

partook of his honest pride, and participated in his victory.

Seated on the Chancery Bench, (June 2, 1778) the eyes of mankind were fixed upon him. The iron days of equity were thought to be passed; and it was fondly expected, that the epoch of his advancement would be the commencement of a golden age.

The nation felt that they had long groaned under the dominion of their own Chancellors. The slowness of their proceedings had mouldered insensibly away, in the pleadings of two centuries; some of the fairest fortunes in the kingdom; and the subtleties of the civil law had involved in the voluminous mazes of a Chancery bill, rights and claims, which the municipal courts would have immediately recognized.

At once haughty and indolent by nature; attached to a party, and distracted with politics; with a mind fitted to discountenance abuse, and appal oppression, Lord Thurlow disappointed their expectations, and, by his conduct, forcibly illustrated that great legal axiom, that the duties of the Woodcock and the Chancery are incompatible.

A change of Ministry taking place, the Chancellor was suddenly dismissed; and the man who had risen with the approbation of mankind, retired amidst the clamours of the nation.

Restored to his high office (December 23, 1783) by another change, as sudden as his dismissal had been precipitate, if his inactivity was still the same, yet his personal conduct seemed to be greatly altered. Exiled from power, he had been taught by retirement, what other men have not learned from adversity; for his present attention to business, and politeness to the gentlemen at the bar, afford a happy contrast to his former behaviour.

The character of Lord Thurlow seems to be developed in his countenance, by an outline once bold, haughty, and commanding. Like Hale, he is negligent of his person; like Yorke, he has swerved from his party; but like himself alone, he has ever remained true to his own principles.

As an orator, his manner is dignified, his periods are short, and his voice at once sonorous and commanding. More nervous than Camden, more eloquent than Richmond, more masculine than Sydney, he is the sole support of the Minister in the House of Peers. Like an insulated rock, he opposes his sullen and rugged front to the storm of dispute, and remains unshaken amidst the whirlwind of opposition.

Better acquainted with books than with men, as a politician, his knowledge of foreign affairs is narrow and confined; he is, however, well informed of the domestic and immediate concerns of the empire.

Devoted to the prerogative, he brands reform with the name of innovation; and is fond of urging the wholesome regulations of our ancient laws, in opposition to the improvements of modern projectors.

He is warmly attached, not only to the interests of the Crown, but to the person of the monarch: to the one from principle, and to the other from gratitude.

During the temporary incapacity of the Sovereign, he, for the first time, spoke and voted on the side of the people. Luckily for the empire, his own interests, and those of the State, were united—for the same bill that established a hereditary Regency, would have consigned the keeper of the King's conscience to oblivion.

As a judge, his researches are deep, and his decisions confessedly impartial: none of them, however, have procured him celebrity.

As a legislator, he has as yet acquired no reputation; and notwithstanding a voluntary proffer of his services, he has made no alteration in the laws respecting the imprisonment of insolvent debtors—an unfortunate class of men, whom he has treated with a violence that favours of the rigour of justice rather than the mildness of humanity!

His enemies, who hate him with rancour rather than enmity, dare not question his integrity, nor can they charge him with any action deserving of reproach.

His friends, who love him from esteem rather than affection, avow the greatness of his deserts, yet find it difficult to fix on his particular merits. In fine, his character is still negative and undetermined. With powers fitted for any thing, he has as yet done nothing; and although he seems the wonder of the present age, will, perhaps, scarce meet with the notice of posterity.

The manly sense, the dignified aspect, the eye calculated to over-awe, and the voice fitted to command, will not survive the frail recollection of his contemporaries!

His great predecessors have erected the noblest monuments to their own fame, by their attention to the happiness, the interests, and the welfare of their fellow-citizens.

Lord Chancellor Hardwicke planned