

utterly useless; and as they brought unnecessary odium on the Government, it would have been absurd longer to retain them.

In speaking of those laws, I cannot refrain from adverting to the individual who, having been at the head of the Government when they were passed, bears all the blame of being their author. He was one of the best and purest and most benevolent men that ever lived. In proposing those laws, he must have been actuated, as he always was, by the most upright and conscientious motives. Had he been now alive, and at the head of this Government, he would probably have been among the foremost to propose the abolition of those laws which he formerly thought necessary, but would now have seen to be useless and odious. To what a degree popular feeling prevails against them cannot be more strikingly shown than by the detraction which they have brought on the memory of one who was eminently deserving of all praise, distinguished by great talents and the most important public services, the soul of honour and virtue, admired, beloved, revered by all who knew him, but condemned by the public, who knew him not, solely on account of these laws which they abhor.

In the Bengal and Agra Presidencies the question was, whether those laws should be retained or abolished; laws, be it observed, too unpopular to be executed, which in practice had in every respect become obsolete. In the provinces subordinate to Bombay there was the same question; but that was not the question in other parts of India. The question there was, shall such laws be introduced where they have not been known? Shall odious restrictions be imposed where there is already perfect freedom? Shall despotic power be substituted in the place of law, or of liberty unrestrained even by law? At Madras there was no local law, and there were no means of making any person responsible for what was published. At the Presidency of Bombay there was a law already existing, as free as that now proposed for all India. At Madras and Bombay, to have made any law short of perfect freedom, would have been to impose restrictions which did not before exist. Such a course would surely have been wrong, and was certainly unnecessary. A law was urgently required at Madras, where liberty existed without responsibility. We could not