of which there was something little short of mathematical demonstration. They refused to take any step which might strike at the heart of affairs. They seemed unwilling to wound the enemy in any vital part. They acted through the whole, as if they really wished the conservation of the Jacobin power; as what might be more favourable than the lawful Government to the attainment of the petty objects they looked for. They always kept on the circumference; and the wider and remoter the circle was, the more eagerly they chose it as their sphere of action in this centrifugal war. The plan they pursued, in it's nature, demanded great length of time. In it's execution, they, who went the nearest way to work, were obliged to cover an incredible extent of country. It left to the enemy every means of destroying this extended line of weakness. Ill success in any part was sure to defeat the effect of the whole. This is true of Austria. It is still more true of England. On this false plan, even good fortune, by further weakening the victor, put him but the further off from his object.

As long as there was any appearance of success, the spirit of aggrandizement, and consequently the spirit of mutual jealousy seized upon all the coalesced Powers. Some sought an accession of territory at the expence of France, some at the expence of each other; some at the expence of third parties; and when the vicissitude of disaster took it's turn, they found common distress a treacherous bond of faith and friendship.

The greatest skill conducting the greatest military apparatus has been employed; but it has been worse than uselessly employed, through the false policy of the war. The operations of the field suffered by the errors of the Cabinet. If the same spirit continues when peace is made, the peace will fix and perpetuate all the errors of the war; because it will be made upon the same false principle. What has been lost in the field, in the field may be regained. An arrangement of peace in it's nature is a permanent settlement; it is the effect of counsel and deliberation, and not of fortuitous events. If built upon a basis fundamentally erroneous, it can only be retrieved by some of those unforeseen dispositions, which the all-wise but mysterious Governor of the World sometimes interposes, to snatch nations from ruin. It would not be pious error, but mad and impious presumption, for any one to trust in an unknown order of dispensations, in defiance of the rules of prudence, which are formed upon the known march of the ordinary providence of God.

It was not of that sort of war that I was amongst the least considerable, but amongst the most zealous advisers; and it is not by the sort of peace now talked of, that I wish it concluded. It would answer no great purpose to enter into the particular errors of the war. The whole has been but one error. It was but nominally a war of alliance. As the combined powers pursued it, there was nothing to hold an alliance together. There could be no tie of *honour*, in a society for pillage. There could be no tie of a common *interest* where the object did not offer such a division amongst the parties, as could well give them a warm concern in the gains of each other, or could indeed form such a body of equivalents, as might make one of them willing to abandon a separate object of his ambition for the justification of any other member of the alliance. The partition of Poland offered an object of spoil in which the parties *might* agree. They were circumjacent; and each might take a portion convenient to his own territory. They might dispute about the value of their several shares: but the contiguity to each of the demandants always furnished the means of an adjustment. Though hereafter the world will have cause to rue this iniquitous measure, and they most who were most concerned in it, for the moment there was wherewithal in the object to preserve peace amongst confederates in wrong. But the spoil of France did not afford the same facilities for accommodation. What might satisfy the House of Austria in a Flemish frontier afforded no equivalent to tempt the cupidity of the King of Prussia. What might be desired by Great Britain in the West-Indies, must be coldly and remotely, if at all, felt as an interest at Vienna; and it would be felt as something worse than a negative interest at Madrid. Austria, long possessed with unwise and dangerous designs on Italy, could not be very much in earnest about the conservation of the old patrimony of the House of Savoy: and Sardinia, who owed to an Italian force all her means of shutting out France from Italy, of which she has been supposed to hold the key, would not purchase the means of strength upon one side by yielding it on the other. She would not readily give the possession of

Novara for the hope of Savoy. No continental Power was willing to lose any of it's continental objects for the encrease of the naval power of Great Britain; and Great Britain would not give up any of the objects she sought for as the means of an encrease to her naval power, to further their aggrandizement.

The moment this war came to be considered as a war merely of profit, the actual circumstances are such, that it never could become really a war of alliance. Nor can the peace be a peace of alliance, until things are put upon their right bottom.

...

The Revolution in France had the relation of France to other nations as one of its principal objects. The changes made by that Revolution were not the better to accommodate her to the old and usual relations, but to produce new ones. The Revolution was made, not to make France free, but to make her formidable; not to make her a neighbour, but a mistress; not to make her more observant of laws, but to put her in a condition to impose them. To make France truly formidable it was necessary that France should be new-modelled. They who have not followed the train of the late proceedings, have been led by deceitful representations (which deceit made a part in the plan) to conceive that this totally new model of a state in which nothing escaped a change, was made with a view to it's internal relations only.

In the Revolution of France two sorts of men were principally concerned in giving a character and determination to it's pursuits; the philosophers and the politicians. They took different ways: but they met in the same end. The philosophers had one predominant object, which they pursued with a fanatical fury, that is, the utter extirpation of religion. To that every question of empire was subordinate. They had rather domineer in a parish of Atheists, than rule over a Christian world. Their temporal ambition was wholly subservient to their proselytizing spirit, in which they were not exceeded by Mahomet himself.

...

When I contemplate the scheme on which France is formed, and when I compare it with these systems, with which it is, and ever must be, in conflict, those things which seem as defects in her polity are the very things which make me tremble. The States of the Christian World have grown up to their present magnitude in a great length of time, and by a great variety of accidents. They have been improved to what we see them with greater or less degrees of felicity and skill. Not one of them has been formed upon a regular plan or with any unity of design. As their Constitutions are not systematical, they have not been directed to any *peculiar* end, eminently distinguished, and superseding every other. The objects which they embrace are of the greatest possible variety, and have become in a manner infinite. In all these old countries the state has been made to the people, and not the people conformed to the state. Every state has pursued, not only every sort of social advantage, but it has cultivated the welfare of every individual. His wants, his wishes, even his tastes have been consulted. This comprehensive scheme virtually

produced a degree of personal liberty in forms the most adverse to it. That liberty was found, under monarchies stiled absolute, in a degree unknown to the ancient commonwealths. From hence the powers of all our modern states meet in all their movements with some obstruction. It is therefore no wonder, that when these states are to be considered as machines to operate for some one great end, that this dissipated and balanced force is not easily centered, or made to bear with the whole nation upon one point.

The British State is, without question, that which pursues the greatest variety of ends, and is the least disposed to sacrifice any one of them to another, or to the whole. It aims at taking in the entire circle of human desires, and securing for them their fair enjoyment. Our legislature has been ever closely connected, in it's most efficient part, with individual feeling and individual interest. Personal liberty, the most lively of these feelings and the most important of these interests, which in other European countries has rather arisen from the system of manners and the habitudes of life, than from the laws of the state, (in which it flourished more from neglect than attention) in England has been a direct object of Government.

On this principle England would be the weakest power in the whole system. Fortunately, however, the great riches of this kingdom, arising from a variety of causes, and the disposition of the people, which is as great to spend as to accumulate, has easily afforded a disposeable surplus that gives a mighty momentum to the state. This difficulty, with these advantages to overcome it, has called forth the talents of the English financiers, who, by the surplus of industry poured out by prodigality, have outdone every thing which has been accomplished in other nations. The present Minister has outdone his predecessors; and as a Minister of revenue, is far above my power of praise. But still there are cases in which England feels more than several others, (though they all feel) the perplexity of an immense body of balanced advantages, and of individual demands, and of some irregularity in the whole mass.

France differs essentially from all those Governments which are formed without system, which exist by habit, and which are confused with the multitude, and with the complexity of their pursuits. What now stands as Government in France is struck out at a heat. The design is wicked, immoral, impious, oppressive; but it is spirited and daring: it is systematick; it is simple in it's principle; it has unity and consistency in perfection. In that country entirely to cut off a branch of commerce, to extinguish a manufacture, to destroy the circulation of money, to violate credit, to suspend the course of agriculture, even to burn a city, or to lay waste a province of their own, does not cost them a moment's anxiety. To them, the will, the wish, the want, the liberty, the toil, the blood of individuals is as nothing. Individuality is left out of their scheme of Government. The state is all in all. Every thing is referred to the production of force; afterwards every thing is trusted to the use of it. It is military in it's principle, in it's maxims, in it's spirit, and in all it's movements. The state has dominion and conquest for it's sole objects; dominion over minds by proselytism, over bodies by arms.

Thus constituted with an immense body of natural means, which are lessened in their amount only to be increased in their effect, France has, since the accomplishment of the Revolution, a complete unity in it's direction. It has destroyed every resource of the State which depends upon opinion and the good-will of individuals. The riches of convention disappear. The advantages of nature in some measure remain; even these, I admit, are astonishingly lessened; the command over what remains is complete and absolute. We go about asking when *assignats* will expire, and we laugh at the last price of them. But what signifies the fate of those tickets of despotism? The despotism will find despotick means of supply. They have found the short cut to the productions of Nature, while others, in pursuit of them, are obliged to wind through the labyrinth of a very intricate state of society. They seize upon the fruit of the labour; they seize upon the labourer himself. Were France but half of what it is in population, in compactness, in applicability of it's force, situated as it is, and being what it is, it would be too strong for most of the States of Europe, constituted as they are, and proceeding as they proceed. Would it be wise to estimate what the world of Europe, as well as the world of Asia, had to dread from Jinghiz Khân, upon a contemplation of the resources of the cold and barren spot in the remotest Tartary, from whence first issued that scourge of the human race? Ought we to judge from the excise and stamp duties of the rocks, or from the paper circulation of the sands of Arabia, the power by which Mahomet and his tribes laid hold at once on the two most powerful Empires of the world; beat one of them totally to the ground, broke to pieces the other, and, in not much longer space of time than I have lived, overturned governments, laws, manners, religion, and extended an empire from the Indus to the Pyrenees?

Letter 3

An honest neighbour of mine is not altogether unhappy in the application of an old common story to a present occasion. It may be said of my friend, what Horace says of a neighbour of his, "*garrit aniles ex re fabellas.*" Conversing on this strange subject, he told me a current story of a simple English country Squire, who was persuaded by certain *dilettanti* of his acquaintance to see the world, and to become knowing in men and manners. Among other celebrated places, it was recommended to him to visit Constantinople. He took their advice. After various adventures, not to our purpose to dwell upon, he happily arrived at that famous city. As soon as he had a little reposed himself from his fatigue, he took a walk into the streets; but he had not gone far, before a "malignant and a turban'd Turk" had his choler roused by the careless and assured air with which this infidel strutted about in the metropolis of true believers. In this temper, he lost no time in doing to our traveller the honours of the place. The Turk crossed over the way, and with perfect good-will gave him two or three lusty kicks on the seat of honour. To resent, or to return the compliment in Turkey, was quite out of the question. Our traveller, since he could not otherwise acknowledge this kind of favour, received it with the best grace in the world—he made one of his most ceremonious bows, and begged the kicking Mussulman "to accept his perfect assurances of high consideration." Our countryman was too wise to imitate Othello in the use of the dagger. He thought it better, as better it was, to assuage his bruised dignity with half a yard square of balmy

diplomattick diachylon. In the disasters of their friends, people are seldom wanting in a laudable patience. When they are such as do not threaten to end fatally, they become even matter of pleasantry. The English fellow-travellers of our sufferer, finding him a little out of spirits, entreated him not to take so slight a business so very seriously. They told him it was the custom of the country; that every country had its customs; that the Turkish manners were a little rough; but that in the main the Turks were a good-natured people; that what would have been a deadly affront any where else, was only a little freedom there; in short, they told him to think no more of the matter, and to try his fortune in another *promenade*. But the 'Squire, though a little clownish, had some homebred sense. What! have I come, at all this expence and trouble, all the way to Constantinople only to be kicked? Without going beyond my own stable, my groom, for half a crown, would have kicked me to my heart's content. I don't mean to stay in Constantinople eight and forty hours, nor ever to return to this rough, good-natured people, that have their own customs.

In my opinion the 'Squire was in the right. He was satisfied with his first ramble and his first injuries. But reason of state and common-sense are two things. If it were not for this difference, it might not appear of absolute necessity, after having received a certain quantity of buffetings by advance, that we should send a Peer of the realm to the scum of the earth, to collect the debt to the last farthing; and to receive, with infinite aggravation, the same scorns which had been paid to our supplication through a Commoner. But it was proper, I suppose, that the whole of our country, in all its orders, should have a share of the indignity; and, as in reason, that the higher orders should touch the larger proportion.

This business was not ended, because our dignity was wounded, or because our patience was worn out with contumely and scorn. We had not disgorged one particle of the nauseous doses with which we were so liberally crammed by the mountebanks of Paris, in order to drug and diet us into perfect tameness. No; we waited, till the morbid strength of our *boulimia* for their physick had exhausted the well-stored dispensary of their empiricism. It is impossible to guess at the term to which our forbearance would have extended. The Regicides were more fatigued with giving blows than the callous cheek of British Diplomacy was hurt in receiving them. They had no way left for getting rid of this mendicant perseverance, but by sending for the Beadle, and forcibly driving our Embassy "of shreds and patches," with all it's mumping cant, from the inhospitable door of Cannibal Castle—

Where the gaunt mastiff, growling at the gate,
Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat.

I think we might have found, before the rude hand of insolent office was on our shoulder, and the staff of usurped authority brandished over our heads, that contempt of the suppliant is not the best forwarder of a suit; that national disgrace is not the high road to security, much less to power and greatness. Patience, indeed, strongly indicates the love of peace. But mere love does not always lead to enjoyment. It is the power of winning that palm which insures our wearing it. Virtues have their place; and out of their place they hardly deserve the name. They pass into the neighbouring vice. The patience of

fortitude, and the endurance of pusillanimity, are things very different, as in their principle, so in their effects.

It is no less striking, that the same obvious reflexion should not occur to those gentlemen who conducted the opposition to Government. But their thoughts were turned another way. They seem to have been so entirely occupied with the defence of the French Directory, so very eager in finding recriminatory precedents to justify every act of it's intolerable insolence, so animated in their accusations of Ministry for not having, at the very outset, made concessions proportioned to the dignity of the great victorious Power we had offended, that every thing concerning the sacrifice in this business of national honour, and of the most fundamental principles in the policy of negotiation, seemed wholly to have escaped them. To this fatal hour, the contention in Parliament appeared in another form, and was animated by another spirit. For three hundred years and more, we have had wars with what stood as Government in France. In all that period the language of Ministers, whether of boast or of apology, was, that they had left nothing undone for the assertion of the national honour; the Opposition, whether patriotically or factiously, contending that the Ministers had been oblivious of the national glory, and had made improper sacrifices of that publick interest, which they were bound not only to preserve, but by all fair methods to augment. This total change of tone on both sides of your house, forms itself no inconsiderable revolution; and I am afraid it prognosticates others of still greater importance. The Ministers exhausted the stores of their eloquence in demonstrating, that they had quitted the safe, beaten high-way of treaty between independent Powers; that to pacify the enemy they had made every sacrifice of the national dignity; and that they had offered to immolate at the same shrine the most valuable of the national acquisitions. The Opposition insisted, that the victims were not fat nor fair enough to be offered on the altars of blasphemed Regicide; and it was inferred from thence, that the sacrificial ministers, (who were a sort of intruders in the worship of the new divinity) in their schismatical devotion, had discovered more of hypocrisy than zeal. They charged them with a concealed resolution to persevere in what these gentlemen have (in perfect consistency, indeed, with themselves, but most irreconcilably with fact and reason) called an unjust and impolitick war.

That day was, I fear, the fatal term of *local* patriotism. On that day, I fear, there was an end of that narrow scheme of relations called our country, with all it's pride, it's prejudices, and it's partial affections. All the little quiet rivulets that watered an humble, a contracted, but not an unfruitful field, are to be lost in the waste expanse, and boundless, barren ocean of the homicide philanthropy of France. It is no longer an object of terror, the aggrandizement of a new power, which teaches as a professor that philanthropy in the chair; whilst it propagates by arms, and establishes by conquest, the comprehensive system of universal fraternity. In what light is all this viewed in a great assembly? The party which takes the lead there has no longer any apprehensions, except those that arise from not being admitted to the closest and most confidential connexions with the metropolis of that fraternity. That reigning party no longer touches on it's favourite subject, the display of those horrors that must attend the existence of a power, with such dispositions and principles, seated in the heart of Europe. It is satisfied to find some loose, ambiguous expressions in it's former declarations, which may set it free from it's

professions and engagements. It always speaks of peace with the Regicides as a great and an undoubted blessing; and such a blessing, as if obtained, promises, as much as any human disposition of things can promise, security and permanence. It holds out nothing at all definite towards this security. It only seeks, by a restoration, to some of their former owners, of some fragments of the general wreck of Europe, to find a plausible plea for a present retreat from an embarrassing position. As to the future, that party is content to leave it covered in a night of the most palpable obscurity. It never once has entered into a particle of detail of what our own situation, or that of other powers must be, under the blessings of the peace we seek. This defect, to my power, I mean to supply; that if any persons should still continue to think an attempt at foresight is any part of the duty of a Statesman, I may contribute my trifle to the materials of his speculation.

Men are rarely without some sympathy in the sufferings of others; but in the immense and diversified mass of human misery, which may be pitied, but cannot be relieved, in the gross, the mind must make a choice. Our sympathy is always more forcibly attracted towards the misfortunes of certain persons, and in certain descriptions: and this sympathetic attraction discovers, beyond a possibility of mistake, our mental affinities, and elective affections. It is a much surer proof, than the strongest declaration, of a real connexion and of an over-ruling bias in the mind. I am told that the active sympathies of this party have been chiefly, if not wholly attracted to the sufferings of the patriarchal rebels, who were amongst the promulgators of the maxims of the French Revolution, and who have suffered, from their apt and forward scholars, some part of the evils, which they had themselves so liberally distributed to all the other parts of the community. Some of these men, flying from the knives which they had sharpened against their country and its laws, rebelling against the very powers they had set over themselves by their rebellion against their Sovereign, given up by those very armies to whose faithful attachment they trusted for their safety and support, after they had compleatly debauched all military fidelity in its source—some of these men, I say, had fallen into the hands of the head of that family, the most illustrious person of which they had three times cruelly imprisoned, and delivered in that state of captivity to those hands, from which they were able to relieve, neither her, nor their own nearest and most venerable kindred. One of these men connected with this country by no circumstance of birth; not related to any distinguished families here; recommended by no service; endeared to this nation by no act or even expression of kindness; comprehended in no league or common cause; embraced by no laws of publick hospitality; this man was the only one to be found in Europe, in whose favour the British nation, passing judgment, without hearing, on its almost only ally, was to force, (and that not by soothing interposition, but with every reproach for inhumanity, cruelty, and breach of the laws of war,) from prison. We were to release him from that prison out of which, in abuse of the lenity of Government amidst its rigour, and in violation of at least an understood parole, he had attempted an escape; an escape excuseable if you will, but naturally productive of strict and vigilant confinement. The earnestness of gentlemen to free this person was the more extraordinary, because there was full as little in him to raise admiration, from any eminent qualities he possessed, as there was to excite an interest, from any that were amiable. A person, not only of no real civil or literary talents, but of no specious appearance of either; and in his military profession, not marked as a leader in any one act of able or successful enterprize—unless

his leading on (or his following) the allied army of Amazonian and male cannibal Parisians to Versailles, on the famous fifth of October, 1789, is to make his glory. Any other exploit of his, as a General, I never heard of. But the triumph of general fraternity was but the more signalized by the total want of particular claims in that case; and by postponing all such claims, in a case where they really existed, where they stood embossed, and in a manner forced themselves on the view of common short-sighted benevolence. Whilst, for its improvement, the humanity of these gentlemen was thus on it's travels, and had got as far off as Olmutz, they never thought of a place and a person much nearer to them, or of moving an instruction to Lord Malmesbury in favour of their own suffering countryman, Sir Sydney Smith.

This officer, having attempted, with great gallantry, to cut out a vessel from one of the enemy's harbours, was taken after an obstinate resistance; such as obtained him the marked respect of those who were witnesses of his valour, and knew the circumstances in which it was displayed. Upon his arrival at Paris, he was instantly thrown into prison; where the nature of his situation will best be understood, by knowing, that amongst its *mitigations*, was the permission to walk occasionally in the court, and to enjoy the privilege of shaving himself. On the old system of feelings and principles, his sufferings might have been entitled to consideration, and even in a comparison with those of Citizen la Fayette, to a priority in the order of compassion. If the Ministers had neglected to take any steps in his favour, a declaration of the sense of the House of Commons would have stimulated them to their duty. If they had caused a representation to be made, such a proceeding would have added force to it. If reprisal should be thought adviseable, the address of the House would have given an additional sanction to a measure, which would have been, indeed, justifiable without any other sanction than it's own reason. But no. Nothing at all like it. In fact, the merit of Sir Sydney Smith, and his claim on British compassion, was of a kind altogether different from that which interested so deeply the authors of the motion in favour of Citizen la Fayette. In my humble opinion, Captain Sir Sydney Smith has another sort of merit with the British nation, and something of a higher claim on British humanity than Citizen de la Fayette. Faithful, zealous, and ardent in the service of his King and Country; full of spirit; full of resources; going out of the beaten road, but going right, because his uncommon enterprize was not conducted by a vulgar judgment—in his profession, Sir Sydney Smith might be considered as a distinguished person, if any person could well be distinguished in a service in which scarce a Commander can be named without putting you in mind of some action of intrepidity, skill, and vigilance, that has given them a fair title to contend with any men and in any age. But I will say nothing farther of the merits of Sir Sydney Smith. The mortal animosity of the Regicide enemy supersedes all other panegyrick. Their hatred is a judgment in his favour without appeal. At present he is lodged in the tower of the Temple, the last prison of Louis the Sixteenth, and the last but one of Maria Antonietta of Austria; the prison of Louis the Seventeenth; the prison of Elizabeth of Bourbon. There he lies, unpitied by the grand philanthropy, to meditate upon the fate of those who are faithful to their King and Country. Whilst this prisoner, secluded from intercourse, was indulging in these cheering reflections, he might possibly have had the further consolation of learning (by means of the insolent exultation of his guards) that there was an English Ambassador at Paris; he might have had the proud comfort of hearing, that

this Ambassador had the honour of passing his mornings in respectful attendance at the office of a Regicide pettifogger; and that in the evening he relaxed in the amusements of the opera, and in the spectacle of an audience totally new; an audience in which he had the pleasure of seeing about him not a single face that he could formerly have known in Paris; but in the place of that company, one indeed more than equal to it in display of gaiety, splendour and luxury; a set of abandoned wretches, squandering in insolent riot the spoils of their bleeding country. A subject of profound reflection both to the prisoner and to the Ambassador.

I might rest here, and take the loan I speak of as leading to a solution of that question, which I proposed in my first letter: "Whether the inability of the country to prosecute the war did necessitate a submission to the indignities and the calamities of a Peace with the Regicide power." But give me leave to pursue this point a little further.

I know that it has been a cry usual on this occasion, as it has been upon occasions where such a cry could have less apparent justification, that great distress and misery have been the consequence of this war, by the burthens brought and laid upon the people. But to know where the burthen really lies, and where it presses, we must divide the people. As to the common people, their stock is in their persons and in their earnings. I deny that the stock of their persons is diminished in a greater proportion than the common sources of populousness abundantly fill up—I mean, constant employment; proportioned pay according to the produce of the soil, and where the soil fails, according to the operation of the general capital; plentiful nourishment to vigorous labour; comfortable provision to decrepid age, to orphan infancy, and to accidental malady. I say nothing to the *policy* of the provision for the poor, in all the variety of faces under which it presents itself. This is the matter of another enquiry. I only just speak of it as of a fact, taken with others, to support me in my denial that hitherto any one of the ordinary sources of the increase of mankind is dried up by this war. I affirm, what I can well prove, that the waste has been less than the supply. To say that in war no man must be killed, is to say that there ought to be no war. This they may say, who wish to talk idly, and who would display their humanity at the expence of their honesty, or their understanding. If more lives are lost in this war than necessity requires, they are lost by misconduct or mistake. But if the hostility be just, the error is to be corrected: the war is not to be abandoned.

That the stock of the common people, in numbers is not lessened, any more than the causes are impaired, is manifest, without being at the pains of an actual numeration. An improved and improving agriculture, which implies a great augmentation of labour, has not yet found itself at a stand, no, not for a single moment, for want of the necessary hands, either in the settled progress of husbandry, or in the occasional pressure of harvests. I have even reason to believe that there has been a much smaller importation, or the demand of it, from a neighbouring kingdom than in former times, when agriculture was more limited in it's extent and it's means, and when the time was a season of profound peace. On the contrary, the prolifick fertility of country life has poured it's superfluity of population into the canals, and into other publick works which of late years have been undertaken to so amazing an extent, and which have not only not been discontinued, but beyond all expectation pushed on with redoubled vigour, in a war that

calls for so many of our men, and so much of our riches. An increasing capital calls for labour: and an increasing population answers to the call. Our manufactures, augmented both for the supply of foreign and domestick consumption, reproducing with the means of life the multitudes which they use and waste, (and which many of them devour much more surely and much more largely than the war) have always found the laborious hand ready for the liberal pay. That the price of the soldier is highly raised is true. In part this rise may be owing to some measures not so well considered in the beginning of this war; but the grand cause has been the reluctance of that class of people from whom the soldiery is taken, to enter into a military life—not that but once entered into, it has it's conveniences, and even it's pleasures. I have seldom known a soldier who, at the intercession of his friends, and at their no small charge, had been redeemed from that discipline, that in a short time was not eager to return to it again. But the true reason is the abundant occupation, and the augmented stipend found in towns, and villages, and farms, which leaves a smaller number of persons to be disposed of. The price of men for new and untried ways of life must bear a proportion to the profits of that mode of existence from whence they are to be bought.

So far as to the stock of the common people, as it consists in their persons. As to the other part, which consists in their earnings, I have to say, that the rates of wages are very greatly augmented almost through the kingdom. In the parish where I live, it has been raised from seven to nine shillings in the week for the same labourer, performing the same task, and no greater. Except something in the malt taxes, and the duties upon sugars, I do not know any one tax imposed for very many years past which affects the labourer in any degree whatsoever; while on the other hand, the tax upon houses not having more than seven windows (that is, upon cottages) was repealed the very year before the commencement of the present war. On the whole, I am satisfied, that the humblest class, and that class which touches the most nearly on the lowest, out of which it is continually emerging, and to which it is continually falling, receives far more from publick impositions than it pays. That class receives two million sterling annually from the classes above it. It pays to no such amount towards any publick contribution.

I hope it is not necessary for me to take notice of that language, so ill suited to the persons to whom it has been attributed, and so unbecoming the place in which it is said to have been uttered, concerning the present war as the cause of the high price of provisions during the greater part of the year 1796. I presume it is only to be ascribed to the intolerable licence with which the newspapers break not only the rules of decorum in real life, but even the dramattick decorum, when they personate great men, and, like bad poets, make the heroes of the piece talk more like us Grub-street scribblers, than in a style consonant to persons of gravity and importance in the State. It was easy to demonstrate the cause, and the sole cause, of that rise in the grand article and first necessary of life. It would appear that it had no more connexion with the war, than the moderate price to which all sorts of grain were reduced, soon after the return of Lord Malmesbury, had with the state of politicks and the fate of his Lordship's treaty. I have quite as good reason (that is, no reason at all) to attribute this abundance to the longer continuance of the war, as the gentlemen who personate leading Members of Parliament, have had for giving the enhanced price to that war, at a more early period of it's duration. Oh, the folly of us poor

creatures, who, in the midst of our distresses, or our escapes, are ready to claw or caress one another, upon matters that so seldom depend on our wisdom or our weakness, on our good or evil conduct towards each other!

An untimely shower, or an unseasonable drought; a frost too long continued, or too suddenly broken up, with rain and tempest; the blight of the spring, or the smut of the harvest; will do more to cause the distress of the belly, than all the contrivances of all Statesmen can do to relieve it. Let Government protect and encourage industry, secure property, repress violence, and discountenance fraud, it is all that they have to do. In other respects, the less they meddle in these affairs the better; the rest is in the hands of our Master and theirs. We are in a constitution of things wherein "*Modo sol nimius, modo corripit imber.*" But I will push this matter no further. As I have said a good deal upon it at various times during my publick service, and have lately written something on it, which may yet see the light, I shall content myself now with observing, that the vigorous and laborious class of life has lately got from the *bon ton* of the humanity of this day, the name of the "*labouring poor.*" We have heard many plans for the relief of the "*Labouring Poor.*" This puling jargon is not as innocent as it is foolish. In meddling with great affairs, weakness is never innocuous. Hitherto the name of Poor (in the sense in which it is used to excite compassion) has not been used for those who can, but for those who cannot labour—for the sick and infirm; for orphan infancy; for languishing and decrepid age: but when we affect to pity as poor, those who must labour or the world cannot exist, we are trifling with the condition of mankind. It is the common doom of man that he must eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, that is, by the sweat of his body, or the sweat of his mind. If this toil was inflicted as a curse, it is as might be expected from the curses of the Father of all Blessings—it is tempered with many alleviations, many comforts. Every attempt to fly from it, and to refuse the very terms of our existence, becomes much more truly a curse, and heavier pains and penalties fall upon those who would elude the tasks which are put upon them by the great Master Workman of the World, who in his dealings with his creatures sympathizes with their weakness, and speaking of a creation wrought by mere will out of nothing, speaks of six days of *labour* and one of *rest*. I do not call a healthy young man, chearful in his mind, and vigorous in his arms—I cannot call such a man, *poor*; I cannot pity my kind as a kind, merely because they are men. This affected pity only tends to dissatisfy them with their condition, and to teach them to seek resources where no resources are to be found—in something else than their own industry, and frugality, and sobriety. Whatever may be the intention (which, because I do not know, I cannot dispute) of those who would discontent mankind by this strange pity, they act towards us, in the consequences, as if they were our worst enemies.

In turning our view from the lower to the higher classes, it will not be necessary for me to shew at any length that the stock of the latter, as it consists in their numbers, has not yet suffered any material diminution. I have not seen, or heard it asserted: I have no reason to believe it. There is no want of officers, that I have ever understood, for the new ships which we commission, or the new regiments which we raise. In the nature of things it is not with their persons that the higher classes principally pay their contingent to the demands of war. There is another, and not less important, part which rests with almost exclusive weight upon them. They furnish the means,

How war may best upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage.

Not that they are exempt from contributing also by their personal service in the fleets and armies of their country. They do contribute, and in their full and fair proportion, according to the relative proportion of their numbers in the community. They contribute all the mind that actuates the whole machine. The fortitude required of them is very different from the unthinking alacrity of the common soldier, or common sailor in the face of danger and death. It is not a passion, it is not an impulse, it is not a sentiment. It is a cool, steady, deliberate principle, always present, always equable; having no connexion with anger; tempering honour with prudence; incited, invigorated, and sustained by a generous love of fame; informed, moderated and directed by an enlarged knowledge of it's own great publick ends; flowing in one blended stream from the opposite sources of the heart and the head; carrying in itself it's own commission, and proving it's title to every other command, by the first and most difficult command, that of the bosom in which it resides. It is a fortitude, which unites with the courage of the field the more exalted and refined courage of the council; which knows as well to retreat as to advance; which can conquer as well by delay, as by the rapidity of a march, or the impetuosity of an attack; which can be, with Fabius, the black cloud that lowers on the tops of the mountains, or with Scipio, the thunderbolt of war; which, undismayed by false shame, can patiently endure the severest trial that a gallant spirit can undergo, in the taunts and provocations of the enemy, the suspicions, the cold respect, and "mouth-honour" of those, from whom it should meet a cheerful obedience; which, undisturbed by false humanity, can calmly assume that most awful moral responsibility of deciding when victory may be too dearly purchased by the loss of a single life, and when the safety and glory of their country may demand the certain sacrifice of thousands. Different stations of command may call for different modifications of this fortitude, but the character ought to be the same in all. And never, in the most "palmy state" of our martial renown, did it shine with brighter lustre than in the present sanguinary and ferocious hostilities, wherever the British arms have been carried. But, in this most arduous, and momentous conflict, which from it's nature should have roused us to new and unexampled efforts, I know not how it has been, that we have never put forth half the strength, which we have exerted in ordinary wars. In the fatal battles which have drenched the Continent with blood, and shaken the system of Europe to pieces, we have never had any considerable army of a magnitude to be compared to the least of those by which, in former times, we so gloriously asserted our place as protectors, not oppressors, at the head of the great Commonwealth of Europe. We have never manfully met the danger in front: and when the enemy, resigning to us our natural dominion of the ocean, and abandoning the defence of his distant possessions to the infernal energy of the destroying principles which he had planted there for the subversion of the neighbouring Colonies, drove forth, by one sweeping law of unprecedented despotism, his armed multitudes on every side, to overwhelm the Countries and States, which had for centuries stood the firm barriers against the ambition of France; we drew back the arm of our military force, which had never been more than half raised to oppose him. From that time we have been combating

only with the other arm of our naval power; the right arm of England I admit; but which struck almost unresisted, with blows that could never reach the heart of the hostile mischief. From that time, without a single effort to regain those outworks, which ever till now we so strenuously maintained, as the strong frontier of our own dignity and safety, no less than the liberties of Europe; with but one feeble attempt to succour those brave, faithful, and numerous allies, whom for the first time since the days of our Edwards and Henrys, we now have in the bosom of France itself; we have been intrenching, and fortifying, and garrisoning ourselves at home: we have been redoubling security on security, to protect ourselves from invasion, which has now first become to us a serious object of alarm and terrour. Alas! the few of us, who have protracted life in any measure near to the extreme limits of our short period, have been condemned to see strange things; new systems of policy, new principles, and not only new men, but what might appear a new species of men! I believe that any person who was of age to take a part in publick affairs forty years ago, if the intermediate space of time were expunged from his memory, would hardly credit his senses, when he should hear from the highest authority, that an army of two hundred thousand men was kept up in this island, and that in the neighbouring island there were at least fourscore thousand more. But when he had recovered from his surprise on being told of this army, which has not it's parallel, what must be his astonishment to be told again, that this mighty force was kept up for the mere purpose of an inert and passive defence, and that, in it's far greater part, it was disabled by it's constitution and very essence, from defending us against an enemy by any one preventive stroke, or any one operation of active hostility? What must his reflexions be, on learning further, that a fleet of five hundred men of war, the best appointed, and to the full as ably commanded as this country ever had upon the sea, was for the greater part employed in carrying on the same system of unenterprising defence? What must be the sentiments and feelings of one, who remembers the former energy of England, when he is given to understand, that these two islands, with their extensive, and every where vulnerable coast, should be considered as a garrisoned sea-town; what would such a man, what would any man think, if the garrison of so strange a fortress should be such, and so feebly commanded, as never to make a sally; and that, contrary to all which has hitherto been seen in war, an infinitely inferiour army, with the shattered relicks of an almost annihilated navy, ill found, and ill manned, may with safety besiege this superiour garrison, and without hazarding the life of a man, ruin the place, merely by the menaces and false appearances of an attack? Indeed, indeed, my dear friend, I look upon this matter of our defensive system as much the most important of all considerations at this moment. It has oppressed me with many anxious thoughts, which, more than any bodily distemper, have sunk me to the condition, in which you know that I am. Should it please Providence to restore to me even the late weak remains of my strength, I propose to make this matter the subject of a particular discussion. I only mean here to argue, that the mode of conducting the war on our part, be it good or bad, has prevented even the common havock of war in our population, and especially among that class, whose duty and privilege of superiority it is, to lead the way amidst the perils and slaughter of the field of battle.

...

The other causes, which sometimes affect the numbers of the lower classes, but which I have shewn not to have existed to any such degree during this war—penury, cold, hunger, nakedness, do not easily reach the higher orders of society. I do not dread for them the slightest taste of these calamities from the distress and pressure of the war. They have much more to dread in that way from the confiscations, the rapines, the burnings, and the massacres, that may follow in the train of a peace, which shall establish the devastating and depopulating principles and example of the French Regicides, in security, and triumph and dominion. In the ordinary course of human affairs, any check to population among men in ease and opulence, is less to be apprehended from what they may suffer, than from what they enjoy. Peace is more likely to be injurious to them in that respect than war. The excesses of delicacy, repose, and satiety, are as unfavourable as the extremes of hardship, toil, and want, to the increase and multiplication of our kind. Indeed, the abuse of the bounties of Nature, much more surely than any partial privation of them, tends to intercept that precious boon of a second and dearer life in our progeny, which was bestowed in the first great command to man from the All-gracious Giver of all, whose name be blessed, whether he gives or takes away. His hand, in every page of his book, has written the lesson of moderation. Our physical well-being, our moral worth, our social happiness, our political tranquillity, all depend on that controul of all our appetites and passions, which the ancients designed by the cardinal virtue of Temperance.

The only real question to our present purpose, with regard to the higher classes, is, how stands the account of their stock, as it consists in wealth of every description? Have the burthens of the war compelled them to curtail any part of their former expenditure; which, I have before observed, affords the only standard of estimating property as an object of taxation? Do they enjoy all the same conveniencies, the same comforts, the same elegancies, the same luxuries, in the same, or in as many different modes as they did before the war?

There is much gaiety, and dissipation, and profusion, which must escape and disappoint all the arithmetick of political oeconomy. But the Theatres are a prominent feature. They are established through every part of the kingdom, at a cost unknown till our days. There is hardly a provincial capital, which does not possess, or which does not aspire to possess, a Theatre-Royal. Most of them engage for a short time, at a vast price, every actor or actress of name in the metropolis; a distinction, which, in the reign of my old friend Garrick, was confined to very few. The dresses, the scenes, the decorations of every kind, I am told, are in a new style of splendour and magnificence; whether to the advantage of our dramattick taste, upon the whole, I very much doubt. It is a shew, and a spectacle, not a play, that is exhibited.

...

I hope, that no French fraternization, which the relations of peace and amity with systematized Regicide, would assuredly, sooner or later, draw after them, even if it should overturn our happy constitution itself, could so change the hearts of Englishmen, as to make them delight in representations and processions, which have no other merit than that of degrading and insulting the name of Royalty. But good taste, manners,

morals, religion, all fly, wherever the principles of Jacobinism enter: and we have no safety against them but in arms.

The Proprietors, whether in this they follow or lead what is called the town, to furnish out these gaudy and pompous entertainments, must collect so much more from the Publick. It was just before the breaking out of hostilities, that they levied for themselves the very tax, which, at the close of the American war, they represented to Lord North, as certain ruin to their affairs to demand for the State. The example has since been imitated by the Managers of our Italian Opera. Once during the war, if not twice (I would not willingly misstate any thing, but I am not very accurate on these subjects) they have raised the price of their subscription. Yet I have never heard, that any lasting dissatisfaction has been manifested, or that their houses have been unusually and constantly thin. On the contrary, all the three theatres have been repeatedly altered, and refitted, and enlarged, to make them capacious of the crowds that nightly flock to them; and one of those huge and lofty piles, which lifts its broad shoulders in gigantick pride, almost emulous of the temples of God, has been reared from the foundation at a charge of more than fourscore thousand pounds, and yet remains a naked, rough, unsightly heap.

...

I am afraid, my dear Sir, that I have tired you with these dull, though important details. But we are upon a subject, which, like some of a higher nature, refuses ornament, and is contented with conveying instruction. I know too the obstinacy of unbelief, in those perverted minds, which have no delight, but in contemplating the supposed distress, and predicting the immediate ruin, of their country. These birds of evil presage, at all times, have grated our ears with their melancholy song; and, by some strange fatality or other, it has generally happened, that they have poured forth their loudest and deepest lamentations, at the periods of our most abundant prosperity. Very early in my publick life, I had occasion to make myself a little acquainted with their natural history. My first political tract in the collection, which a friend has made of my publications, is an answer to a very gloomy picture of the state of the nation, which was thought to have been drawn by a statesman of some eminence in his time. That was no more than the common spleen of disappointed ambition: in the present day, I fear, that too many are actuated by a more malignant and dangerous spirit. They hope, by depressing our minds with a despair of our means and resources, to drive us, trembling and unresisting, into the toils of our enemies, with whom, from the beginning of the Revolution in France, they have ever moved in strict concert and co-operation. If, with the report of your Finance Committee in their hands, they can still affect to despond, and can still succeed, as they do, in spreading the contagion of their pretended fears, among well-disposed, though weak men; there is no way of counteracting them, but by fixing them down to particulars. Nor must we forget, that they are unwearied agitators, bold assertors, dextrous sophisters. Proof must be accumulated upon proof, to silence them. With this view, I shall now direct your attention to some other striking and unerring indications of our flourishing condition; and they will in general be derived from other sources, but equally authentick; from other reports and proceedings of both Houses of Parliament, all which unite with wonderful force of consent in the same general result. Hitherto we have seen the superfluity of our capital

discovering itself only in procuring superfluous accommodation and enjoyment, in our houses, in our furniture, in our establishments, in our eating and drinking, our clothing, and our publick diversions. We shall now see it more beneficially employed in improving our territory itself. We shall see part of our present opulence, with provident care, put out to usury for posterity.

From Letter 4:

A piece has been sent to me, called "Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the fourth week of October, 1795," with a French motto, *Que faire encore une fois dans une telle nuit?—Attendre le jour*. The very title seemed to me striking and peculiar, and to announce something uncommon. In the time I have lived to, I always seem to walk on enchanted ground. Every thing is new, and according to the fashionable phrase, revolutionary. In former days, authors valued themselves upon the maturity and fulness of their deliberations. Accordingly they predicted (perhaps with more arrogance than reason) an eternal duration to their works. Quite the contrary is our present fashion. Writers value themselves now on the instability of their opinions, and the transitory life of their productions. On this kind of credit the modern institutors open their schools. They write for youth; and it is sufficient if the instruction lasts as long as a present love, or as the painted silks and cottons of the season.

The doctrines in this work are applied, for their standard, with great exactness, to the shortest possible periods both of conception and duration. The title is "Some Remarks on the *Apparent* circumstances of the War in the fourth week of October, 1795." The time is critically chosen. A month or so earlier would have made it the anniversary of a bloody Parisian September, when the French massacre one another. A day or two later would have carried it into a London November, the gloomy month in which it is said by a pleasant author that Englishmen hang and drown themselves. In truth, this work has a tendency to alarm us with symptoms of publick suicide. However, there is one comfort to be taken even from the gloomy time of year. It is a rotting season. If what is brought to market is not good, it is not likely to keep long. Even buildings run up in haste with untempered mortar in that humid weather, if they are ill-contrived tenements, do not threaten long to encumber the earth. The Author tells us (and I believe he is the very first Author that ever told such a thing to his readers) "that the *entire* *fabrick* of his speculations might be upset by unforeseen vicissitudes"; and what is far more extraordinary, "that even the *whole* consideration might be *varied whilst he was writing those pages*." Truly, in my poor judgement, this circumstance formed a very substantial motive for his not publishing those ill-considered considerations at all. He ought to have followed the good advice of his motto; *Que faire encore dans une telle nuit? Attendre le jour*. He ought to have waited till he had got a little more day-light on this subject. Night itself is hardly darker than the fogs of that time.

Finding the *last week in October* so particularly referred to, and not perceiving any particular event relative to the War, which happened on any of the days in that week, I thought it possible that they were marked by some astrological superstition, to which the greatest politicians have been subject. I therefore had recourse to my Rider's Almanack. There I found indeed something that characterized the work, and that gave directions concerning the sudden political and natural variations, and for eschewing the maladies that are most prevalent in that aguish intermittent season, "the last week of October." On that week the sagacious astrologer, Rider, in his note on the third column of the calendar side, teaches us to expect "*variable and cold weather*"; but instead of encouraging us to trust ourselves to the haze and mist and doubtful lights of that changeable week, on the answerable part of the opposite page, he gives us a salutary caution, (indeed it is very nearly in the words of the author's motto): "*Avoid (says he) being out late at night, and in foggy weather, for a cold now caught may last the whole winter.*" This ingenious author, who disdained the prudence of the almanack, walked out in the very fog he complains of, and has led us to a very unseasonable airing at that time. Whilst this noble writer, by the vigour of an excellent constitution, formed for the violent changes he prognosticates, may shake off the importunate rheum and malignant influenza of this disagreeable week, a whole Parliament may go on spitting and snivelling, and wheezing and coughing, during a whole session. All this from listening to variable, hebdomadal politicians, who run away from their opinions without giving us a month's warning; and for not listening to the wise and friendly admonitions of Dr. Cardanus Rider, who never apprehends he may change his opinions before his pen is out of his hand, but always enables us to lay in, at least, a year's stock of useful information.

...

The great general pervading purpose of the whole pamphlet is to reconcile us to peace with the present usurpation in France. In this general drift of the author I can hardly be mistaken. The other purposes, less general, and subservient to the preceding scheme, are to show, first, that the time of the remarks was the favourable time for making that peace upon our side; secondly, that on the enemy's side their disposition towards the acceptance of such terms as he is pleased to offer, was rationally to be expected; the third purpose was to make some sort of disclosure of the terms, which, if the Regicides are pleased to grant them, this nation ought to be contented to accept: these form the basis of the negociation, which the author, whoever he is, proposes to open.

Before I consider these Remarks along with the other reasonings which I hear on the same subject, I beg leave to recal to your mind the observation I made early in our correspondence, and which ought to attend us quite through the discussion of this proposed peace, amity, or fraternity, or whatever you may call it; that is, the real quality and character of the party you have to deal with. This, I find, as a thing of no importance, has every where escaped the author of the October Remarks. That hostile power to the period of the fourth week in that month has been ever called and considered as an usurpation. In that week, for the first time, it changed its name of an usurped power, and took the simple name of *France*. The word France is slipped in just as if the government stood exactly as before that revolution which has astonished, terrified, and almost

overpowered Europe. "France," says the author, "will do this"; "it is the interest of France"; "the returning honour and generosity of France," &c. &c. Always merely France; just as if we were in a common political war with an old recognized member of the commonwealth of Christian Europe; and as if our dispute had turned upon a mere matter of territorial or commercial controversy, which a peace might settle by the imposition or the taking off a duty, with the gain or the loss of a remote island or a frontier town or two, on the one side or the other. This shifting of persons could not be done without the hocus-pocus of *abstraction*. We have been in a grievous error. We thought that we had been at war with *rebels* against the lawful government, but that we were friends and allies of what is properly France; friends and allies to the legal body politick of France. But by sleight of hand the Jacobins are clean vanished, and it is France we have got under our cup. Blessings on his soul that first invented sleep, said Don Sancho Panza the wise! All those blessings, and ten thousand times more, on him who found out abstraction, personification, and impersonals! In certain cases they are the first of all soporificks. Terribly alarmed we should be if things were proposed to us in the *concrete*; and if fraternity was held out to us with the individuals, who compose this France, by their proper names and descriptions: if we were told that it was very proper to enter into the closest bonds of amity and good correspondence with the devout, pacifick, and tender-hearted Syeyes, with the all-accomplished Rewbel, with the humane guillotinish of Bourdeaux, Tallien and Isabeau; with the meek butcher Legendre, and with "the returned humanity and generosity" (that had been only on a visit abroad) of the virtuous regicide brewer Santerre. This would seem at the outset a very strange scheme of amity and concord; nay, though we had held out to us, as an additional douceur, an assurance of the cordial fraternal embrace of our pious and patriotic countryman Thomas Paine. But plain truth would here be shocking and absurd; therefore comes in *abstraction* and personification. "Make your Peace with France." That word *France* sounds quite as well as any other, and it conveys no idea but that of a very pleasant country and very hospitable inhabitants. Nothing absurd and shocking in amity and good correspondence with *France*. Permit me to say, that I am not yet well acquainted with this new-coined France, and, without a careful assay, I am not willing to receive it in currency in place of the old Louis d'or.

Having therefore slipped the persons, with whom we are to treat, out of view, we are next to be satisfied, that the French Revolution, which this peace is to fix and consolidate, ought to give us no just cause of apprehension. Though the Author labours this point, yet he confesses a fact, (indeed he could not conceal it) which renders all his labours utterly fruitless. He confesses, that the Regicide means to *dictate* a pacification, and that this pacification, according to their decree passed but a very few days before his publication appeared, is to "unite to their Empire, either in possession or dependence, new barriers, many frontier places of strength, a large sea-coast, and many sea-ports." He ought to have stated it, that they would annex to their territory a country about a third as large as France, and much more than half as rich; and in a situation the most important, for command, that it would be possible for her any where to possess.

To remove this terror, (if the Regicides should carry their point) and to give us perfect repose with regard to their Empire, whatever they may acquire, or whomsoever they

might destroy, he raises a doubt "whether France will not be ruined by *retaining* these conquests, and whether she will not wholly lose that preponderance, which she has held in the scale of European powers, and will not eventually be destroyed by the effect of her present successes; or, at least, whether, so far as the *political interests of England are concerned*, she [France] will remain an object of *as much jealousy and alarm, as she was under the reign of a Monarch.*" Here, indeed, is a paragraph full of meaning! It gives matter for meditation almost in every word of it. The secret of the pacifick politicians is out. This Republick, at all hazards, is to be maintained. It is to be confined within some bounds, if we can; if not, with every possible acquisition of power, it is still to be cherished and supported. It is the return of the Monarchy we are to dread, and therefore we ought to pray for the permanence of the Regicide authority. *Esto perpetua* is the devout ejaculation of our Fra Paolo for the Republick one and indivisible! It was the Monarchy that rendered France dangerous; Regicide neutralizes all the acrimony of that power and renders it safe and social. The October speculator is of opinion, that Monarchy is of so poisonous a quality, that a moderate territorial power is far more dangerous to its neighbours under that abominable regimen, than the greatest Empire in the hands of a Republick. This is Jacobinism sublimed and exalted into most pure and perfect essence. It is a doctrine, I admit, made to allure and captivate, if any thing in the world can, the Jacobin directory, to mollify the ferocity of Regicide, and to persuade those patriotick Hangmen, after their reiterated oaths for our extirpation, to admit this well humbled nation to the fraternal embrace. I do not wonder that this tub of October has been racked off into a French cask. It must make its fortune at Paris. That translation seems the language the most suited to these sentiments. Our author tells the French Jacobins that the political interests of Great Britain are in perfect unison with the principles of their government; that they may take and keep the keys of the civilized world, for they are safe in their unambitious and faithful custody. We say to them, "We may, indeed, wish you to be a little less murderous, wicked and atheistical, for the sake of morals: we may think it were better you were less new-fangled in your speech, for the sake of grammar: but, as *politicians*, provided you keep clear of Monarchy, all our fears, alarms and jealousies are at an end: at least they sink into nothing in comparison with our dread of your detestable Royalty." A flatterer of Cardinal Mazarin said, when that Minister had just settled the match between the young Louis the 14th and a daughter of Spain, that this alliance had the effect of Faith, and removed Mountains—that the Pyrenees were levelled by that marriage. You may now compliment Rewbel in the same spirit on the miracles of Regicide, and tell him, that the guillotine of Louis the 16th had consummated a marriage between Great Britain and France, which dried up the Channel, and restored the two countries to the unity, which, it is said, they had before the unnatural rage of seas and earthquakes had broke off their happy junction. It will be a fine subject for the Poets, who are to prophecize the blessings of this peace.

I am now convinced, that the Remarks of the last week of October cannot come from the author, to whom they are given; they are such a direct contradiction to the style of manly indignation, with which he spoke of those miscreants and murderers in his excellent Memorial to the States of Holland—to that very State, which the Author, who presumes to personate him, does not find it contrary to the political interests of England to leave in the hands of these very miscreants, against whom on the part of England he took so much

pains to animate their Republick. This cannot be; and, if this argument wanted any thing to give it new force, it is strengthened by an additional reason that is irresistible. Knowing that Noble person, as well as myself, to be under very great obligations to the Crown, I am confident he would not so very directly contradict, even in the paroxysm of zeal against monarchy, the declarations made in the name and with the fullest approbation of our Sovereign, his Master, and our common benefactor. In those declarations you will see, that the King, instead of being sensible of greater alarm and jealousy from a neighbouring crowned head, than from these Regicides, attributes all the dangers of Europe to the latter. Let this writer hear the description given in the Royal Declaration of the scheme of power of these Miscreants, as "*a system destructive of all publick order; maintained by proscriptions, exiles, and confiscations without number; by arbitrary imprisonments; by massacres which cannot be remembered without horror; and at length by the execrable murder of a just and beneficent Sovereign, and of the illustrious princess, who with an unshaken firmness has shared all the misfortunes of her Royal consort, his protracted sufferings, his cruel captivity, and his ignominious death.*" After thus describing, with an eloquence and energy equalled only by its truth, the means, by which this usurped power had been acquired and maintained, that government is characterized with equal force. His Majesty, far from thinking Monarchy in France to be a greater object of jealousy, than the Regicide usurpation, calls upon the French to re-establish "*a monarchical government*" for the purpose of shaking off "*the yoke of a sanguinary anarchy; of that anarchy, which has broken the most sacred bonds of Society, dissolved all the relations of civil life, violated every right, confounded every duty; which uses the name of liberty to exercise the most cruel tyranny, to annihilate all property, to seize on all possessions; which founds its power on the pretended consent of the people, and itself carries fire and sword through extensive provinces for having demanded their laws, their religion and their rightful Sovereign.*"

"That strain I heard was of an higher mood." That declaration of our Sovereign was worthy of his throne. It is in a style, which neither the pen of the writer of October, nor such a poor crow-quill as mine can ever hope to equal. I am happy to enrich my letter with this fragment of nervous and manly eloquence, which if it had not emanated from the awful authority of a throne, if it were not recorded amongst the most valuable monuments of history, and consecrated in the archives of States, would be worthy as a private composition to live for ever in the memory of men.

In those admirable pieces, does his Majesty discover this new opinion of his political security in having the chair of the Scornor, that is, the discipline of Atheism and the block of Regicide, set up by his side, elevated on the same platform, and shouldering, with the vile image of their grim and bloody idol, the inviolable majesty of his throne? The sentiments of these declarations are the very reverse: they could not be other. Speaking of the spirit of that usurpation the Royal manifesto describes with perfect truth its internal tyranny to have been established as the very means of shaking the security of all other States; as "*disposing arbitrarily of the property and blood of the inhabitants of France, in order to disturb the tranquillity of other nations, and to render all Europe the theatre of the same crimes and the same misfortunes.*" It was but a natural inference from this fact, that the Royal manifesto does not at all rest the justification of this war on common

principles: "*that it was not only to defend his own rights, and those of his Allies,*" but "*that all the dearest interests of his people imposed upon him a Duty still more important—that of exerting his efforts for the preservation of civil society itself, as happily established among the nations of Europe.*" On that ground the protection offered is to those, who by "declaring for a *Monarchical government* shall shake off the yoke of a sanguinary Anarchy." It is for that purpose the Declaration calls on them to join the standard of an "*hereditary Monarchy*"; and declaring, that the *safety and peace* of this Kingdom and the powers of Europe "*materially depend upon the re-establishment of order in France,*" his Majesty does not hesitate to declare, that "*the re-establishment of Monarchy in the person of Louis the 17th and the lawful heirs of his crown appears to him [his Majesty] the best mode of accomplishing these just and salutary views.*"

This is what his Majesty does not hesitate to declare relative to the political safety and peace of his Kingdom and of Europe, and with regard to France under her ancient hereditary Monarchy in the course and order of legal succession. But in comes a gentleman in the fag end of October, dripping with the fogs of that humid and uncertain season, and does not hesitate in Diameter to contradict this wise and just Royal declaration; and stoutly, on his part, to make a counter-declaration, that France, so far as the political interests of England are concerned, will not remain, under the despotism of Regicide and with the better part of Europe in her hands, so much an object of jealousy and alarm, as she was under the reign of a Monarch. When I hear the Master and reason on one side, and the Servant and his single and unsupported assertion on the other, my part is taken.

This is what the Octobrist says of the political interests of England, which it looks as if he completely disconnected with those of all other nations. But not quite so; he just allows it possible (with an "at least") that the other powers may not find it quite their interest, that their Territories should be conquered and their Subjects tyrannized over by the Regicides. No fewer than ten Sovereign Princes had, some the whole, all a very considerable part, of their Dominions, under the yoke of that dreadful faction. Amongst these was to be reckoned the first Republick in the World, and the closest Ally of this Kingdom, which, under the insulting name of an independency, is under her iron yoke; and, as long as a faction averse to the old government is suffered there to domineer, cannot be otherwise. I say nothing of the Austrian Netherlands, countries of a vast extent, and amongst the most fertile and populous of Europe; and with regard to us most critically situated. The rest will readily occur to you.

But if there are yet existing any people, like me, old fashioned enough to consider, that we have an important part of our very existence beyond our limits, and who therefore stretch their thoughts beyond the *Pomoerium* of England, for them too he has a comfort, which will remove all their jealousies and alarms about the extent of the Empire of Regicide. "*These conquests eventually will be the cause of her destruction.*" So that they, who hate the cause of usurpation and dread the power of France under any form, are to wish her to be a conqueror, in order to accelerate her ruin. A little more conquest would be still better. Will he tell us what dose of Dominion is to be the *quantum sufficit* for her destruction, for she seems very voracious of the food of her distemper? To be sure she is

ready to perish with repletion; she has a *Boulimia*, and hardly has bolted down one State, than she calls for two or three more. There is a good deal of wit in all this; but it seems to me (with all respect to the Author) to be carrying the joke a great deal too far. I cannot yet think, that the Armies of the Allies were of this way of thinking; and that, when they evacuated all these countries, it was a stratagem of war to decoy France into ruin; or that, if in a Treaty we should surrender them for ever into the hands of the usurpation (the lease, the author supposes) it is a master-stroke of policy to effect the destruction of a formidable rival, and to render her no longer an object of jealousy and alarm. This, I assure the Author, will infinitely facilitate the Treaty. The usurpers will catch at this bait, without minding the hook, which this crafty angler for the Jacobin gudgeons of the New Directory has so dexterously placed under it.

Every symptom of the exacerbation of the publick malady is with him (as with the Doctor in Molière) a happy prognostick of recovery. Flanders gone!—*tant mieux*. Holland subdued!—charming! Spain beaten, and all the hither Germany conquered!—Bravo! Better and better still! But they will retain all their conquests on a Treaty! Best of all! What a delightful thing it is to have a gay physician who sees all things, as the French express it, *couleur de rose*! What an escape we have had, that we and our Allies were not the Conquerors! By these conquests, previous to her utter destruction, she is "wholly to lose that preponderance, which she held in the scale of the European Powers." Bless me! This new system of France, after changing all other laws, reverses the law of gravitation. By throwing in weight after weight her scale rises, and will by and by kick the beam! Certainly there is one sense in which she loses her preponderance: that is she is no longer preponderant against the Countries she has conquered. They are part of herself. But I beg the Author to keep his eyes fixed on the scales for a moment longer, and then to tell me in downright earnest, whether he sees hitherto any signs of her losing preponderance by an augmentation of weight and power. Has she lost her preponderance over Spain, by her influence in Spain? Are there any signs, that the conquest of Savoy and Nice begins to lessen her preponderance over Switzerland and the Italian States—or that the Canton of Berne, Genoa and Tuscany, for example, have taken arms against her, or, that Sardinia is more adverse than ever to a treacherous pacification? Was it in the last week of October, that the German States shewed that Jacobin France was losing her preponderance? Did the King of Prussia, when he delivered into her safe custody his territories on this side of the Rhine, manifest any tokens of his opinion of her loss of preponderance? Look on Sweden and on Denmark: is her preponderance less visible there?

It is true, that in a course of ages Empires have fallen, and, in the opinion of some, not in mine, by their own weight. Sometimes they have been unquestionably embarrassed in their movements by the dissociated situation of their Dominions. Such was the case of the empire of Charles the Fifth and of his successor. It might be so of others. But so compact a body of empire; so fitted in all the parts for mutual support; with a Frontier by nature and art so impenetrable; with such facility of breaking out with irresistible force, from every quarter, was never seen in such an extent of territory from the beginning of time, as in that empire, which the Jacobins possessed in October 1795, and which Boissy d'Anglas, in his Report, settled as the Law for Europe, and the Dominion assigned by Nature for the Republick of Regicide. But this Empire is to be her ruin, and to take away

all alarm and jealousy on the part of England, and to destroy her preponderance over the miserable remains of Europe!

These are choice speculations, with which the Author amuses himself, and tries to divert us, in the blackest hours of the dismay, defeat and calamity of all civilized nations. They have but one fault, that they are directly contrary to the common sense and common feeling of mankind. If I had but one hour to live, I would employ it in decrying this wretched system, and die with my pen in my hand to mark out the dreadful consequences of receiving an arrangement of Empire dictated by the despotism of Regicide to my own Country, and to the lawful Sovereigns of the Christian World.

I trust I shall hardly be told, in palliation of this shameful system of politicks, that the Author expresses his sentiments only as doubts. In such things it may be truly said that "once to doubt is once to be resolved." It would be a strange reason for wasting the treasures and shedding the blood of our country to prevent arrangements on the part of another power, of which we were doubtful, whether they might not be even to our advantage and render our neighbour less than before the object of our jealousy and alarm. In this doubt there is much decision. No nation would consent to carry on a war of scepticism. But the fact is, this expression of doubt is only a mode of putting an opinion when it is not the drift of the Author to overturn the doubt. Otherwise, the doubt is never stated as the Author's own, nor left, as here it is, unanswered. Indeed, the mode of stating the most decided opinions in the form of questions is so little uncommon, particularly since the excellent queries of the excellent Berkeley, that it became for a good while a fashionable mode of composition.

Here then the Author of the fourth week of October is ready for the worst, and would strike the bargain of peace on these conditions. I must leave it to you and to every considerate man to reflect upon the effect of this on any Continental alliances present or future, and whether it would be possible (if this book was thought of the least authority) that its maxims with regard to our political interest must not naturally push them to be beforehand with us in the fraternity with Regicide, and thus not only strip us of any steady alliance at present, but leave us without any of that communion of interest which could produce alliances in future. Indeed, with these maxims, we should be well divided from the World.

Notwithstanding this new kind of barrier and security that is found against her ambition in her conquests, yet in the very same paragraph he admits that "for the *present* at least it is subversive of the balance of power." This, I confess, is not a direct contradiction, because the benefits which he promises himself from it, according to his hypothesis are future and more remote.

So disposed is this Author to peace, that, having laid a comfortable foundation of *our* security in the greatness of *her* Empire, he has another in reserve if that should fail, upon quite a contrary ground; that is, a speculation of her crumbling to pieces and being thrown into a number of little separate Republicks. After paying the tribute of humanity to those who will be ruined by all these changes, on the whole he is of opinion

that "the change might be compatible with general tranquillity, and with the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous commerce among nations." Whether France be great or small, firm and entire, or dissipated and divided, all is well; provided we can have peace with her.

But, without entering into speculations about her dismemberment whilst she is adding great nations to her empire, is it then quite so certain, that the dissipation of France into such a cluster of petty Republicks would be so very favourable to the true balance of power in Europe, as this Author imagines it would be, and to the commerce of Nations? I greatly differ from him. I perhaps shall prove in a future letter, with the political map of Europe before my eye, that the general liberty and independence of the great Christian commonwealth could not exist with such a dismemberment; unless it were followed (as probably enough it would) by the dismemberment of every other considerable country in Europe: and what convulsions would arise in the constitution of every state in Europe, it is not easy to conjecture in the mode, impossible not to foresee in the mass. Speculate on, good my Lord! provided you ground no part of your politicks on such unsteady speculations. But, as to any practice to ensue, are we not yet cured of the malady of speculating on the circumstances of things totally different from those in which we live and move? Five years has this Monster continued whole and entire in all its members. Far from falling into a division within itself, it is augmented by tremendous additions. We cannot bear to look that frightful form in the face as it is and in its own actual shape. We dare not be wise. We have not the fortitude of rational fear. We will not provide for our future safety; but we endeavour to hush the cries of present timidity by guesses at what may be hereafter. "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow"—is this our style of talk, when "all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death?" Talk not to me of what swarms of Republicks may come from this carcass! It is no carcass. Now, now, whilst we are talking, it is full of life and action. What say you to the Regicide Empire of to-day? Tell me, my friend, do its terrors appal you into an abject submission, or rouse you to a vigorous defence? But do—I no longer prevent it—do go on—look into futurity. Has this Empire nothing to alarm you when all struggle against it is over, when Mankind shall be silent before it, when all nations shall be disarmed, disheartened and *truly divided* by a treacherous peace? Its malignity towards humankind will subsist with undiminished heat, whilst the means of giving it effect must proceed, and every means of resisting it must inevitably and rapidly decline.

Against alarm on their politick and military empire these are the writer's sedative remedies. But he leaves us sadly in the dark with regard to the moral consequences which he states have threatened to demolish a system of civilization under which his Country enjoys a prosperity unparalleled in the history of Man. We had emerged from our first terrors. But here we sink into them again; however, only to shake them off upon the credit of his being a Man of very sanguine hopes.

Against the moral terrors of this successful empire of barbarism, though he has given us no consolation here, in another place he has formed other securities; securities, indeed, which will make even the enormity of the crimes and atrocities of France a benefit to the world. We are to be cured by her diseases. We are to grow proud of our Constitution

upon the distempers of theirs. Governments throughout all Europe are to become much stronger by this event. This too comes in the favourite mode of *doubt*, and *perhaps*. "To those," he says, "who meditate on the workings of the human mind, a doubt may perhaps arise, whether the effects, which I have described [namely the change he supposes to be wrought on the publick mind with regard to the French doctrines] "though *at present* a salutary check to the dangerous spirit of innovation, may not prove favourable to abuses of power, by creating a timidity in the just cause of liberty." Here the current of our apprehensions takes a contrary course. Instead of trembling for the existence of our government from the spirit of licentiousness and anarchy, the author would make us believe we are to tremble for our liberties from the great accession of power which is to accrue to government.

....

It is asserted, that this government promises stability. God of his Mercy forbid! If it should, nothing upon earth besides itself can be stable. We declare this stability to be the ground of our making peace with them. Assuming it therefore, that the Men and the System are what I have described, and that they have a determined hostility against this country, an hostility not only of policy but of predilection—then I think that every rational being would go along with me in considering its permanence as the greatest of all possible evils. If, therefore, we are to look for peace with such a thing in any of its monstrous shapes, which I deprecate, it must be in that state of disorder, confusion, discord, anarchy and insurrection, such as might oblige the momentary Rulers to forbear their attempts on neighbouring States, or to render these attempts less operative, if they should kindle new wars. When was it heard before, that the internal repose of a determined and wicked enemy, and the strength of his government, became the wish of his neighbour, and a security against either his malice or his ambition? The direct contrary has always been inferred from that state of things; accordingly, it has ever been the policy of those, who would preserve themselves against the enterprizes of such a malignant and mischievous power, to cut out so much work for him in his own States, as might keep his dangerous activity employed at home.

It is said in vindication of this system, which demands the stability of the regicide power as a ground for peace with them, that when they have obtained, as now it is said, (though not by this noble Author) they have, a permanent Government, they will be *able* to preserve amity with this Kingdom, and with others who have the misfortune to be in their neighbourhood. Granted. They will be *able* to do so, without question; but are they willing to do so? Produce the act, produce the declaration. Have they made any single step towards it? Have they ever once proposed to treat?

The assurance of a stable peace, grounded on the stability of their system, proceeds on this hypothesis, that their hostility to other Nations has proceeded from their Anarchy at home, and to the prevalence of a Populace which their government had not strength enough to master. This I utterly deny. I insist upon it as a fact, that in the daring commencement of all their hostilities, and their astonishing perseverance in them, so as never once in any fortune, high or low, to propose a treaty of peace to any power in

Europe, they have never been actuated by the People. On the contrary, the People, I will not say have been moved, but impelled by them, and have generally acted under a compulsion, of which most of Us are, as yet, thank God, unable to form an adequate idea. The War against Austria was formally declared by the unhappy Louis 16th; but who has ever considered Louis 16th, since the Revolution, to have been the Government? The second regicide Assembly, then the only Government, was the Author of that War, and neither the nominal King nor the nominal People had any thing to do with it further than in a reluctant obedience. It is to delude ourselves to consider the state of France, since their Revolution, as a state of Anarchy. It is something far worse. Anarchy it is, undoubtedly, if compared with Government pursuing the peace, order, morals, and prosperity of the People. But regarding only the power that has really guided, from the day of the Revolution to this time, it has been of all Governments the most absolute, despotic, and effective, that has hitherto appeared on earth. Never were the views and politics of any Government pursued with half the regularity, system and method, that a diligent observer must have contemplated with amazement and terror in theirs. Their state is not an Anarchy, but a series of short-lived Tyrannies. We do not call a Republic with annual Magistrates an Anarchy. Theirs is that kind of Republic; but the succession is not effected by the expiration of the term of the Magistrate's service, but by his murder. Every new Magistracy succeeding by homicide, is auspicated by accusing its predecessors in the office of Tyranny, and it continues by the exercise of what they charged upon others.

This strong hand is the law, and the sole law, in their State. I defy any person to show any other law, or if any such should be found on paper, that it is in the smallest degree, or in any one instance, regarded or practised. In all their successions, not one Magistrate, or one form of Magistracy, has expired by a mere occasional popular tumult. Every thing has been the effect of the studied machinations of the one revolutionary cabal, operating within itself upon itself. That cabal is all in all. France has no Public; it is the only nation I ever heard of where the people are absolutely slaves, in the fullest sense, in all affairs public and private, great and small, even down to the minutest and most recondite parts of their household concerns. The Helots of Laconia, the Regardants to the Manor in Russia and in Poland, even the Negroes in the West Indies know nothing of so searching, so penetrating, so heart-breaking a slavery. Much would these servile wretches call for our pity under that unheard-of yoke, if for their perfidious and unnatural Rebellion, and for the murder of the mildest of all Monarchs, they did not richly deserve a punishment not greater than their crime.

On the whole, therefore, I take it to be a great mistake, to think that the want of power in the government furnished a natural cause of war: whereas, the greatness of its power, joined to its use of that power, the nature of its system, and the persons who acted in it, did naturally call for a strong military resistance to oppose them, and rendered it not only just, but necessary. But, at present, I say no more on the genius and character of the power set up in France. I may probably trouble you with it more at large hereafter. This subject calls for a very full exposure; at present, it is enough for me, if I point it out as a matter well worthy of consideration, whether the true ground of hostility was not rightly conceived very early in this war, and whether any thing has happened to change that

system, except our ill success in a war, which, in no principal instance, had its true destination as the object of its operations. That the war has succeeded ill in many cases, is undoubted; but then let us speak the truth and say, we are defeated, exhausted, dispirited, and must submit. This would be intelligible. The world would be inclined to pardon the abject conduct of an undone Nation. But let us not conceal from *ourselves* our real situation, whilst, by every species of humiliation, we are but too strongly displaying our sense of it to the Enemy.

The Writer of the Remarks in the last week of October appears to think that the present Government in France contains many of the elements, which, when properly arranged, are known to form the best practical governments; and that the system, whatever may become its particular form, is no longer likely to be an obstacle to negotiation. If its form now be no obstacle to such negotiation, I do not know why it was ever so. Suppose that this government promised greater permanency than any of the former, (a point, on which I can form no judgment) still a link is wanting to couple the permanence of the government with the permanence of the peace. On this not one word is said: nor can there be, in my opinion. This deficiency is made up by strengthening the first ringlet of the chain that ought to be, but that is not, stretched to connect the two propositions. All seems to be done, if we can make out, that the last French edition of Regicide is like to prove stable.

As a prognostic of this stability, it is said to be accepted by the people. Here again I join issue with the Fraternizers, and positively deny the fact. Some submission or other has been obtained, by some means or other, to every government that hitherto has been set up. And the same submission would, by the same means, be obtained for any other project that the wit or folly of man could possibly devise. The Constitution of 1790 was universally received. The Constitution, which followed it, under the name of a Convention, was universally submitted to. The Constitution of 1793 was universally accepted. Unluckily, this year's Constitution, which was formed and its *genethliacon* sung by the noble Author while it was yet in embryo, or was but just come bloody from the womb, is the only one which in its very formation has been generally resisted by a very great and powerful party in many parts of the kingdom, and particularly in the Capital. It never had a popular choice even in show. Those who arbitrarily erected the new building out of the old materials of their own Convention, were obliged to send for an Army to support their work. Like brave Gladiators, they fought it out in the streets of Paris, and even massacred each other in their House of Assembly in the most edifying manner, and for the entertainment and instruction of their Excellencies the Foreign Ambassadors, who had a box in this constitutional Amphitheatre of a free People.

At length, after a terrible struggle, the Troops prevailed over the Citizens. The Citizen Soldiers, the ever famed National Guards, who had deposed and murdered their Sovereign, were disarmed by the inferior trumpeters of that Rebellion. Twenty thousand regular Troops garrison Paris. Thus a complete Military Government is formed. It has the strength, and it may count on the stability of that kind of power. This power is to last as long as the Parisians think proper. Every other ground of stability, but from military force

and terror, is clean out of the question. To secure them further, they have a strong corps of irregulars, ready armed. Thousands of those Hell-hounds called Terrorists, whom they had shut up in Prison on their last Revolution, as the Satellites of Tyranny, are let loose on the people. The whole of their Government, in its origination, in its continuance, in all its actions, and in all its resources, is force; and nothing but force. A forced constitution, a forced election, a forced subsistence, a forced requisition of soldiers, a forced loan of money.

They differ nothing from all the preceding usurpations, but that to the same odium a good deal more of contempt is added. In this situation, notwithstanding all their military force, strengthened with the undisciplined power of the Terrorists, and the nearly general disarming of Paris, there would almost certainly have been before this an insurrection against them, but for one cause. The people of France languished for Peace. They all despaired of obtaining it from the coalesced powers, whilst they had a gang of professed Regicides at their head; and several of the least desperate Republicans would have joined with better men to shake them wholly off, and to produce something more ostensible, if they had not been reiteratedly told that their sole hope of peace was the very contrary to what they naturally imagined. That they must leave off their cabals and insurrections, which could serve no purpose, but to bring in that Royalty, which was wholly rejected by the coalesced Kings. That, to satisfy them, they must tranquilly, if they could not cordially, submit themselves to the tyranny and the tyrants they despised and abhorred. Peace was held out, by the allied Monarchies, to the people of France, as a bounty for supporting the Republick of Regicides. In fact, a coalition, begun for the avowed purpose of destroying that den of Robbers, now exists only for their support. If evil happens to the Princes of Europe, from the success and stability of this infernal business, it is their own absolute crime.

Significant quotes in Edmund Burke's Letters On A Regicide Peace with explanations. In England a movement was afoot to make peace with the Revolutionary government, and peace talks were actually opened at one point. Burke, ever a firm and staunch enemy of the French Revolution, was equally firmly opposed to this peace movement. In a series of four open letters he argued his case for France as a menace to all of Europe. In this third letter Burke insisted that France had at one time contemplated an invasion of England and that the peace terms offered to England by the Directory were positively humiliating; he derided and cast suspicion on those who encouraged peace as an apology. Books. Revolutionary Writings. The first Letter on a Regicide Peace. Revolutionary Writings. Revolutionary Writings. Reflections on the Revolution in France and the First Letter on a Regicide Peace. Chapter. Chapter. Aa. Aa. Get access. Buy the print book.