

subscriptions for the support of Mr. Paine in the prosecution, and they considered themselves as supporting the rights of the nation, in publishing his works, because the works were calculated to produce those effects, without which the nation, according to their opinion, could not exist in a state of freedom as a nation; and this becoming more visible that they wanted to raise the democratic part of the country, many of their members cannot stay among them, and they do not in the least attempt to explain their meaning: they say not, you are mistaken in our project; no; but they leave the society with the remaining members, to execute the purpose which they are engaged in. Having come to these resolutions, in order to support Mr. Paine in this prosecution, they publish these resolutions in various newspapers, the editors of these newspapers insuring themselves against the hazards of the law, some for more, and some for less. And then these publications are sent into the country, in various places, in hundreds and thousands, to persons to distribute to persons of all professions, to the utter defeat of the impossibility effectually to restrain the mischief, for the very purpose of having that effect of making the law of the country unequal to the mischief which it was intended to make.

Another step was taken at the same time, namely, a proclamation, which was issued by the executive government of the country, in order to restrain these seditious publications. And in both these societies you will find them cloaking themselves under the words of a full, fair, and free representation of the people, which never co-exists in any writings of their's, with the mentioning of the King, or the other house of the Legislature; they vilify that proclamation, and they make it the very means by which they shall spread the mischief more rapidly than they otherwise could have done.

On the 24th of May, 1792, there is a letter sent from Mr. Hardy; I believe it is not in his own hand-writing, but in the hand-writing of Mr. Vaughan; in which he states, that by the direction of the London Corresponding Society, he had the honour of inclosing to them the copy of their Address and Regulations, which he requested might be communicated to the Constitutional Society. The thanks of the society was given them for this.

The London Corresponding Society followed the example of the Constitutional Society, in vilifying the proclamation in a paper, which was read, this paper having been communicated by the London Corresponding Society, at a meeting held July 6, 1792. (See *Jordan's Second Report of the Commons*, page 83.)

On the 14th of June, 1792, a letter is received by them from certain persons, signing themselves the Editors of the Patriot,
(see

(see *Jordan's Second Report of the Commons*, page 87 to 91,) signed by Mr. Gale.

On the 6th of June, 1792, they resolve that twelve thousand of Mr. Paine's Letters to Mr. Secretary Dundas be printed by this society, for the purpose of being transmitted to our correspondents throughout Great Britain, and that a committee be appointed to direct the same.

The Attorney General now passed on to the 6th of August, 1792, at which time there appeared to him to have been a most important transaction pass in the London Corresponding Society; it is an Address, which develops their plan to bring about a Reform, without any communication with that parliament, which they considered as inadequate to the work; in which the letter and address, -stating what they consider as the grievances in the country, states, that such being the forlorn situation of three-fourths of the country, how are Britons to obtain redress? will the court, the ministry, the parliament grant it? will the nobles or clergy hear the people? No; experience tells us, and proclamations confirm it, they will not.—Therefore, Britons, friends, and fellow-citizens, with one heart unite, claim what is your right.

This address was circulated with infinite industry to every corresponding society in the kingdom, conveyed through every possible channel, and the doctrine adopted by all the affiliating societies; and the plan on which they went upon from the 6th of August, appears to be a plan to redress themselves by their own power, to redress themselves by their own strength, and not by the parliament.

He observed, that it seemed to him it was impossible to mistake what is meant by these papers. I beg you will give your particular attention to a paper found on Mr. Hardy, dated Sept. 2, 1792, received from Stockport on the 17th.

Copy of a Letter from Stockport, to the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, received Sept. 17, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

In obedience to the wishes of the society here, I have the pleasure of acknowledging the honour of your letter, and the packet which the kindness of our brothers of the London Corresponding Society so opportunely presented us with.

It is doubly deserving our thanks, as it shews your kindness, and as it will be useful in the information of our infant society: we stand much in need of your experience in this particular, and we doubt not of your best assistance. We are surrounded by a majority, a formidable one indeed, in power, abilities, and numbers, but we are not dismayed.

We

We have carefully perused the addresses, and I aim to observe on their contents in general, that the sentiments *hardly rise to that height which we expect from men sensible of their full claims to absolute and uncontrollable liberty, i. e. unaccountable to any power which they have not immediately constituted and appointed.*

These are our sentiments, whatever may be your's, though in the present state of political knowledge it *may be prudent not to avow them openly.* We desire your sentiments on the means of accomplishing that object which we presume you have in common with us. We think it expedient that we should perfectly understand each other in the beginning, lest the appearance of disunion might furnish matter of triumph to our enemies. We observe one expression, which says, "Numerous other reforms would undoubtedly take place, &c. &c." But we ask, how is that parliament to be chosen? Can we expect it from the present order of things? *Would not all the evil be done away at once by the people assembled in convention?* Does it appear probable, that the odious laws which we complain of will be abolished any other way? Can the grievance arising from aristocracy be redressed, while the _____ (Blank, and whether it is to be filled up with the House of Lords, or King, it is for you to judge,) retains it's present authority in the legislature? Is the universal right of conscience ever to be attained, while the B. _____ maintain their seats on the _____.

Your thoughts on these important points we most earnestly desire may be transmitted to us as soon as possible; not directed as the last; we fear it will excite suspicion. Direct to Mr. _____, Stockport, who is chairman occasionally in the absence of _____, who resides too far from hence to be at hand on emergencies.

Your's, &c.

THOMAS HARDY.

Here the Stockport Society say, that they think that the sentiments of the Addresses of the London Corresponding Society hardly amount to their expectations; and they say, we presume your sentiments on the means of accomplishing that object, are in common with us. To accomplish what object? The object of putting themselves under no power which they had not immediately appointed. Was it to be done by Parliament? No; the Address of the 6th of August had disavowed it: it is not to be done while the other parts of the Legislature hold their parts in the Legislature. Now, when these people thus write, we presume that you mean to pursue the same means in accomplishing that object, which it *may not be prudent to avow openly.* Does the

the Corresponding-Society say in their answer, tell us what you mean by that object, as they would have done if they had meant to disavow that they had no such object? If they do not, the answer is distinctly this, that if it is to be accomplished in a full, fair, and free representation of the people; a full and fair representation was to be the method or immediate means that was to effect what they were seeking after; that was to be as the medium to answer all their designs. Then follows the answer in a letter signed by Margarot, dated the 11th of October, *to the Friends of Universal Peace and of the Rights of Man-Society at Stockport.*

“ With infinite satisfaction the London Corresponding-Society Committee perused your letter: they are happy to learn your steady determination, spite of all obstacles, to pursue that sole means of political felicity, a perfect representation of the people.

“ With regard to our publications, our sentiments are expressed in as strong terms as prudence will permit, yet plain enough we imagine to convince the public that while we expect every thing from an honest and an annual parliament, nothing short of such a senate, chosen by the whole nation, will satisfy us.

“ True generosity, the characteristic of this nation, and of all unperverted men throughout the globe, calling upon us to countenance, at this juncture, the arduous struggle of the French nation *against despotism and aristocracy*, those foes to the human race, we have resolved upon addressing the French National Convention.

(This was on the 11th of October 1792; and the King of France was deposed on the 10th of August 1792. These transactions appear peculiarly worthy notice.)

“ Now, without entering into the probable effects of such a measure, effects which your Society will not fail to discover, we invite you to join us; and to that end herewith you have a copy of our intended address; if you approve the idea, and will concur in sending it, be pleased to return us without delay a copy, signed by your president and secretary, or by the delegates, stating each for how many persons he signs, we will then associate your body with ours, and with some others who have already assented to the measure. If, on the contrary, you disapprove that mark of zeal *towards the only nation that has hitherto undertaken to restore to mankind its just rights*, please to communicate to us your objections.

“ Sir,

“ For the Committee of Delegates,

“ Yours, &c.

“ M. M. CH.”

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Now,

Now, on the 6th of October 1792, that Mr Barlow, whose name occurs before with respect to his publications, he writes a letter and sends it to the London Corresponding-Society, together with a book, called "Advice to the National Convention of France:" he writes a similar letter to the Constitutional-Society; and you will please to observe, that he was sent as one of the delegates of the Society to Paris. Mr. Barlow says in that letter, I have lately published a small treatise, addressed to the National Convention of France, on the defects of the constitution of 1791, and of the amendments that ought to be applied.

He then observed, that although the contents of his treatise was more particularly applicable to the French government, yet he would beg leave to state what was the doctrine in this book for which the Society for Constitutional Information (Mr. Hardy then a member of it) made him their thanks: that doctrine amounts to this, Mr. Barlow, after stating that these principles of equal active citizenship, which had found its way into the constitution of France in 1791, and which had left a King as a part of the system of that government, were not compatible; he informs them that the glorious victory of the 10th of August, had accomplished finally the effect of those principles which he understood to be the principles of those to whom he was writing, asserting that it was impossible upon those principles, that a King could be retained in that system of government; because, according to such a system the constitution was at variance with itself, conceiving that those that had made the Revolution in 1791, had not discovered that defect; or on the other hand, if they had discovered it, they thought the moment had not arrived when they would reduce it to a pure representative government; and also asserting, that the maxim of government, that a King can do no wrong, ought to be, that a king can do no good; and until they excluded out of their system of government, a King, they would not be in any rational form of government. This is the gentleman that is voted by the Constitutional Information, an honorary member of the Society, and afterwards sent to Paris with the addresses I am now about to state to you, of those addresses I shall state to you but two of them. These addresses had been sent up and down through the country to the affiliated Societies for addresses from them to express the same principles to France, not on account of the cause of France, but an account of the cause of England, with a view of bringing the same effect into England as in that of France.

The London Corresponding-Society first of all communicated to the Constitutional-Society, in the month of October, their intention of sending an address to France; the Constitutional-Society fully approved of the purpose, saw the end it aimed at,

and

and they determined not to concur in the same address, but to send a separate address; and in these papers you will see the principles that were expressed to the Convention concerning the King and government of the country, and for rearing a Republic.

The address of the London Corresponding-Society is to this effect (*See JORDAN'S Second Report of the Commons, p. 85*).

This was followed by another from the Society for Constitutional Information, which seems to state their principles more clearly (*See JORDAN'S Second Report of the Commons, p. 91*). They rejoice that the glorious victory of the 10th of August, has finally prepared the way for a constitution established on the basis of reason and nature. Mr. Barlow had said, and they adopted their address in his language, that there was no constitution could be formed, on the basis of liberty and nature, on the principle of the Revolution of 1791, with a King at their head.

It will not be matter of surprise to you that a letter such as this to the National Convention of France, should have produced opinions consonant thereto.

It is not very extraordinary that that infamous decree of fraternization was made in France, whereby they rejected privileged orders of all casts. But I think you will be surprised that any man could receive such a letter as Mr. Barlow's in this country, and read, in approbation, the answer of this address to France, and which was read in the presence of the prisoner, without taking some means to shew that he rejected all that that answer meant to say.

On the 21st of December 1792, or rather, I should say, on the 14th of December 1792, a letter is received by the Society for Constitutional Information from the Society of Friends and Equality, sitting at Laon, capital of the department de l'Aisne, wherein is expressed, that when they acknowledge no rights, but the Rights of Man, then France and England shall form together a treaty of union as lasting as the course of the Seine and the Thames, then there, as here, shall exist no other reign but that of Liberty, Equality, and Friendship; and conclude, may this day rise on the horizon of the two nations.

Accordingly then, we find this Society of the Friends of Liberty established at Laon, as adverting to what had been said in the address of the Constitutional-Society to the National Convention on the 10th of August: saying, "Yes, also, brethren and friends, the 10th of August shall be distinguished in the annals of the world, as the day of the triumph of Liberty, &c." On the 17th of December 1792, they received another letter from a Society in Macou in the department of

the Saone and Loire, in which they are exhorted to live free or die: they say, "Will that bold nation, that has produced philosophers, remain a partial spectator in the noble cause. You will soon lift up yourself against the perfidious court of St. James's; your love for liberty has fixed your attention on their acts. The Popular Societies of France regard the epoch that shall permit them to prepare their addresses to the National Assembly of Great-Britain, and to offer to the soldiers of your nation, arms, bayonets, and pikes." Some persons, connected with these in this indictment, were at the bar of the National Convention of France; others of them delivering these sentiments by their ambassadors, Mr. Barlow, whose principles you have seen, and Mr. Frost, who has been convicted in this country, coming from that, with the doctrine of, No King. They offered this address to the National Convention of France, the substance of which I will state to you in terms which I believe is an accurate translation.

Gentlemen, Mr. Barlow and Mr. Frost, two English citizens, being admitted to the bar, one of them pronounced the address dated Nov. 28, 1792, and observe, it was after the National Assembly had promised fraternal assistance to the subjects of any country that found themselves willing to cast off all kingly government: They say, "We are to congratulate you on the triumphs of Liberty. Before the epoch of the French Revolution, this Society (that is, the Constitutional-Society in London) employed itself too long with little hopes of success, judge then of the transports of our gratitude, &c. innumerable societies of the same sort are forming themselves, at this moment, in every part of England; the minds of all receive, in this occurrence, a general impression, which leads them to find out the abuses of government, and to seek the remedy, means as simple as the evils are infinite, &c. Reason is about to make a rapid progress, &c." Am I to be told then, that in the month of Nov. 1792, these men meant no more than a reform in the Commons House of Parliament, them that said in August 1792, they could not apply to Parliament; it is impossible, after this, to put such a construction on their actions.

You will likewise find, that the President of the Convention thought it necessary to give an answer; the President, addressing them as Generous Republicans, and well he might; he concludes his address in much the same sentiment as they concluded theirs; in hoping the time shortly to commence, when the French should send their congratulations to a National Assembly of England.

You will likewise find, that the London Corresponding-Society, and the London Constitutional-Society, endeavoured to
excite

excite persons, in all parts of England, to send addressees, and the intent of them cannot possibly be misunderstood; but take the intent what you will, and say there was as yet no war between England and France, yet it is manifest, there was an intent that there should be a National Convention in England, and, especially, when they say, that the soldiers of their Liberty would assist the soldiers of our Liberty, whether there was war or no. And, in that month of November 1792; a passage occurs in the history of nations, in which France declares war against all the world that did not adopt her principles and venture to put them in execution.

I shall now, undoubtedly, insist before you and the court, that the act of any individuals of any society, and particularly the act of sending addressees to a foreign country, and also that the letters which persons write, relative to the same address, are evidence against each of them, whether written by the particular individual or no.

You will allow me now to state, that on the 20th of September 1792, Mr. Frost, who was then at Paris; states his notions of the real effect of these transactions; about which time, also, Mr. Paine made his first appearance in the National Convention.

He then observed, that there was a project to buy shoes for the soldiers of France, as well as arms and muskets; with which project the prisoner at the bar was contributing; concerning which Mr. Tooke gets a letter wrote to Petion the mayor of Paris, informing him that they had made a present of some money for the use of the French, and requesting to know the name of some Frenchman in London with whom it might be intrusted.

This was answered by Petion on the 9th of October, when he told them they could have no doubt of his intention to second views so beneficial to England and France: that they had the glorious distinction of deserving the hatred of their government, concluding with, worthy fellow-citizens, honoured by the sentiments which you express for us, receive the assurance of my gratitude, your fellow-citizen, Petion.

It may be in the recollection of most who now hear me, that circumstances of this sort, which were supposed to be in existence, had excited in this country a considerable alarm in the minds of many persons, which alarm, it seems to have been thought necessary both in the Constitutional-Society, and also in the Corresponding-Society, to be laid asleep. They thought it called on them to give some explanation of their principles. The explanation which the London Corresponding-Society gave, was, though it was given for the purpose of laying aside that alarm, yet it will be proved to you, being written by Mr. Vaughan;

Vaughan; and at a meeting held it was agreed to be stuck up about the town at midnight, by a person of the name of Carter, but there was some mistake in the orders given him by his employer, he went to stick them up in the morning, and the person was taken up in the act of sticking the bills: he was prosecuted, convicted, and lay six months in gaol in consequence of that conviction; and this was the fate of issuing an address that was not to appear by day-light into the world, but by midnight. With respect to the address, I say this, if I had not read already to you what I have read, you would have found it impossible to say what they meant that published it; but after reading what I have read to you, you can have no difficulty in saying, that the paper that they published, was by no means such as was calculated in any manner to disavow those principles which I have shewn you satisfactorily were their avowed principles ever since March 1792: they express in the language of it, as if it was supposed they used the words, no King, no parliament. Whoever says they have ascribed to us the expressions, no King, no parliament, or any design of invading the property of other men, is guilty of an impudent and malicious falsehood. Then this letter concludes thus, let us wait and watch the ensuing session of parliament, from whom we have much to hope, but little to fear. The House of Commons may have been the source of our calamities; it may be the foundation of our happiness; *should it not, we trust we shall prove ourselves unworthy of our forefathers.* Now, I ask you, after concluding this letter thus, what this means? If parliament will not do it, why, if we are ready to admit that parliament is formed on principles to do the thing it wills, it is all well; but if it will not, we will not prove ourselves unworthy of our forefathers.

In referring back to the declaration of the 6th of August, 1792, which said, that they had nothing to look for from parliament, it corroborates the language that they used to the National Convention of France, the conduct which in their delegates was never repudiated by any act in the London Corresponding-Society.

In referring moreover to the subsequent evidence that I have to offer to you, you will find that the sentiment expressed by this Society in August 1792, was a sentiment which, if followed up by those that acknowledge to hold it, to this effect, that if parliament did not give them this redress, they would have it by their own force.

With respect to the Constitutional-Society, the professed object of this Society has been to promote the welfare of the people by all constitutional means, (but will it make the means more constitutional than they really are, because they choose to call them so) and to expose the abuses which have imperceptibly crept into

the government, by all peaceable means: but you will find from the proceedings of April 1794, that if they could not do it by peaceable means, they meant to do it by force.

About the same time there was an address from Manchester, dated, Dec: 14, 1792, which appears to have been read in the Constitutional-Society in the presence of the prisoner, and which address has some very peculiar circumstances about it; for you will find that there was a resolution on the 14th of December in these words; Resolved, that the said address be published in the newspapers. Now, it appears that these words are in the hand-writing of Mr. Tooke, and the address itself in the hand-writing of Mr. Tooke; and this address appears afterwards to be in print—it is sent for publication, and with a view to shew what the distribution of libels has extended to, in producing the treasonable purposes in this country: we find that there was ordered 100,000 copies to be distributed in Great-Britain and Ireland.

On the 21st of December, the report was, that the Secretary had offered the address that was sent from Manchester, and ordered to be sent to the offices of the Morning-Chronicle and Morning-Post; and that they had refused to print them.

Now, in this address, which bears date the 14th of December 1792, and which was read in this meeting; and recollecting what I have stated, of the principles of those who were concerned in this transaction, as this principle had been manifested in all their other transactions which I have stated, you will find there is these passages, “ that they bear with patience the hourly calumnies to which they are exposed. They entertain no personal enmity, no aversion but to the enemies of the people, no disrespect to the constitution, but what is hostile to the rights of the people.”

But, this is more distinctly stated in a letter to the editor of the Patriot, a Sheffield newspaper, which was likewise read, and entered among the minutes of this Society; and which it will appear were concerted and affiliated with the London Corresponding-Society, and also with the Constitutional-Society in the propagation of the principle of their clubs in an extent that no language can do justice to, and which it is impossible to describe without reading the letters themselves. (*See JORDAN'S Second Report of the Comms, p. 87.*)

Mr. Attorney-General went on to observe, I have now gone through as well as I am able, and I hope sufficient to give you a clew to the case that I have to state, in respect to the principles and practice of these Societies with all their filiations, and ought to mention to you that you will find in the evidence that is to be laid before you most uncommon industry in picking up fresh connections. If a paper appeared in the country, stating, that a Society of any sort were formed, you will find amazing industry in connecting

necting and affiliating them with the London Corresponding and Constitutional Societies; if these Societies profess that they will have nothing but a government of themselves, they contrive to give them an answer agreeably, if they desire to keep monarchy, whether upon Mr. Pitt's plan, or the Duke of Richmond's plan, or to cut up monarchy by the roots: they answer them sufficient to enlist them all in their transactions, to combine the principles which they state, with the practice which was correspondent with those principles; to apply those practices, which were like the principles of these Societies in March 1791, and the same that Mr. Paine and Mr. Barlow had inculcated, and to do which the present government must be changed in order that the limited monarchy may be destroyed; under which I state in defiance of the world, we enjoy as solid blessings that a people ever did enjoy, ever since the providence of God made a people. They never did enjoy such a quantity of private happiness and private prosperity, public happiness and public prosperity, as we have enjoyed. What has been done to accomplish the destruction of which, you shall judge from what now will be stated to you:

After the 10th of August 1792, the next thing that was to be done was, by going on strengthening themselves by affiliation; and you find they have connections at Norwich, Sheffield, Leeds, &c. and if you believe them their numbers were very great. The next step was not with a view that it might be accomplished, but for the purpose of attracting more affiliating Societies that they began now to think in the year 1793, of making applications to parliament; and in the course of that year, while they are so making applications, you will find they openly discuss the use of so doing; they take the opinion of the Societies in the country, with respect to three distinct propositions, namely, whether they shall address the King, the parliament, or call a Convention.

In September 1792, the Stockport Society told the London Constitutional Society, that there was no hopes of doing any thing but by a Convention; they begin to think of this thing, called a Convention, in the year 1793, and they propose three propositions: Are we to make an application to Parliament? Are we to make an application to the King (that is, to make an application that he would be graciously pleased, according to the oath that he takes at his coronation, to give his consent to destroy the Constitution, and himself as a part of it)? Or, are we to have a Convention? You will find, when the whole of the evidence is laid before you, that there is a vast deal said about the matter of this Convention and applying to Parliament; the application to the King was given up, because it was thought futile; but they come finally to this determination, that things are not yet ripe, but that the application may be one means of ripening that that is not quite mature.

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Then they set about procuring petitions, which they solicit from all parts of the kingdom, telling those whom they ask at the same time, that it is all waste paper, and they do not mean it should have any effect. They send a petition to Parliament, which, for the good of themselves and posterity, I thank God, Parliament did not attend to; I mean so as to make a change in the government, on the principles of universal suffrage and annual representation, which would necessarily have destroyed the existence of that government to which it was presented; but they judge it will occasion a great debate, and if the public mind was not ripe for the Convention, in 1793, yet these proceedings and transactions had a natural and obvious tendency to bring to maturity the project not yet ripe.

You will find therefore, that both the London Corresponding Society and the Society for Constitutional Information, kept this subject in view.

A letter from the Norwich Society, on the 5th of March 1793, to the Society for Constitutional Information, and whom you will see had corresponded also with the London Corresponding-Society, on the subject of the said proposition, states itself thus:

“ United Political Societies of Norwich, 5th March 1793.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ It is with peculiar satisfaction we are favoured with your correspondence, not merely because you are so, although you are better fitted to diffuse knowledge, but because you are embarked in the same magnanimous cause, which demands with alacrity the attention of every individual, and it is with the utmost regret we see so many, either from ignorance or something worse, who are inimical to their own interest; for nothing contributes so much to support the oppressor as the ignorance of the oppressed, for which purpose the flood-gates have been opened gradually, till by degrees the streams of corruption have nearly overflowed the land, such as bounty acts, borrowing qualification and septennial acts, besides standing armies, excise and tything laws, with various others too painful for reflection, without credit to the framers thereof, and with advantage to society. We do not presume to recapitulate these abuses for your information, but, being too experimentally acquainted with them, we wish to find out a method of redress. At present we see a great propriety in universal suffrage and annual elections, but we beg you will be obliging enough to inform us of what you have collected of the sense of the people by your correspondents. We have to inform you, that our worthy Corresponding Societies of London have recently submitted three pro-

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positions

positions for your investigation: First, Whether a petition to Parliament, or an address to the King, or a Convention."

(And when it mentions the word Convention, after what pass in 1792, when the London Corresponding-Society declared that they did not expect any redress from Parliament, it seems to me to be marvellous, that in March 1793, they were to have a Convention to go to Parliament, which on their own principles was not competent to give it if they had a mind to take it from them).

"Permit us briefly to state our views for your revival; and with respect to the first, we behold, *we are a conquered people*; we have tamely submitted to the galling yoke, and resistance in the present circumstances is vain; we cannot, we cannot act the man, and, as necessity has no law, we think ourselves under *that degrading necessity to state our grievances to the House of Commons, with a request for redress, and should they refuse to grant our reasonable petition, we have still got (no thanks to them) a formidable engine, that will convey the insult to the remotest parts of the kingdom.* As to the propriety of the second, we wish to submit to your superiour judgment, and should esteem it a favour to be informed of the result, for at present we *are dubious of its good consequences.* Lastly, a Convention, and oh! *that the period were arrived;* but, in the present state of affairs, alas! it is impracticable! *yet this is the object we pursue, and esteem any other means only in subordination to, and as having a tendency to accomplish that desirable end.*

"We wish to be in unison with our brethren and fellow-labourers, and should be glad of any information as soon as it is convenient, and we beg your advice, whether it is necessary, as soon as possible, to *collect signatures to a petition for a real representation of the people, and by whom to present it; whether Mr. Coke, Mr. Burch, or any of the friends of the people; and whether it is attended with any expence.—Our members are both inimical to the business.*

"We can give you an accurate statement of the representation in our neighbourhood, only observe it is equally farcical here as elsewhere. To conclude with united thanks for all favours received, wishing you (*torn off*) and success, and may heaven avert (*torn off*). We subscribe ourselves, gentlemen, your

Obliged humble servant,

(Signed) J. BROUGHTON.

Note. Please to direct to J. Broughton, St. Mary's Church, Mr. Blake being no longer our secretary.—*We have between thirty and forty separate societies in Norwich, besides many in the country villages."*

Yours

You will observe this letter of the 5th of March 1793, having been received from Norwich; Mr. Frost, who had then lately come from France, and was about that time convicted for the doctrine of *No King*; which, in this country, it is not yet quite lawful to say; Mr. Frost was ordered to draw up and prepare to this letter an answer. However, it got into nobler hands, it was settled by Council, and the substance I will now read to you. It is dated on the 16th of April 1793; it is a letter from the secretary of the Society for Constitutional Information, with information to the Societies at Norwich. They say therein, "that the Constitution of England has no more of that character it once possessed; that the supposed democracy of the country has become a matter of property and privilege; and, that we have no longer that mixt government, which our adversaries are praising, when they know it is no longer in our possession, are facts notorious and indisputable. Where then are we to look for the remedy?" (Most surely those that would not look in August 1792, will not look to it in April 1793) to that Parliament of which we complain, to the Executive Power which is implicitly obeyed, if not anticipated, in that Parliament; or to ourselves (who are ourselves, but these affiliated Societies) represented in some meeting of delegates for the extensive purpose of reform, which we suppose you understand by the word Convention. Then the Norwich Society writes to the Constitutional Society, and it proposes a Convention, as the only means of doing this business; and the Constitutional Society states, that it is only to be done in a convention of themselves, represented in some meeting of delegates, for the extensive purpose of reform, and not by applying to Parliament. Now this passage states expressly, that the reason why they were to have a Convention was because they were not to apply to Parliament. But I cannot impute to men of understanding such an absurdity as to believe, that they meant to form a Convention, merely to suppose it was to carry a petition to Parliament, for the sake of a reform only in the House of Commons. No, they say, "It is the end of each of these propositions that we ought to look to; and as success in a good cause must be the effect of perseverance, and the rising reason of the time, let us determine with coolness, but let us persevere with decision; as to a Convention, we regard it as a plan the most desirable and most practicable, so soon as the great body of the people shall be courageous and virtuous enough to join us in the attempt." (You will see whether I give it the proper emphasis.)

Give me leave to carry back your attention to the 25th of January 1793.

This society, that had the correspondence with France in November 1792, and in February 1793, just immediately after the decree of fraternization, whereby the National Convention

resolved to assist any people who wanted to get rid of their governments, and which was held as the cause of war in this country, you will find at that period that Citizen St. Andre, a member of the National Convention in France, that had deposed their King, that could not exist on a government formed on the rights of man; he was admitted into the Society for Constitutional Information, as an honorary member, together with Citizens Barrere and Roland, being considered by them as some of the most judicious and enlightened friends of human liberty, and resolve (I particularly request your attention to this) that the speeches of Citizen St. Andre and Citizen Barrere, associated honorary members of this Society, as given in the Gazette National ou Moniteur Universelle of Paris, on the 4th, 6th, and 7th of January, be inserted in the books of this Society. And as far as this Society could effect it, they endeavoured also to have a publication of it in the newspapers; and it will be proved to you, that one of the persons named in the indictment undertook to get the speech, and to enter them in the books of the society; and I shall prove to you what these speeches were, and then if you will be so good as to ask yourselves what the Constitutional Society meant in January and February 1793, you will judge whether that Convention which they meant to call was to be the means of applying to Parliament, or to be the means of introducing a representative government in this country; to assume, and which you find did for the time assume all the powers of government, the people delegating these legislative powers only so long as it chose to delegate it; a body politic in itself possessing an eternal source of reform and revolutions.

With respect to St. Andre, the passages I shall observe to you are these; speaking to the Convention, he says, your right to decide the fate of kings arises from your being a revolutionary tribunal, created by the nation in a state of insurrection.

Speaking of the people of Paris, this is on a question whether the person of the King be inviolable; a maxim perfectly consistent with the civil liberty of the people, because though the King's person is inviolable, he has advisers who are violable in every act he does, at whose peril it is done; he says,

“ The people of Paris, by making an holy insurrection against the King on the 10th of August (which in Mr. Frost's letter to Mr. Tooke was absolutely necessary to be done) deprived him of his character of inviolability. The people of the other departments applauded this insurrection, and adopted the consequence of it. The people have therefore formally interposed to destroy this royal inviolability. The tacit consent of the people rendered the person of the King inviolable. The act of insurrection was a tacit repeal of that consent, and was founded on the same grounds of law as the consent itself.—The King's person

person is inviolable only with relation to the other branches of the legislature, but not with relation to the people."

Now, gentlemen, I ask you, what do these gentlemen (who order this speech to be published; that the King's person is inviolable only with relation to the other branches of the legislature, but not with relation to the people) when they were talking to the Convention mean? I am sorry to say, that my mind is drawn to the conclusion, that they thought the King's person was not inviolable with respect to the Convention of the people, which was to be formed because there was to be no application to the Parliament.

Now let us see their ideas of a Convention:

"A Convention differs from an ordinary legislature in this respect—A legislature is only a species of superintending Magistracy, a moderator of the powers of government—A Convention is a perfect representation of the Sovereign.—The members of the Legislative Assembly acted in August upon these principles.—In summoning the Convention, they declare, that they saw but one measure which could save France; namely, to have recourse to the supreme will of the people, and to invite the people to exercise immediately that unalienable right of sovereignty which the Constitution had acknowledged, and which it could not subject to any restriction. The public interest required that the people should manifest their will by the election of a National Convention, formed of representatives invested by the people with unlimited powers.—The people did manifest their will by the election of that Convention.—The Convention being assembled, is itself that sovereign will which ought to prevail.—It would be contrary to every principle to suppose that the Convention is not alone exclusively the expression of the general will.

"The powers of the Convention must, from the very nature of the Assembly, be unlimited with respect to every measure of general safety, such as the execution of a tyrant.—It is no longer a Convention if it has not power to judge the King.

"A Convention is a constituent body, *i. e.* a body that is to make a Constitution for the people.—A legislature makes laws under an established Constitution, and in conformity to it. It is despotism when in the ordinary and permanent establishment of a state there is no separation of powers; but it is of the very essence of a constituent body to concenter for the time all authority.—It is the very nature of a National Convention to be the temporary image of the Nation, to unite in itself all the powers of the State, to employ them against the enemies of Liberty, and to distribute them in a new social compact called a Constitution."

After I have stated that to you, I think I cannot possibly be mistaken

mistaken when I conceive that you can do no otherwise than put the same construction on this letter which I do.

Gentlemen, I will now take the liberty of calling your attention to a letter of the 17th of May 1793, and an answer, the 25th of May 1793, passing over a great many letters, the substance of which you may inform yourselves of by having them read. I will now call your attention, in order of time, to a letter of the 17th of May 1793, for it begins a correspondence most excessively material, with that part of the country in which a Convention has been already held, I mean in Scotland, a Convention, which I think I shall state to you, that for the time acted on the principles that form the speech of St. Andre, and which if it had not been stopped in the execution of its purpose, and had been joined by those whose acts are here before you this day, you might have now seen a very different state of things in this country to which now is the case.

I hold it as my opinion, in the office which I fill, that if I understand the case for which certain persons were tried for the acts which they did in Scotland, not as for high-treason, but if they had been tried for high-treason, there would have been no right to complain, if they had agitated that question in that shape before a jury of the country.

On the 17th of May, a Mr. Urquhart going from London to Edinburgh, Mr. Hardy, and the person named Margarot, they write a joint letter, informing those to whom they write, that Parliament had, as they expected it would, and as they meant it should, reject their petition; the letter is dated

London, May 17, 1793.

“ SIR,

“ The London Corresponding-Society eagerly seize the opportunity of Mr. Urquhart's going back to Edinburgh, to request of your society a renewal of correspondence, and a more intimate co-operation in that which both societies alike seek, viz. a Reform in the Parliamentary Representation. We are very sensible that no society can by itself bring about that desirable end; let us therefore unite as much as possible, *not only with each other, but with every other society throughout the nation.* Our petitions, you will have learned, have been all of them unsuccessful; our attention *must now therefore be turned to some more effectual means.*—*From your society we would willingly learn them, and you, on your part, may depend upon our adopting the firmest measures, provided they are constitutional (and by constitutional they meant at a Convention distinct from a Parliament); and we hope the country will not be behind-hand with us.*

This war has already opened the eyes of many, and should it continue

continue much longer, there is no answering for its effects on the mind of the people.

"Our society has met with much persecution, nevertheless we go on increasing in number and political knowledge. Wishing you and our cause all success, we remain most cordially, Sir,

"For the London Corresponding-Society,

"Your Friends and Fellow-Labourers,

"M. M. Chairman.

"T. HARDY, Secretary.

"To the Friends of the People
at Edinburgh."

Then Mr. Skirving, in answer, writes thus:

"Mr. Urquhart did me the pleasure to call on Thursday afternoon, and delivered your letter of the 17th current. I am much pleased with the contents of it, and shall lay it before the first meeting of our Societies here, which however does not take place till Monday sevensnight. I would have acknowledged the receipt of your favour by yesterday's post, but was too much employed in removing our household to another lodging to attend to any thing else.

"If either you in England or we in Scotland should attempt *separately* the Reform which we, I trust, seek to obtain, we should by so doing only expose our weakness, and manifest our ignorance of the corruption which opposes our important undertaking. If we sought only the extirpation of one set of interested men from the management of national affairs, that place might be given to another set *without affecting the vitals of the system adverse to Reform*. These might be easily accomplished; but to cut up deep and wide-rooted prejudices, to give effectual energy to the dictates of truth in favour of public virtue and national prosperity, in opposition to self and all its interested habits, and to withstand and overawe the final efforts of the powers of darkness, is the work of the whole and not of a part, a work to which mankind, till this *awful period*, were never adequate, *because never till now disposed to fraternize, not merely, or only, I trust, from the sense of the common danger to which we are exposed, but from the ennobling principle of universal benevolence*.

"I know no greater service that I can do to my country than to promote the union you so wisely desire; and I am happy to assure you that I have hitherto discovered no sentiment in our association adverse to the most intimate and brotherly union with the associations in England.

"I think

“ I think the minds of all must, in the *nature* of things, be *now turned to more effectual means of Reform*. Not one person was convinced of the necessity of it by the most convincing arguments of reason, together with the most unequivocal expressions of universal desire. What then is to be hoped for from repetition; I am only afraid that the bow in England against Reform was so contracted that *in returning* it may break. You would willingly learn; you say from us. I own that we ought to be forward in this. We have, at once, *in great wisdom perfected our plan of organization; and if we were in the same independent state of mind as the people of England,* we would be able to take the lead. The associations with you are no more, I fear—excuse my freedom—than an Aristocracy for the good of the people. They are indeed moderate, firm, and virtuous, and better cannot be; but we are the people themselves, and we are the first to shew that the people can both judge and resolve, if undirected by faction, with both wisdom and moderation.

“ I have not a higher wish in the present exertions for Reform, than *to see the people universally and regularly associated*, because I am persuaded that the present disastrous engagements will issue in ruin—(I must here beg your attention to this, because I think you will see that in the transactions in the Convention at Edinburgh, they looked to what they were to do in case of an invasion, as well as in every other)—and the people then *must provide for themselves*; and it would be unhappy, when *we should be ready to act with unanimity to be occupied about organization, without which however anarchy must ensue*. We will not need but to be prepared for the event, to “ stand and see the salvation of the Lord.” Let us therefore take the hint given us by our opposers; let us *begin in earnest to make up our minds relative to the extent of Reform which we ought to seek; be prepared to justify it, and to controvert objections; let us model the whole in the public mind; let us provide every stake and stay of the tabernacle which we would erect, so that when the tabernacles of oppression in the palaces of ambition are broken down under the madness and folly of their supporters, we may then, without anarchy and all-dangerous delay, erect at once our tabernacle of righteousness*. And may the Lord himself be in it.

“ How hurtful to the feelings of a reflecting mind to look back to the wretched state in which the Roman monarchy, enfeebled and broken by its own corruption, left the nations which it had subjected, like “ sheep without a shepherd;” they soon became a prey to every invader, because there was none to gather and unite them. Had they, foreseeing the evil, associated for mutual defence, no robber would have been able to enslave them; they

they would have given laws to all parties as well as to themselves ; all separate colonies and nations would have sought their alliance ; but not having virtue to associate, and heal the divisions, and root out the selfish spirit, which ambition fostering governments procure to their subjects, they fell under oppressions, from under whose iron sceptre they have never yet been able to deliver themselves.

“ We may suppose an event which we deprecate ; nay, should we not be prepared for every possible issue of the present unprecedented divisions of mankind, we have a right to be apprehensive of the abilities of our own managers, who are so afraid to depart from precedent, that, like men of detail, they may be inadequate to the task of preserving the vessel from shipwreck, now grappling with danger, not only great, but new and uncommon. If the present ministry fail, who after them shall be trusted ? it requires little penetration to see the anarchy and discord which will follow ; it will be such that nothing *short of a general union among the people themselves will be able to heal ; haste, therefore, to associate, at least to be ready to associate.* If then such a broken state of things should take place, the civil broils that would necessarily ensue would soon subside before the united irresistible voice of the whole. Do not, I intreat you, hesitate, thinking such *a work premature as yet ;* (Gentlemen, this is written in May 1793) but *a month,* and then it may be *too late.* A malignant party may be already formed, and only waiting for the halting of the present managers ; it will then be too late to seek to subject to deliberation, after a party has dared the act of rebellion. *If you go no farther than separate meetings in different towns, we will not be able to confide in your confraternity, because, while in such state, you may be but the tools of a faction.* We could have all confidence, and unite with all affection, in *one assembly of commissioners,* from all countries of the world, (this letter being written in the beginning of the war, and then it says, we could have all confidence, and unite with all affection in one assembly of commissioners, from all countries of the world,) if we knew they were chosen by the unbiassed voice of the people, because they would come up with the same disinterested views and desires as ourselves, having all agreed to a common center of union and interest ; but we could not confide in fellow citizens who kept aloof from such union, and would not previously affiliate in one great and indivisible family.

“ In troubling you with so long an epistle I have at least shewn my inclination to correspond. I have also hinted at things which appear to me the present subjects of consideration, because I am desirous of your opinion upon them. I have possibly wrote with too much freedom, but you will place it to account of zeal

in the cause, and on this score discharge my design, which is disinterested and philanthropic.

With sincere esteem and affection,

I am, Sir,

Your well-wisher,

W. SKIRVING, Sec.

On the 10th of June, 1793, (I have before told you that there was a society in Birmingham) that society writes to the London Corresponding Society, and the answer of the London Corresponding Society to them is in these terms :

Sir,

10th June, 1793.

It is with singular satisfaction the committee of the London Corresponding Society received your letter ; they are very glad to see the spirit of freedom springing up in Birmingham, and they make no doubt but that the zeal of your society, and the increase of your numbers, will soon do away the stigma thrown on your town by the unjustifiable behaviour of a Church and King mob. We are entirely of your opinion with regard to the necessity of a general union ; and we believe, as you do, that *when once the country shall have so united, the Nerves of the day will be forced to yield to the just demand of a long and sore oppressed people.*

With pleasure we accept your proffered correspondence, and earnestly beg of you to let us hear from your Society by every opportunity. We wish likewise you would point out to us *some safe mode of conveyance* for such informations and publications as we may think necessary to be transmitted to you. The post we no ways rely on, as many of our letters have already been intercepted.

If any of the members of your society should have occasion to visit this metropolis, we hope you will not let him come without a letter from you, and that while they stay here they will frequently *assist at the meetings* of our several divisions, and by thus *associating commence an union which we hope soon to see spread itself all over Britain.*

We will not enter into a detail of our grievances ; we are equally well informed thereon, and all alike thoroughly convinced that nothing short of annual Parliaments and universal suffrage can restore to us that degree of civil liberty we are justly entitled to, &c. &c.

To _____, Secretary to the Birmingham
Society for Constitutional Information.

Gentlemen,

Gentlemen, the Political Societies at Norwich also write to the London Corresponding Society with respect to this Convention on the 25th of June 1793, in which they say, we lately received your friendly letter, wherein you stated three propositions; first, a petition to his Majesty, or to Parliament, or a National Convention, - and ordered one of our committee to answer it; should be glad if you will inform me whether it was attended to; I gave my opinion on the subject to the Constitutional Society at London, and found their ideas congenial to my own, viz. an address to the King, futile; a petition to Parliament, (as a conquered people,) tolerable; a National Convention, (if circumstances admitted,) best of all.

You will find on the 28th of June, 1793, while these societies are holding so much correspondence with respect to this National Convention, as the only effectual means to effect their purpose, it was thought that an address to the nation should be prepared, and that is not immaterial for you to take notice of, because you will find that the project of a National Convention in Scotland, was thought to have failed for want of a previous address to the nation. On account of that, many gentlemen were brought together, and a resolution was passed, that Mr. Tooke, and a person of the name of Yorke, who was afterwards a delegate to Edinburgh, should be united in preparing an address.

On the 25th of July, 1793, a letter having been received from the Political Societies at Norwich, the answer is given in these terms:

Fellow Citizen,

London, 25th July 1793.

The London Corresponding Society have received and read with pleasure your letter of the 25th of June, but the answer which you mention to have been made to our three questions has not yet come to hand. We shall be glad to be informed in your next whether it was put in the Post Office.

With regard to the questions themselves, however individuals may have made up their minds on them, *the public seemed most to approve the mode of petitioning parliament.* We accordingly acquiesced, and sent in a petition signed by near 6,000 persons. With this letter you will receive a copy of it; and with it's fate you are doubtless not unacquainted.

While we agree with you that the people are treated like swine, we are forced to acknowledge that some among them, from their *sloth and ignorance*, scarcely deserve better usage; however, unceasingly labouring to meliorate their condition as well as our own, and convinced that a thorough Parliamentary Reform is the only means of effectuating it, we firmly pursue our purpose, and in the most conspicuous manner, under the eye of the court,

in the middle of the metropolis, and in the very nest of place and pension hornets, the tavern where Reeves, the tool of the Junta, holds his inquisitorial tribunal, have lately held a general meeting of the society, sent forth an address to the nation, and entered into some spirited resolutions, a few copies of which we desire you to accept and promulgate as far and as wide as you can; at the same time rest assured that the firmness displayed therein is not *confined to words*, but that on every occasion our society will be found foremost in *asserting and recovering the liberties of their country*.

Exhorting you, therefore, to throw aside all unavailing complaint, we wish you to occupy yourselves in instructing the people, in introducing and maintaining order and regularity in your own society, and in *forming a junction with all others associated for the same purpose throughout the nation*, by keeping up a constant correspondence with them; but, above all, *orderly and courageously preparing yourself for the event*, (mark the reason,) for as it is natural to suppose that those who now prey on the public will not willingly yield up their enjoyments, nor re-possess us of our rights *without a struggle*, which, by their behaviour in Ireland, (it alludes to a bill to prevent a Convention being held there,) we have some reason to think they are meditating, and perhaps may intend to effect by means of those very foreign mercenaries who are now paid with the sweat of our brow, and whom, under some plausible pretence, it would be no difficult matter to land on our shore—It may be more advantageous to humanity to shew them at first, that their opponents are neither mob nor rabble, *but an indignant oppressed people, in whom is not yet entirely extinct the valour of their forefathers*.

(This is the conclusion again to the address at the end of the year 1792.)

Union and increase being then our only resources, let us diligently exert ourselves therein with zeal and patience, removing ignorance and prejudice, with firmness and a consistent behaviour encouraging those who join us; and, above all, avoiding little bickerings among ourselves, ever discountenancing selfish jealousies and private animosities, and cordially joining with heart and hand in the common cause.

Your neighbourhood must severely feel the dreadful consequences of an iniquitous, depopulating, and ruinous war, but you are not the only sufferers; from various parts of the country we learn, that the war abroad has already spread desolation at home; yet such is the blindness of some folks, that they talk of it's being continued for years. Peace we wish to all men, but to such friends destruction. Let us hear from you soon, and let our
future

future correspondence be more regular. We are, with sincerity,
fellow citizen, for the L. C. S. as

Your friends and fellow labourers for the
Good of our country,

M. M.
T. H.

In a letter I referred to, which is written by the same Corresponding Society, on the 31st of July 1793, as an answer sent by the Hertford Society, in which the Hertford Society had desired to know their principles, they state themselves in the same manner. (See JORDAN'S *Second Report of the House of Commons*, p. 141.)

In October 1793, the Scotch Convention having met, which we have all heard so much of out of this place, you find there was a letter received from Mr. Sinclair, together with an address of Skirving, who was secretary to the Convention; and an extraordinary meeting was called at the Crown and Anchor, to consider the utility and propriety of sending delegates to the Convention to be held at Edinburgh, for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform.

On the 28th of October 1793, this society came to a resolution to send delegates, and Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Yorke, whom I have before mentioned, were appointed. And perhaps one cannot better state the extraordinary assumption of delegated power, than when I state to you, that Mr. Sinclair, meeting with the other deputies in the Convention of Scotland, had no difficulty in assuming with others, to call their meeting the British Convention of the people, and asserting their right so to act. Richter was to supply the place of Mr. Yorke in case he is disabled. And these persons go with all the delegation of the powers of the people, which this constituted society could give them.

The London Corresponding Society was not to be backward with the London Society for Constitutional Information, in forming this Convention in Scotland, all which you will see in the evidence, which deserves your most serious attention, as expressed in a circular letter, in which the prisoner expressed himself thus:

Fellow Citizens,

London, 17th Oct. 1793.

We have to acknowledge at once your favours of the 3d September, and 14th instant. Multiplicity of business prevented my answering your first; but will now inform you that the spirit shewn in it gave great satisfaction to our society at large. The rejoicings for the capture of Valenciennes were not confined to Norwich alone. The ignorant every where else throughout the nation betrayed their imbecility on the occasion. But the taking
of

of a town, the slaughtering of thousands of human beings, the laying waste whole provinces, or the enslaving a nation (however great evils they may be) can only retard for a small space of time the progress of truth and reason:—Be not disheartened, therefore pursue your plan, instruct mankind, and constitutionally set your faces against existing abuses: Be assured that many are our friends, *who only wait a favourable opportunity to openly join us*, while our enemies have much enfeebled themselves and their cause by their arbitrary exertions. Despotism is at it's last gasp—one or two campaigns more will terminate it's existence.

We are glad to see that you begin to make a proper use of delegation: Where bodies of men are too numerous to be convened easily on every occasion, delegation is the best, and indeed only way to obtain the general opinion. Scotland, improving on the idea, have not only summoned their own delegates, but also invite those of every other society to attend a kind of Convention, which is to be held at Edinburgh on the 29th instant. The inclosed paper, which I, previous to the communicating your letter to our committee (which will meet only to-morrow) make haste to transmit to you, will shew you that your society is included in the general invitation to send delegates to that meeting—which we exhort you to do, if you possibly can.—I firmly believe our society will not miss the opportunity of doing the same.

On the 5th of October, as this letter was wrote on the 17th, the prisoner writes to Skirving in this way:

Dear Sir,

London, Oct. 5, 1793.

With pleasure I peruse your favour of the 2d instant; but as yet have seen nor heard nothing of the two copies of Mr. Muir's trial, which you mention as being sent to the Society, and to myself. Be kind enough, notwithstanding, to return that gentleman thanks for his polite attention, and assure him, that we view him in the light of a martyr to freedom, as well as Mr. Palmer; and that our warmest hopes are, that the oppressors of mankind will either be ashamed or afraid of carrying their revengeful malice into execution.

The General Convention which you mention appears to Mr. Margarot (to whom alone I have communicated your letter) and myself, to be a very excellent measure, and as such I could wish you, without delay, to communicate it officially to our Society, *without any ways mentioning that you had written to me privately*. If in your official letter you should require us to send a deputation to that meeting, I have no doubt but our Society would with pleasure accept the invitation, and I am persuaded it may do much good. Our freedom, as you justly observe, depends en-
tirely

tirely upon ourselves, and upon our availing ourselves of this opportunity, which once lost may not be so soon recovered. I am glad to discover by your testimony that I was no ways mistaken in the high opinion I always had of Lord Daer's patriotism. A title may be a bar to disinterested patriotism; but, it seems, he has evinced it to be not an insuperable one.

You are right—it is true, that we have had another General Meeting, at which a hastily composed and suddenly produced address to the King was read, applauded, and agreed to be presented; but on a cool revival, the said address being found to be more ill-natured than spirited, more dangerous in its language than advantageous in its object, besides being too long, the Committee, with the approbation of the majority of the Society, have adopted another, much safer, more apposite, and relating solely to the war. Enclosed you have a copy of it. But you was misinformed when you was told we passed any resolutions at that meeting, for we only came to one, and that rather of a private nature, namely, “That the conduct of Sir James Sanderson, in preventing the meeting of the London Corresponding Society at the Globe Tavern, Fleet-street, is of such a nature as to place him under *our censure*.”

I am, most sincerely,

Your fellow-labourer and well-wisher,

THOMAS HARDY.

P. S. Mr. Margarot desires to be remembered to you in the most affectionate manner. Do not in future, *on the address of your letter, mention anything of the London Corresponding Society*, for it was a thousand to one that I received that letter by post.

To Mr. Skirving, Edinburgh.

The London Constitutional Society gave their delegates, Mr. Yorke and Sinclair, certain instructions; and I ought to tell you, that the manner of keeping the books of the London Constitutional Society was thus: the resolutions made on the one night, were taken on loose paper either by the secretary, or by other persons who acted in his absence or presence when he was not doing that duty himself, and they were entered before the subsequent night of meeting regularly on the book, and the first thing done on the subsequent night of meeting, was to read the resolutions that were made on the former night, to see they were correct. Now it will naturally occur, therefore, that the book may explain the minutes, and the minutes may explain the book.

Now, when they came to draw the minutes for the instruction of their delegates, that were to be held in Scotland, the first
idea

idea was to instruct their delegates to petition Parliament ; but that was altered ; therefore, that is struck out of their minutes, and they have instructions in these general terms :

“ The delegates are instructed, on the part of this Society, to assist in bringing forward and supporting any constitutional measures for procuring a real representation of the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament. That in specifying the redress to be demanded of existing abuses, the delegates ought never to lose sight of the two essential principles, general suffrage and annual representation, together with the unalienable right in the people to reform ; and that a reasonable and known compensation ought to be made to the Representatives of the nation, by a national contribution.”

What they meant by the representatives of the nation, if it was as I have really stated to you, you cannot be mistaken ; and what they meant by general suffrage and annual representation, seems to be beyond all doubt.

The London Corresponding Society are somewhat bolder in their instructions with which they send their delegates to the convention in Scotland ; they are to the following effect ; they consist of nine articles.

By article 1st, the delegate is instructed, “ that he shall on no account depart from the original object and principles of this society, namely, the obtaining annual Parliaments and universal suffrage by rational and lawful means.

2d. “ To support the opinion that representatives in parliament ought to be paid by their constituents.

7th. “ That it is the duty of the people to resist any act of parliament repugnant to the original principles of the constitution, as would be every attempt to prohibit associations for the purpose of reform.”

I beg you to observe this, *That it is the duty of the people to resist any act of parliament, &c.* because this shews on what principle the Convention of Scotland was formed.

There is no government in this country if this principle is to be acted upon, because nobody can tell to what extent it will go ; consequently, those who went into Scotland with this authority in their hands, state a great variety of cases in which the people, or any convention of the people, was to resist the parliament.

Mr. Attorney General now went into a general history of the Scotch Convention, (as will appear fully on the evidence in the trial.) He then observed, it was material to attend, that they styled themselves the British Convention of delegates, associated for the purposes of Parliamentary Reform.

Then, says he, I ask, what is a Convention of the people according to these societies ? According to the proceedings in
Scotland,

Scotland, a convention of the people is a convention of delegates of these societies in England and Scotland. What is it that they are to do? they assert, that the people have in them all civil and political authority, and they repeat it again and again, from the time the Convention was first formed, till the moment of it's dispersion. More especially still from the time of it's dispersion, to the meeting of the 20th of January, and at the meeting of Chalk Farm, you will find the most pressing sentiments, that *now or never is the time* when a convention of the people was to meet; when they, no longer fearful of their own valour, were courageous enough to prepare themselves for the event, and to shew to those who were their enemies, oppressors, and plunderers, that they were a brave people in whom valour was not extinct.

Having thus seen the practice that took place in the National Assembly of France, the Convention of Scotland followed their example; they created Sections, they divided the country into Departments, they appointed Provincial Assemblies, they have Committees to call together on extraordinary emergencies, and then, in Nov. 1793, they come to a resolution to which I would beg your most serious attention.

You will remember, that they went with authority which stated to them, that it was the duty of the people to resist any Act of Parliament that should be made for a particular purpose. It is hardly to be contended, I think, but that the great bulk of the people of this country were happy in their political existence; as undoubtedly they were remaining happy in their political existence, because they did not feel the grievances till they were taught by malignant industry to believe that they existed, or it may be that they existed in such a degree as to call for measures of this sort. Those that formed this Convention could not believe that the legislature of this country could permit a proceeding of this kind to pass unnoticed, to go on, yet confiding, so much as they did, in the supposed state of their numbers in that country, and those that were to be connected with them in this, you will find, that on the 28th of Nov. 1793, one of the persons belonging to this Convention, the members all standing up on their feet, for the greater solemnity of the thing, passes a motion of union between the two nations, and then this resolution is come to, "Resolved, that the following declaration and resolution be entered at the end of our Minutes.

"That this Convention, considering the calamitous consequences of any act of legislature which may tend to deprive the whole or any part of the people of their undoubted right to meet, either by themselves or by delegation, to discuss any matter relative to their common interest, whether of a public or private nature, and holding the same to be totally inconsistent with the first principles and safety of society, and also subver-

five of our known and acknowledged constitutional liberties, do hereby declare, before God and the world, that we shall follow the wholesome example of former times, by paying no regard to any act which may militate against the Constitution of our country, (that is to say, the affiliated societies,) and shall continue to assemble and consider of the best means by which we can accomplish a real representation of the people, and annual election, until compelled to desist by superior force.

“ And we do resolve, that the first notice given for the introduction of a Convention Bill, or any bill of a similar tendency to that passed in Ireland in the last sessions of their Parliament ;

“ Or any bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, or the act for preventing wronguous imprisonment, and against undue delays in trial in North Britain ;

“ Or in case of an invasion, or the admission of any foreign troops whatsoever into Great Britain or Ireland ; (I call your recollection to the Letter of the French Convention, when the troops of liberty with arms, bayonets, and pikes, were to be sent into this country. Why, if the people of this country had brought foreign troops into Great Britain or Ireland, not being of a nation that we were at war with, were these people to conduct themselves in the same manner as they were to act with those troops that were at war with us ? Yet if foreign troops are introduced to meet the exigency of the occasion, were they to be considered in the same light as if it was an invasion ?)

“ All or any one of these calamitous circumstances shall be a signal to the several delegates to repair to such place as the Secret Committee of this Convention shall appoint ; and the first seven members shall have power to declare the sittings permanent, shall constitute a Convention, and twenty-one proceed to business ;

“ The Convention doth therefore resolve, that each delegate, immediately on his return home, do convene his constituents, and explain to them the necessity of electing a delegate or delegates, and of establishing a fund, without delay, against any of these emergencies, for his or their expence ; and that they do instruct the said delegates to hold themselves ready to depart at one hour's warning.”

Why are they here to declare their sitting permanent ? because the due Legislature of the country has dared, not as yet to come to an act, but to give notice of it's intention. Are these the men that would think of bringing themselves together to declare their sittings permanent on such a ground as they state here ? to oppose the Legislature of a great country acting in that great duty that belongs to that country. Can we see it without supposing that they were to make their meeting effectual by acts that could be carried on for the purpose of preventing the Legislature from deliberation ?

By

By what act could it be done, but by resuming the valour of their forefathers? by force, by exerting that effectual exertion that is to be preceded by spreading useful knowledge, the characteristic of that useful knowledge being to put down by the nature of it's acts the King, Lords and Commons.

Well might Mr. Hardy say, that if the opportunity is lost now, it is lost for ever. We must act now, or we must never act.

Having some reason to suppose that this Convention would be dispersed, they came to another resolution:

“That the moment of any illegal dispersion of the British Convention, shall be considered as a summons to the delegates to repair to the place of meeting appointed for the Convention of emergency by the Secret Committee; and that the Secret Committee be instructed, without delay, to proceed to fix the place of meeting.”

After these resolutions it became necessary to do a little more, and to declare on what principle this Convention exists. Now mark the principles, and do your country justice, to apply so much of the observations as I have made to you, as are worthy your attention, to what I have before stated, as necessarily connected between the principles and practice of Mr. Paine. The principle is that of the French Convention. What is the practice? It is the assembling of a convention that should sit to prohibit the Legislature from doing any thing but what is agreeable to them; and having met in execution of the practice, they proceed immediately to a declaration of the principles; but they do not proceed to a declaration of principles till they have done that strong and solemn act which I have stated to you; then they resolve that a Committee be appointed to draw a declaration of the natural, unalienable and imprescriptible rights of man, &c. to be prefixed to an Address to the People of Great Britain, and that a Committee of observation be appointed at London to give the earliest intimation of any motion of the kind mentioned in the foregoing resolution.

Then you find they met in a place called Convention Hall, and they date their proceedings the first year of the British Convention; then they are informed that the London Corresponding Society would undertake to be the Committee of Observation, which, they say, ought to exist; then you find their numbers mentioned, that there are many thousands of constituents in Norwich, London, Leeds, &c. and that the Convention, to look at it in it's true nature, was a Committee of the people, and therefore it was necessary for them to have, as they had in France, primary Societies, those primary Societies being over-ruled by the leaders of their great clubs, from which they emanated, and so forming in this country a government under the power of the Jacobin Club.

You will find that before these persons parted, Mr. Margatrot communicated to his constituents the proceedings of this body, which he stiles always the British Convention of the people, associated to claim Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage.

You will find that they looked up to the London Corresponding Society, that their active exertions were necessary for the accomplishing of the project that they were sitting for in Edinburgh. And then afterwards delegates arrived in London, and gave to Mr. Hardy, as the Secretary of that Society, an account of their proceedings; they give him an account of that solemn motion and the manner of making it, as I have mentioned; they state that the appointment of the place (to which circumstance I beg your most particular attention) where they were to meet, was left to a Secret Committee, and when they sent to him informing him of the circumstance of this motion, they sent to him an account of the motion, at the same time informing him in a letter, *that letters convey but very imperfectly, and with no great degree of safety, what we wish to inform each other of*, because letters will not convey very safely; that the convention were to meet in cases of invasion, that was a secret that was not to be trusted to correspondence by letter; and though it existed in that motion that was made, every other part being communicated in a letter, yet they do not think it safe to communicate it by letter, and also consider it of such a nature that they determine not to insert it even in their own minutes.

This fact being communicated to the London Corresponding Society by a delegate, you will also find that Mr. Sinclair, delegate to the London Constitutional Society, was not behind in his duty to his constituents; he desired a Secret Committee might be also appointed in that society.

Not long after this, we see the concerted power of the magistracy in that country disperse that convention, which dispersion suggested to the societies in this country, viewing the same work at the same hazard, to form the plan of another convention to be held in England, knowing that the project must then be accomplished, or never could be accomplished, because no government would permit such a convention to exist without taking some means to prevent the consequences against itself.

We find then, after the dispersion of the Scotch Convention, when some of them had been sentenced to punishments, and which proceedings against them were not stated in my humble opinion in that aggravated way, as they might have been stated, when they were to be brought into this country in the process of the execution of their sentence, you will find in the evidence, propositions in this society about a rescue, which however failed.

Before

Before they left Scotland, there is a letter of Margarot's to Hardy, to this effect. Two months passed in Scotland will so effectually do the business, that nothing will be able to prevent the reform from taking place. In your letter, says he, do not introduce politics, or at least nothing but what concerns reform. The convention you will see have declared themselves permanent, they are to sit in some other part of the country, which is not yet declared, the cause is in great forwardness in Scotland, that nothing but sufficient supplies of money are wanting in order to avow their views with success, and a very short time will be sufficient to put things in such a train, as will completely exclude the possibility of a failure. In another letter he talks of Mr. Sinclair having gone to Perth on very urgent business.

On the 19th of December 1793, Mr. Sinclair, the delegate from the Constitutional Society, came to London just at the time I have before observed to you, that there were some things in the letter of Gerald's and Margarot's that could not be safely conveyed by letter; and who of consequence might be inferred to have been sent for the purpose of this secret intelligence, which was that part of their resolution of assembling the convention at some secret place, and that the first seven should declare their sittings permanent, and twenty-one proceed to business, in case of an invasion.

On the 22nd of December 1793, another letter is written to Mr. Hardy by the same gentleman, which probably led in some degree to the transactions which passed in January 1794, for after stating what happened to himself in Scotland, he says, Sheffield has exhibited a most manly spirit, (you are to observe that Sheffield had at that time sent out very strong resolutions) it is not too late, for God's sake send out some strong resolutions: above all, talk of impeachments and petitioning the king.

Then we find Mr. Margarot and Mr. Brown, who were the delegates of Sheffield, were gone to attend a general meeting of the society of the Friends of the People, in East Lothianshire, and then it is said, the time is come that we must shew ourselves worthy of liberty, or lose it.

On the 27th of December 1793, you will find, that Gerald was at Perth, as Margarot states, that he himself had been at East Lothian; that they had been well employed, and that they must come to some spirited resolutions.

And you will there find, on the 11th of January 1794, that Mr. Hardy writes this letter to Norwich, relative to the proceedings I have now been stating, that the Corresponding Society first, and the Constitutional Society afterwards, in their public acts approved of every thing the convention had done.

Fellow Citizens,

London, January 11, 1794.

I have just received a letter from citizen Margarot, at Edinburgh, with some of the Edinburgh Gazetteers, where you will see that citizen Skirving is found guilty, and sentenced for fourteen years transportation to Botany Bay. Margarot's trial comes next; he meets it with great firmness and resolution. I have no time to make my comments on the proceedings, but I think our opponents are cutting their throats as fast as they can.—Now is the time for us to do something worthy of *men*. The brave defenders of liberty south of the English Channel are performing wonders, driving their enemies before them like chaff before the whirlwind. Margarot tells me, that he has not time to write to you just now, but he hopes to have time very soon, when his trial is over, and immured in a prison. The London Corresponding Society is to have a general meeting and an anniversary dinner, on Monday the 20th instant, at the Globe Tavern, Strand. I have sent you some of Margarot's and Skirving's indictment, with two copies of a pamphlet on Brewing—the author is a member of our society; if you approve of it, you may put it in practice, and it will be a great saving to many families, also a diminution of the revenue, for every one brewing their own beer pay no duty for it. Excuse haste. I still remain,
&c.

(Signed) THOMAS HARDY.

You will find that Mr. Margarot, while at Spithead, writes to the Norwich Society, dated from Spithead the 10th of March, 1794. The Letter follows:

Spithead, 10th of March 1794.

Worthy Friends, and Fellow Citizens,

Our stay here being longer than was at first expected, I avail myself of that delay to acknowledge the receipt of twenty pounds from your society, which have been delivered to me by Thomas Hardy, our Secretary, to whom you had remitted them, and who has been down here purposely to see me, and make some arrangements for the future, but whose business has called him back to London before any thing could be settled between us.—At first he seemed to think that the money was meant by you to be divided among the four who are now suffering together: but, on my acquainting him that those gentlemen were infinitely better off than myself in that respect, insomuch that they are continually receiving private presents, and are moreover supported by many noblemen and rich members of Parliament, these latter seeking only (I much fear) to make a party affair of it, he gave the money to my own disposal. If, however, you meant otherwise, your intention shall be complied with immediately on it's being made
known

known to me—So much for pecuniary affairs—“ This morning ten ships of war have left Spithead for the Channel, and it is here reported that the Brest fleet is out. Rumour always magnifying things, says there are seventy sail of the French at sea; if so, there must be a number of transports among them, and a descent may probably be the consequence.—For God’s sake, my worthy friends, do not relax in the cause of freedom—continue as you have begun—consolidate your own societies—unite with others—persevere, and make no doubt but sooner or later your endeavours will be crowned with success.” I have also to thank you for the affectionate address I received from you. Be assured that my utmost ambition will be to deserve your confidence and your esteem. The tide of fortune, however strongly it may run against our cause at present, must soon have a turn: The eyes of mankind will naturally open—when their pockets empty, and their blood spills, they will ask each other, for whom are we thus sacrificing ourselves and murdering others? What advantage results to us from all this expenditure and slaughter? And by interfering in the government of another country, do we not set other nations an example to interfere with our own government, and to model it as they think proper? Should they do so, popery and despotism must be our lot—may gracious Providence avert it; may we rather all to a man be determined to live free or die! In my exile nothing would afflict me so much as to hear that my country was enslaved, and that my countrymen hugged their chains. I trust however, the national spirit of Britons will prevent it. Adieu, my dear friends; and ever remember,

Your faithful,

M. MARGAROT.

P. S. This day a mock debate concerning our sentence is to take place in P——

I come now to state to you the proceedings of the year 1794, as far as they depend on the written evidence that is to be laid before you, and it must be a satisfaction to every man who hears me, that in the course of this evidence, whatever may arise on the parole evidence that is to be given, you will find so strong a confirmation of the written evidence that is to be laid before you, that these observations cannot obstruct you from coming to a true conclusion, whatever that may be. The Constitutional Society having sent their delegate to the Scotch Convention, you will find that at a meeting, held the 17 of January 1794, the following Resolution was come to, and to which I desire your particular attention, more especially, as there are some circumstances belonging to the composition of that resolution, which appear to me to be worthy your attention.

I have

I have before told you, that these resolutions were originally drawn from the minutes, and the original minute still exists, and perhaps it shews that discretion with which men are able to state, in different ways, the precise thing; and I say, that these papers were meant to excite the subjects of this country to resist by actual force. The Resolutions are these:

“Resolved, That law ceases to be an object of obedience whenever it becomes an instrument of oppression.

“Resolved, That we call to mind, with the deepest satisfaction, the merited fate of the infamous Jefferies, once Lord Chief Justice of England, who, at the *Æra* of the glorious Revolution, for the many iniquitous sentences which he had passed, was torn to pieces by a brave and injured people.

“Resolved, That those who imitate his example, deserve his fate.

(This is to be applied to the Judges of Scotland, who executed the law on such facts as I have stated; and I hope, this sort of Resolutions had not their end, to put them to their peril, who in their official duty, passed those sentences to which these Resolutions allude.)

“Resolved, That the Tweed, though it may divide countries, ought not, and does not make a separation between those principles of common severity in which Englishmen and Scotchmen are equally interested; and that injustice in Scotland is injustice in England; and that the safety of Englishmen is endangered whenever their brethren in Scotland, for a conduct which entitles them to the approbation of all wise, and the support of all brave men, are sentenced to Botany Bay; a punishment hitherto inflicted only on felons.

“Resolved, That we see with regret, but we see without fear, that the period is fast approaching when the liberties of Britons must depend not upon reason to which they have long appealed, nor on the powers of expressing it, but on their firm and undaunted resolution to oppose tyranny by the same means by which it is exercised.

“Resolved, That we approve of the conduct of the British Convention, who, though assailed by force, have not been answered by arguments; and who, unlike the members of a certain assembly, have no interest distinct from the common body of the people.”

What is the tyranny exercised by the regular government of the country, but the means of the application of force of the government in support of it's acts? The tyranny then that the government makes use of by the application of the force of the country in support of it's functions is now to be resisted.

The first resolve is in the minutes thus, *that as allegiance and*

protection are reciprocal, law ceases to be an object of obedience, whenever it becomes an instrument of oppression.

Couple that as it stood with the third resolution, and what is it, but that to those who do not protect, no allegiance is due; and we see it with regret, but we see it without fear, that we must oppose those who do not protect us, because to them no allegiance is due.

You will find that it stood in the original minute, thus: *that Englishmen are determined to vindicate Scotchmen at the hazard of their lives.*

Then you will find the last resolution comparing the gentlemen of the House of Commons with the Convention of Scotland, resolving, that they approve of the conduct of the British Convention, who, though assailed by force, have not been answered by argument, and, who unlike the members of a certain assembly, have no interest distinct from the common body of the people, who being the incorrupt representatives of many thousands, have spoken the language of truth and firmness. And I make this account the instrument of conveying to the public, and I do most anxiously wish it may, that the public may understand what it is that men mean when they are distributing these libels through the country.

This Convention, say they, assailed by force, has not been answered by argument. How could they be answered by argument, who came to solemn and secret resolutions which they do not dare to state on their own proceedings; thus working under ground till they blow up the country with it's inhabitants, and then, Now, say, we have done well, you cannot say we have done ill, because you cannot tell on what principle we act.

On the 28th of January there is a letter written by Margarot to the person that stands at the bar, in which is the following, "We have just received notice to hold ourselves ready to depart at an hour's notice. Look out for us, Thomas Hardy, immediately.

You will likewise find that a letter sent from Margarot to Hardy is of great consequence, as it explains many passages in the evidence between the 20th of Jan. 1794, and the time that these persons were apprehended. Margarot writes from Edinburgh in this manner: "Armed associators are I conceive set on foot by the rich, wherefore should not the poor do the same? are you to wait patiently till twenty thousand Hessians come to cut your throats?"

On the 20th January 1794, there was a meeting at the Globe Tavern, that meeting which you will permit me to observe, Hardy, in his letter of the 11th of January 1794, which I have before spoken of, alluded to when he said the London Corresponding

spending Society were to have a General meeting and an Anniversary Dinner.

The proceedings of that day will deserve your very particular attention.

The following is a copy of the said printed paper.

“ At a general meeting of the London Corresponding Society, held at the Globe Tavern, Strand, on Monday the 20th day of January, 1794; citizen John Martin in the chair; the following address to the people of Great Britain and Ireland was read and agreed to.

“ CITIZENS,

“ We find the nation involved in a war, by which, in the course of one campaign, immense numbers of our countrymen have been slaughtered; a vast expence has been incurred, our trade, commerce, and manufactories, are almost destroyed, and many of our manufacturers and artists are ruined, and their families starving.

“ To add to our affliction, we have reason to expect, that other taxes will soon be added to the intolerable load of imposts and impositions with which we are already overwhelmed, for the purpose of defraying the expences which have been incurred, in a fruitless crusade, to re-establish the odious despotism of France.

“ When we contemplate the principles of this war, we confess ourselves to be unable to approve of it, as a measure either of justice or discretion;—and if we are to form our calculation of the result, from what has already passed, we can only look forward to defeat, and the eternal disgrace of the British name.

“ While we are thus engaged in an expensive and ruinous foreign war, our state at home is not less deplorable.

“ We are every day told, by those persons who are interested in supporting the *corruption* list, and an innumerable host of *sin-cure* placemen, that the constitution of England is the perfection of human wisdom; that our laws (we should rather say, THEIR laws) are the perfection of justice; and that *their* administration of those laws is so impartial and so ready, as to afford an equal remedy, both to the rich and to the poor; by means of which we are said to be placed in a state of absolute freedom, and that our rights and liberties are so well secured to us as to render all invasion of them impossible.

“ When we ask, how we enjoy these transcendant privileges? we are referred to Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights; and the glorious Revolution, in the year 1688, is held out to us, as the bulwark of British liberty.

“ CITIZENS,

“CITIZENS,

“We have referred to Magna Charta, to the Bill of Rights, and to the Revolution, and we certainly do find that our ancestors did establish wise and wholesome laws: but we as certainly find, that, of the venerable constitution of our ancestors, hardly a vestige remains.

“The only chapters of the great charter, which are now in legal existence, are the 14th and 29th.

“The important provision of the 14th chapter runs thus:

“A freeman shall not be amerced for a small fault, but after the manner of the fault: and for a great fault after the greatness thereof, saving to him his contenment; and a merchant likewise, saving to him his merchandize; and any other's villain than our's shall be likewise amerced, saving to him his wainage; and none of the said amerciaments shall be assessed, but by the oath of honest and lawful men of the vicinage.”

“But by the usurped power of the judges, in assessing fines (and what fines!!) in the cases of misdemeanour; this glorious right of the subject, of having these fines assessed by the Jury, (the only possible protection from slavery and the vilest oppression) is unjustly and infamously ravished from us.

“The provision of the 29th chapter runs thus:

“No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any otherwise destroyed; nor we will not pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny, or defer to any man, either justice or right.

“The various methods now in constant practice, by which the benefits of this provision are totally defeated and destroyed, might induce us to suppose, that the Great Charter has been repealed; if we did not assuredly know, that it is the fundamental basis of our constitution; which even the Real Representatives of the people (much less the miserable nominees of Hellstone and Old Sarum) have not the right, nor (as we trust it will be found by experience) the power to repeal. Yet what do we find in practice? unconstitutional and illegal Informations Ex Officio, that is, the arbitrary will of the king's attorney-general, usurping the office of the Accusing Jury; and the interested oath of a vile common informer, with the judgment of as vile a common trading or pensioned justice, substituted in the room of our birth-right, an impartial trial by our country.

“Add to this, that the exorbitant expence of judicial proceedings, the novel practice of arbitrarily and repeatedly annulling the verdicts of Juries, and the dilatory practice of the courts,

courts, most openly and shamefully contradict the clause which forbids the denial, the delay, and the sale of justice.

“ A man accused of Felony (for which, by the common law of England, his life and goods are forfeited) may be bailed on finding two sureties for forty pounds each ; but upon a charge of misdemeanor by words only, bail to the amount of one thousand pounds has been demanded.

“ Upon conviction also for such misdemeanour, enormous fines, long and cruel imprisonments unknown to our antient laws, and un sanctioned by any new statutes, have of late (and but of late) been too frequently and too oppressively inflicted. And all this, although by this Bill of Rights it is declared, that “ excessive bail shall not be demanded, or cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.”

“ If we look to Ireland, we find that acknowledged privilege of the people to meet for the support and protection of their rights and privileges, is attempted, by terror, to be taken away by a late infamous Act of Parliament: whilst titles of honour?—No, but of dishonour—are lavished ; and new sources of corruption opened, to gratify the greedy prostitution of those, who are the instruments of this oppression.

“ In Scotland, the wicked hand of power has been impudently exerted, without even the wretched formality of an Act of Parliament. Magistrates have forcibly intruded into the peaceful and lawful meetings of freemen ; and, by force, (not only without law, but against law) have, under colour of magisterial office, interrupted their deliberations, and prevented their association.

“ The wisdom and good conduct of the British Convention at Edinburgh has been such, as to defy their bitterest enemies to name the law which they have broken ; notwithstanding which, their papers have been seized, and made use of as evidence against them, and many virtuous and meritorious individuals have been, as cruelly as unjustly, for their virtuous actions, disgraced and destroyed by infamous and illegal sentences of transportation. And these unjust and wicked judgments have been executed with a rancour and malignety, never before known in this land ; our respectable and beloved fellow-citizens have been cast fettered into dungeons amongst felons in the hulks, to which they were not sentenced.

“ CITIZENS,

“ We all approve the sentiments, and are daily repeating the words, for which these our respectable and valuable brethren are thus unjustly and inhumanly suffering. We too associate in order to obtain a fair, free, and full representation of the
people

people in a house of real national representatives. (Did not the Convention at Edinburgh associate for to obtain a fair, free, and full house of National Representatives? They associated as if they were the people, and they were to associate themselves with societies in England, and to form themselves as delegates of these societies, to do what? to meet as an assembly, which assembly was to controul the operation of Parliament, until the force of this body so met should destroy them.) Are we also willing to be treated as felons, for claiming this our inherent right, which we are determined never to forego but with our lives, and which none but thieves and traitors can wish to withhold from us? Consider, it is one and the same corrupt and corrupting influence, which at this time domineers in Ireland, Scotland, and England, (that is, the persons meeting in the regular execution of their functions, and their offices as magistrates). Can you believe that those who sent virtuous Irishmen and Scotchmen fettered with felons to Botany Bay, do not meditate, and will not attempt to seize the first moment to send us after them? Or if we had not just cause to apprehend the same inhuman treatment; if, instead of the most imminent danger, we were in perfect safety from it; should we not disdain to enjoy any liberty or privilege whatever, in which our honest Irish and Scotch brethren did not equally, and as fully participate with us? Their cause then and our's is the same. And it is both our duty and our interest to stand or fall together. The Irish Parliament and the Scotch Judges, actuated by the same English influence; have brought us directly to the point. There is no farther step beyond that which they have taken. We are at issue. We must now chuse at once either liberty or slavery for ourselves and our posterity. Will you wait till barracks are erected in every village, and till *subsidized* Hessians and Hanoverians are upon us?

“ You may ask perhaps, by what means shall we seek redress? (This society asked the same question in August 1792, and they asked the same question in April 1793; the same answer was given in August 1792, the same answer was given in April 1793. It is not by the King, it is not by the Parliament, but it is by a Convention of ourselves and our societies; but they supposed that the time was now come to do which they were not virtuous and courageous enough to do in 1793.) You may ask, &c.

We answer, that men in a state of civilized society are bound to seek redress of the grievances from the laws, as long as any redress can be obtained by the laws. But our common master whom we serve (whose law is a law of liberty, and whose service is perfect freedom) has taught us not to expect to gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. We must have redress

dress from our own laws, and not from the laws of our plunderers, enemies, and oppressors."

They go on to say, "*There is no redress for a nation circumstanced as we are, but in a fair, free, and full representation of the people.*" And here again I ask, What is the fair, free, and full representation of the people? no mention being made here of *in Parliament*, but by those that approve of the British Convention, a Convention, which, by the force of its own authority, was to declare the natural, unalienable, and imprescriptible rights of man. What are we to understand from those that take on them to unite the two nations of England and Scotland, and declare their meeting to be a British Convention uniting the two nations, and that body formed by delegates of different societies in this and that country? I say this, that this is the species of Convention, which, in their opinion, (and I think no man can doubt it) was the fair, full, and free representation of the people, in which they hope, and hope alone for redress.

Could it be possible for them to suppose, even if they made parliament the willing or unwilling organ, could it ever enter into their thoughts, that these, that they call their plunderers, enemies, and oppressors, would ever become the voluntary or involuntary instrument of doing that which was the object of the existence of all these societies, from March 1791, till in the apprehension of these persons they were checked in the execution of their purpose?

They now pass on to several Resolves.

"Resolved, That during the ensuing session of Parliament, the general Committee of this Society do meet daily, for the purpose of watching the proceedings of the Parliament, and of the administration of the government of this country. (This was to be published for the sake of doing this business, and is followed up with this resolution, which I have stated to you was so solemnly made and so sacredly sworn.) And that upon the first introduction of any bill, or motion inimical to the liberties of the people, such as, for *landing foreign troops in Great Britain or Ireland*, for *suspending the Habeas Corpus Act*, for *proclaiming Martial Law*, or for *preventing the people from meeting in Societies for Constitutional Information*, (now they abused the terms they used, you must think by this time,) or any other *Innovation* of a similar nature, that, on any of these emergencies, the general Committee shall issue summonses to the delegates of each division, and also to the secretaries of the different societies affiliated and corresponding with this society, forthwith to call a *general Convention of the People*, to be held at such place and in such a manner as shall be specified in the summons, for the purpose of taking such measures into their consideration.

"Resolved,

“ Resolved, That the preceding address and resolution be signed by the chairman, and printed and published.

“ J. MARTIN, Chairman.

“ T. HARDY, Secretary.”

Now what is this, supposing nothing had passed in Scotland of what I have stated to you? Is the rule and government of this country reduced to this state, that it shall find no protection in the administration of the law of the country against persons associating and affiliating themselves for the purposes they have declared here? Is no motion to be made in parliament for a bill, for any of the purposes here specified? Is no motion to be made in parliament for a bill which these societies chose to complain of, under the terms of any other innovation of a similar nature, without explaining what it meant; but what? that bodies of men are to come together claiming to themselves, that which exists in the natural and physical quality of the people, and then to declare and pretend that they have got a Convention of the people. Have they got the people with them? here is nothing like it; yet here they call themselves the Convention of the people, the meaning of which, take it altogether, is this; from your laws, the laws of you our plunderers, enemies and oppressors, we can expect no relief, therefore we do not mean to come to you; but we will watch you, and if you dare an innovation of any sort, we shall call a fair, free, and full representation of the people by summonses issued to the delegates of these societies.

Then, gentlemen, they publish their resolves, that 100,000 copies of the Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland, voted at the general meeting, be printed and distributed by the society.

And then they follow this up with the publication of a great many toasts; and where one mentions such a thing as toasts, one is afraid of the subject sinking into insignificancy: it is no great part of the case, and yet it was thought of importance enough to sit once or twice to form toasts that would be best calculated to inflame the minds of the people, and to urge those forward that were not in this project. Accordingly it was the custom of the London Corresponding Society, as well as the Society for Constitutional Information, to give toasts, such as, Success to the arms of freedom, wherever directed: Against whom were the arms directed? The application of this phrase is obvious, with respect to his Majesty, when we reflect, that it was drank by those who had said the Elector of Hanover may do what he pleases, but if the King of Great Britain dares to go to war, we know what we are to do.

Other

Other toasts were drank, such as, Citizen John Paine; John Frost; the virtuous and spirited citizens now in confinement for matters of opinion; and may we shew them by our conduct that they are not forgotten. These matters of opinion are all taken in acts of detail.

Gentlemen, the name of Mr. Frost being mentioned, it is to the purpose of this business to take notice, that he was prosecuted in this country for these words, *no King, no parliament, liberty, equality*; he has been proved to be guilty of a great offence, he has suffered that punishment which the law inflicted, and has made the atonement that the law required; but these gentlemen (who sent Mr. Frost and Mr. Barlow to France,) on his being prosecuted for his promulgation of the doctrine of no king, declare that they will sustain Mr. Frost in all his prosecutions. Is it no evidence what the intention of these were, who come to a resolution in which they declare, that the law, questioning the propriety of that kind of conduct, amounted to persecution, and say it ought not to have been done?

These toasts were drank, Mr. Martin being then present with Mr. Hardy, a delegate, attending member; I will give you now his account of this proceeding of the 20th of January 1794, in his own hand writing, in a letter directed to Maurice Margarot, at Edinburgh, who before had wrote, that two months in Scotland would do the business, provided they would do the business in England. Martin tells him we had a meeting on Monday, *I was in the chair, every thing was well conducted, regularly, and the proceedings were tolerably bold. Mr. Hardy has sent you a copy of the address and resolution. The King went yesterday to meet his parliament.* (So now, gentlemen, we have got no parliament of our own.) *The society increases rapidly.* (You will observe the words, gentlemen,) *the society is increasing rapidly, both in spirit and in number, and the rich begin to come among us. I could write to you strange things, but I know not but it may be read by somebody before it come to your hands.*

After this had past, you will find that that letter was written by the London Corresponding Society to the Society for Constitutional Information, which I first mentioned to you on the 27th of March 1794, and now, by your leave, I will read a part of it again.

I should tell you first, in order of time, that the Society for Constitutional Information distinctly adopted that paper of the Corresponding Society as their own; they ordered it to be entered on their books, and fully took it to themselves, as if it had been concerted at a conjunctive meeting of them both.

Well then, the London Constitutional Society having adopted it as their own, it would be surprizing indeed, if the convention, which

which they there speak of on the 27th of March, should be of a different nature than that which they agreed to on the 20th of January, and with that I come to the letter of the 27th of March. (See JORDAN'S *Second Report of the House of Commons*, p. 106.)

In this letter there can be no doubt what they meant by a speedy revolution; but it is not left there, for in the third resolution, they state that there ought to be immediately a convention of the people by delegates deputed for that purpose, by the different societies of the friends of freedom assembled for that purpose.

Now, Gentlemen, to whom is this proposed? to that Constitutional Society who had adopted that resolution of the 20th of January 1794, and who had said at the 20th of January 1794, redress was not to be taken by the laws of England, but by their own laws, and not those of their plunderers, enemies, and oppressors.

What observation follows on this? this follows on it, that couching the thing in terms that are a little ambiguous, but which no human being, judging honestly, could doubt the meaning of; they do mean there should be this convention to supercede the powers of the nation, having all political and physical authority, and then they form of the two societies, a Committee of Correspondence for the purpose of bringing forward that convention, without which they had said Britons could not enjoy their liberty.

Gentlemen, when I lay this evidence before you, I shall have yet to learn, why this is not a step taken to the constituting of a body, or a step towards the means of constituting a body, or another body than that established by the constitution of this country; and which other body was (like the convention mentioned in the speech of Barrere,) to supercede the established legislature, and to depose the King, as the indictment expresses it, against the will and in defiance of the parliament. I say to depose the king, for if these people have sovereign power, and they must have it on their own principles, the King of England cannot have it as he has now; he was bound to resist, he was sworn to it by the solemn obligation of his coronation oath; see it otherwise you cannot, if you contemplate those consequences which must accrue to the life of the King, he being bound to resist such attempts for the sake of his subjects, and for the sake of his oath, in acknowledging, according to the terms of that oath, to rule agreeable to the statutes of parliament.

You find further, that there was a meeting at Chalk Farm, and when the minutes of that meeting are read to you, you will see that that meeting was a step taken in the functions of that joint Committee of Correspondence between the two societies,

for the express purpose of trying the tempers of the people, seeing what they could do by numbers: and it is very remarkable that that meeting, which was held here on the 14th of April 1794, was also held in divers other parts of this kingdom, as appears more particularly from a letter found in the possession of the prisoner. As there was a meeting in the open air at Chalk Farm, so, gentlemen of the Jury, they were not wanting elsewhere, doing the best they could to bring their purposes to bear, by which you may see it required vigilance, it required the interposition of some strong hand in parliament to interpose. There was a meeting held at Leeds, Wakefield, Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Nottingham, and many other places; and it will be proved to you, that the prisoner at the bar sent a circular letter to the remotest parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of carrying into effect the project of a British Convention, which had been defeated indeed, but the evil was carrying on it's purpose by secret measures, precisely the same way as that that had existed; and you will find accordingly, that the prisoner at the bar writes these letters to all these societies in the country, and the addressing these letters to all these societies, shews that the convention to be called, was not to be a convention of the people, but a convention of delegates of these societies assuming the character of the people. He now writes to them, the critical moment is arrived. In 1793, his language is, men are not virtuous enough, they are not courageous enough. In 1792, they expected nothing from parliament, but they did not go to other powers, they expected every thing from societies at that time.

Then they state when that time, the fulness of time is come, the critical moment is arrived, and Britons must either assert with zeal and firmness their claim to liberty, or yield without resistance to the chains that ministerial usurpation is forging for them. Then they say, "Will you co-operate with us in the only peaceable measure that now presents itself, with any prospect of success? We need not intimate to you that, notwithstanding the unparalleled audacity of a corrupt and overbearing faction, which at present tramples on the rights and liberties of the people, our meetings cannot in England be interrupted without the previous introduction of a convention bill?" (There was the reason, they thought, for the convention being permanent.) "A measure which it is our duty to anticipate (mark these words, our duty to anticipate; gentlemen, what was their object? why, they were instantly, upon the project of such a bill being mentioned in Parliament, as they before had stated, to declare their sittings permanent, solemnly viewing that moment, when such a bill as that would be brought in, which they would resist to the hazard of their lives; then, Gentlemen, what do they mean to do here? while yet the bare expectation of it existed, they hold
it

It their duty to anticipate, and to anticipate it by the same means, by a convention of the people; a convention of these societies sitting, not at Edinburgh, not at a place that they durst name, but for the purpose of conducting this business, kept secret, that the project might not be disappointed: then they say, we must, however, be expeditious, Hessians and Austrians are already among us, (they were in the hospitals,) and if we tamely submit, a cloud of these armed barbarians may shortly be poured in upon us; let us form then another British Convention. (What was it, a Convention of the People? and a Convention that was to assume controuling power over the Legislature?) We have a central situation in our view, which we believe would be most convenient for the whole island; but which we forbear to mention, intreating your confidence in this particular, till we have the answer of the societies, with which we are at correspondence: let us have your answer then by the 20th at farthest, earlier if possible; whether you approve of the measure, and how many delegates you can send, with the number, if possible, of your society.

Let me ask now, Was this to be a Convention of the People, or a Convention of Societies, assuming the character of the Convention of the People?

Now let us observe how near this project was being carried into effect; let us have your answer by the 20th at farthest; and then, as in the British Convention, all things were to be conducted by the Secret Committee! So here the letter concludes: We have appointed a Secret Committee for this business,—you will judge how far it is necessary for you to do the same.

Then we come to the proceedings at Chalk Farm. And when it was stated at Chalk Farm that the Friends of the People would not agree in the measure of holding a convention; it met with a universal groan, the company at least amounting to a large body of men, I dare say about two thousand.

At the end of the minutes of the meeting, you will find there is subscribed a small note, in the hand-writing of the prisoner at the bar.

Soon after that, the business was broke up by the apprehension of the prisoner and others, which has led to the means of this prosecution.

Gentlemen, I have before told you that I conceived that it was incumbent on me to shew the conduct of persons who were the parties engaged in the conspiracy. Now, Gentlemen, you will find that one of those persons who attended this meeting on the 20th of January, 1794, was a very active member in this London Corresponding Society, and likewise one of the Committee of Correspondence and Co-operation: he himself gives this account of the proceedings of the 20th of January 1794; and other

circumstances. It is Mr. Thelwall; he says, *I have been for four or five months almost the sole labourer, the only avowed Sans Culottes in the country. I tell you in plain terms, I am a republican, a downright Sans Culotte.* And he says to the person to whom he writes, *You have too much veneration for property, too much religion, and too much law.*

Having now gone through the written evidence, I have now to state to you the parole evidence; not indeed the whole, for that will be received better from the witnesses. You will find on this part of the case, that after the dispersion of the British Convention in Edinburgh, after it was seen that the law was strong enough to beat down a conspiracy of that kind, acting by their mere naked numbers, they conceived it became then necessary to act with arms.

Now, Gentlemen, on that part of the case where a general conspiracy of this sort is established amongst affiliated societies, existing in Scotland, Sheffield, Norwich, Manchester, and various parts of the kingdom, all aiming at the same end, all acting on the same principles, all involved in the same project, namely, the having a Convention from different parts of the united kingdoms. It would seem odd, that in these different parts of the kingdom, in Sheffield, Scotland, and in London, we should find arms of a sort and denomination, not lately heard of in this country, nor in these later times, except as existing in France.

But you will find from the evidence that I have to offer to you, and you will not be surprized if I should tell you, that in the pockets of some of the persons mentioned in this indictment, parties in this conspiracy, in these very acts of forming the committee of correspondence and co-operation, (and it will be laid before you, that it was distributed in more places than in the London Corresponding Society,) was a paper, in the form of a play-bill, wherein was represented, on the 4th of April, 1794, to be performed the Guillotine, or George's Head in a Basket, a paper in which that sacred person is contemptuously spoken of, as well as all signified orders, under a ludicrous representation of them to their country, were doomed to the lamp-irons to suspension. But this is not to be wondered at, if you could find that Mr. Thelwall could retire from Chalk Farm, and taking up a pot of porter, and cutting off the froth with the knife, say, *Thus I would serve all Kings.*

If you believe such language as this can be used, you will not be surprized to find pikes with these men and their associates; nor will you be surprized to find muskets with these men and their associates.

Do not let us be puzzled with the great doctrine of the Bill of Rights, that every man has a right to provide himself with

with arms for his own defence, but the question of the Jury will be to say what they had them for.

Now you will find, that Mr. Yorke, who was a member of the London Constitutional Society, will be proved to you as stating, that he was going among the Sons of Liberty, in Belgium, to bring into this country the true defenders of Liberty; afterwards you find, that he had been propagating at Sheffield, the same as these other societies had been at London, namely, that it was necessary that the people should arm; hence you will find, that at Sheffield, pikes are made, and they inform the prisoner at the bar that the pikes are made, and he delivers letters, informing those who wanted them, that they may furnish themselves with them in Green-arbour court, or some other place in this town; I think that there may have been a large import of pikes into this part of the country. But that is not all, you will find that these ideas of arms were carried further. You will find there was a plate shewing the manner of the military exercise, which was engraved and published with explanations, and that some of the members formed a society at Lambeth, for the very purpose of practising military exercise; small indeed in their beginning, but that is not to the point. You will also find that the prisoner gave to Mr. Edwards a direction where he might furnish himself with pikes from Sheffield, and he gave an order to Mr. Williams for some muskets, for the use of this society, with this restraint, that he should not become employed unless he became a member with them. You will find accordingly that they drill at particular places. You will likewise see what is natural enough if it should happen after you find a resolution entered in the book of the society for Constitutional Information, that there should be a black book to enter in it the names of the enemies of their country, and at which you will not be surprized at finding persons in these affiliated societies, holding conversation about seizing the most august person in the kingdom, of seizing the most august personages in the legislature, and persons in the House of Commons, and by means of which they could know their situation and their purpose.

On the whole, I shall submit this written evidence to you, calling the parole evidence to prove a great part of the case, calling some witnesses who were persons employed by government to watch over the proceedings of these Societies, and therefore became privy to some of their transactions. Indeed government would have been wanting to itself, if knowing that there existed such Societies who were actuated by such designs; they had not taken some means of precaution in order to defeat their mischievous intentions.

I think also at Sheffield they had got to making an instrument called a Night Cat, the use of which was to annoy the horses,
by

by running into their feet, thus preventing them from going forward. If government knew of these projects going on in this country, it would have been very blameable indeed if it had hesitated to make use of some of these men, to know what really was going forward.

It is the great province of a British Jury that it is able, (and God forbid that these projects should ever give the reflection, that a British Jury are not able,) to give all due attention to the evidence, and see what credit is to be given to the witnesses who come before them.

I have forgot to mention to you that you will likewise find, that about the time that this Convention was thought of, there was a new Constitution to be thought of for these Societies. You will find in this new Constitution to be framed, they speak of a Royalist as an enemy to the liberties of his country; and a Democrat as a friend to the liberty of his country, and the whole was thrown into such a scheme and system, as was to add physical strength to the purposes of that Convention which was to assume political and civil authority.

If you find from all these circumstances under the direction of the Bench, that the Charge amounts to High Treason, and the Constitution is reduced to a miserable pass indeed, if the respect due to the administration of the law is suffered to be robbed in any manner; if you find that to be the case, you will do that which is your duty on behalf of the public, which is due to yourselves, to the public, to your posterity, in pronouncing him guilty.

But if on the other hand, after hearing his case fully stated and fully attempted to be proved, you are of opinion it is not proved; or that the offence is not made out according to the allowed interpretation of the statute of Edward the III^d. I say in conclusion, I join in the prayer which the law makes, that in that case God send the Prisoner a good deliverance.

Thomas Maclean sworn.—Examined by Mr. Bower.

Q. What are you?

A. I am one of his Majesty's messengers.

Q. Did you go at any time to the house of Mr. Thomas Adams, in Tooke's-court?

A. I did.

Q. What did you seize, books or papers?

A. Books and papers, both.

Q. When did you go there?

A. On the 12th of May last.

Q. What

Q. What did you do with the papers and books you seized there?

A. I kept them in my possession till I had marked them all.

Q. Will you look at this letter, and tell me whether this is one of the papers? (*A paper shewn him.*)

A. This is one, by the mark on it, it is a letter of Mr. Hardy's, dated 27th of March, 1794.

Alexander Grant sworn, and examined by Mr. Bower.

Q. Do you know the prisoner at the bar, Thomas Hardy?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know his hand-writing?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever seen him write?

A. I have.

Q. Look at that letter, and tell me whether you believe it to be of his own hand-writing?

A. I have never seen this letter, I cannot say whether this letter is or is not his hand-writing.

Q. Do you believe it, according to the best of your belief, that it is his own hand-writing?

A. I really cannot take on me to swear that it is.

Q. You are not asked to swear, you are asked as to your belief,

A. I believe it is, but I cannot swear it is.

Mr. Bower. You are asked for no more.

Mr. Hardy's Letter, March 27, 1794, was now read by the Clerk of the Court, as follows:

“ March 27, 1794.”

“ To the Secretary of the Society for Constitutional Information.

“ CITIZEN,

“ I am directed by the London Corresponding Society to transmit to you the following resolutions to the Society for Constitutional Information, and to request the sentiments of that society respecting the important measures which the present juncture of affairs seems to require. The London Corresponding Society conceives that the moment is arrived, when a full and explicit declaration is necessary from all the friends of freedom, whether the late illegal and unheard-of prosecutions and sentences shall determine us to abandon our cause, or shall excite us to pursue a radical reform with an ardour proportioned to the magnitude of the object, and with a zeal as distinguished on our parts as the treachery of others in the same glorious cause is notorious.