

To the Electors of the Town of LONDON.

When you did me the honour to elect me to your representative at the last election, you required no pledge, and none was given, except that I should endeavour to carry out Responsible Government as administered in England. Although no positive pledge was given, it was, however, generally understood that I should act with the Conservative party then in power. As for, therefore, as that party has acted consistently with its professions, in maintaining Constitutional principles, which I have acted with. But when instead of carrying out Responsible Government, allusions were evinced of a determination to subvert the very principles of the Constitution, then I felt constrained to take opinions which were a variance with those of the Conservative party. And now, as events have progressed, and the designs of the party have become more fully developed, I am compelled to reiterate my sentiments, and to extend all participation feeling and respect to that party. When the Bill for the Extension of the Franchise has been introduced, I took occasion to speak of it in such terms as to rally great attention, and I expressed, while it could be honestly expressed, that when it had passed through both branches of the Legislature, I could see no cause left for the head of the Executive Government, but to assent to it. If he declined, he would have been justly chargeable, not only with a breach of faith in permitting a measure to be introduced approving a part of the Constitutional Revenue, and then dissenting from it, but he would have found his Ministry really to resign on a point considered as a test and a principle of the Constitution. As the Bill for the extension of the Franchise has been introduced, I have been led to show what the country felt. No one, indeed, of either party, ever doubted but that the result of a new election would have been substantially the same as that just effected. Besides, the resolution of the Bill would have thrown upon the Ministry of England a responsibility which, in my opinion, was properly avoided. It, however, immediately became apparent, that the indignation which, if well merited, should have been thrown upon the proposers of the measure, and upon those who voted for it, was levelled as a personal matter upon the Head of the Government. Believing that this course suggested for its adoption in reference to this measure, would only distract and agitate the country, and being of the opinion of the outrage which had just been perpetrated, I availed myself of the first opportunity to express my views to the effect.

"That Her Majesty's duty should be incumbent in the person of her Representative, that the Legislative Assembly as the powerful prosecution of its constitutional labours should be unimpeded, that the Houses of Parliament of the country should be with safety and its records preserved, its noble and impregnable bulwark, and that the savage and exulting shouts of mob, not of the lowest orders, were circumstances well calculated to excite the saddest apprehensions and the most painful feelings. There were occasions when silence was a crime, and they were now the actors on such an occasion. He said he would be true, but he would speak plainly and he hoped, as became a rational man—it might be said he had misinterpreted the meaning of terms, but he had esteemed loyalty to his Sovereign, as inseparable from respect to her laws, and, therefore, he held those men, or those classes of men who could trample upon law and order, were essentially loyal, their brawling protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. In this, there was no question as to whether the Act was or

was expedient or inexpedient, which was said to have given rise to this sad tumult. Whatever was its character, it was carried by the only means known to our laws, and assented to, as it properly might be, by the Representative of the Sovereign, as a constitutional right. No member of the House had left in the streets, or given more decidedly against the passing of that measure by the House than he did here; yet, he said that however much he could have wished that the bill had neither been introduced nor passed by the House, he should have permitted the necessity that could arise in existing circumstances, have compelled him to do so. He said that he would have assented to the Bill. While, therefore, as a mere measure, apart from a constitutional point, he had deeply regretted, and should always regret, the passing of the bill, he said, and he said it boldly, that he was glad that as the test and evidence of a constitutional right amongst men, both Whigs and Tories, it had to be seen the Royal Assent. It would not have been wise in the Representatives to have withheld his assent from the Bill, but he had become convinced that the Bill was not the expression of the feelings of the Sovereign, and that everything that was afterwards done to the House and to every other British

This was spoken in the midst of excitement, but my sentiments were undisturbed. For this expression of opinion, and that subsequent expression in an address, and my subsequent disapproval of these acts, my Conservators were here and elsewhere have charged me with speaking from the Conservative party. If the leading members of the party have adhered to the principles they professed, and if their language and conduct have been orderly and becomingly high-toned patriots, and if the conduct I have pursued, and the sentiments I have uttered, have been the reverse of this, then I am justly charged with this accusation. But if they are, on the other hand, have acted contrary to their professions, and in such a manner as to show that, for the sake of power, they would subvert every principle of free government—and of the Government, I shall be acquitted of the charge.

And a remark has been made, that it is not a reasonable Government, having given its sanction to it, although not with its sanction to it. She did as she has always done, and she will do so to every other man, and she will do so to every other man, and she will do so to every other man, and she will do so to every other man. But, assuming that it was the most noble as Bill which could be introduced—the best working of Responsible Government, and the most successful course of the Conservative party, may well be illustrated by this very Bill. And first, all those who are in favour of the Bill, the majority, will submit. If, therefore, the majority in the House chose to pass the bill, the minority was bound to submit to its operation, when it became law. If it were wrong, an appeal to the good sense of the country would have set at right, and displaced those who were rash enough to do what the country disapproved. Secondly, if, to carry out any measure, or class of measures, or to carry on the Government with a just, it became necessary to change the majority of the Legislative Council, it was right to do so, and this is, in fact, to make that House so far elective, as not to thwart the free action of the Government. But for this change the Ministry are answerable to the Country—responsible for carrying out the Government, and for the means by which it is effected; and if in any respect they have been corrupt, the next elections would have set all right. Thirdly, in passing this bill, the Representative of the Sovereign did no more than by the Constitution, he had

a right to do, and in my humble judgment, what he was bound to do, not only as the Head of the Government, but as an act of fair dealing with his Ministry. But, instead of a reasonable appeal to the sense of the people, instead of the minority being in opposition, what they would have wished, being in power—we have seen that, immediately on the passing of the bill, the Governor-General was assailed, not by the mob, but by persons of education and standing, who have been applauded by the mob. Just following this, the Parliament Buildings, Library, and Records, were destroyed by a mob of course, by a responsible one! This flagrant act was palliated, its perpetrators, or mod, and all attempts to bring the case justly, thwarted, disapproved, and resisted. In the same spirit and with the same end, the Governor-General was afterwards burdened only attacked in the streets, and missiles, not as before, merely circulated to insult, but to endanger, if not to deprive him of his life, were hurled at him, on an occasion when either resistance or retirement was out of the question. But even these acts were not condemned by the ultra-Conservatives. English statesmen of all shades of opinion in the manifesto, pronounced unfavourably of these proceedings. An echo to the United States, with the motto of "powerful," attached to it, was next modelled, chiefly by those, whose edicts had just been so generously wounded by rewarding, it was said, those who had a few years before propounded the same scheme as a crime for their grievances! If an execution was a crime, and the right to dispense with allegiance denied in 1837, what has made the crime less onerous and how can allegiance be thrown off in 1840? If it be a crime now, it was surely no crime then. But if the highest penalties were justly awarded them, would they be unjustly awarded now? If to subvert the Government now, be patriotism, it was so then. To allege, you could find with one breath, and association with the next, is to be absurd. But this scheme, so well meant for what it professed, was too glaring even to outrage the majority, for whom it was intended, and it should little beyond the point from which it emanated. Next followed a Convention, a democratic assembly, which they who set in two years before would have denominated as republican, and conservative of every thing British. In this assembly were debated propositions subversive of what Conservatism sought to conserve; and the concluding question left open to the country with its sanction, was a demand of the 22 Resolutions, unopposed, namely, an Elective Legislative Council.—As to crowning an individual branch of the party has recently, and while professing the most exalted loyalty, resolved, that not the two, but the three branches of the Legislature shall be elective! True Conservatism is to preserve our English institutions, this is totally to subvert them. I have all along deprecated the extremes into which parties in this Province run, but I was not prepared to find that the two extremes of ultra-democratic loyalty and ultra-elaborate radicalism would meet in the same radical point; nay, that the extremely loyal would in some degree outstrip the extremely radical. The extreme radical of 1837 who did not disavow loyalty altogether, sought only the redress of grievances to the extent to which England has granted them, excepting an elective Legislative Council, but that part of the party referred to, then, now and always boasting of loyalty, seek this and other radical changes—an elective Governor and other elective functionaries not then thought of.

I was not in favour of the introduction of

Responsible Government, as the man it was granted to us, because I was afraid we could not as a people appreciate its advantages and carry it out. But I confess my fears in this respect never rested upon the party or the men who have been the most to try to subvert it. If this form of Government was good for the ultra part of the Conservative party when in power, it should be good for it when out of power; and it did not seem to me that part of the party to show, that being in power they were Conservatives, but that out of power they were Radicals and destructives; and that the distinction, in truth, between the one and the other was wanting, or not having the power.

Responsible Government was a step to our social progress, and in our political position, made as I humbly thought an advance of our times, and times to improve it, but having been made, it could not be reversed. And that I believed was fairly to work it out, and I do believe, that if we would but do this, it possesses the most safe and certain means of redressing our evil, which a government can address. It was so intended to improve, we would be less free, it may work worse, was intended for the improvement of the people and really politicians, but only a slow way to the welfare of the country.

But I could, with regard to the Governor-General, but it is what we did, I was constrained to do, and I am dissatisfied. The bill, it is true, is in favour of in-lawing and

We possess a great country, a vast of resources, and a people capable of developing these resources. Our great leading mistakes are one, and entire, it we could but see it so. Since the government has been based upon the old plan, there is now no great political question about which to be afraid, but the hate of the country is the narrowest, but the political parties assail each other. Rather than forgive this they would not forgive it. The feeling, common to both, is, that we only can do the right thing in the right way. The country is a vast and fertile, and we are becoming a free and a civilized people. I have on all occasions spoken against the introduction of a new system of government, and as a man I have always been a radical, and have ever been to see signs of her and other wisdom. I have always looked up to the British Constitution as the best model of a good government, and our country with that country an inviolable inheritance. I have always been a loyalist, as a sentiment sacred to good order, and to the maintenance of our social rights. I will not, therefore, be of any party, whose acts subvert that constitution, and spit that loyalty. But I know, there are some among you whose opinions differ from mine, and who think disorder and violence things to be encouraged, with such, to whatever party they belong I wish to have nothing to do. Best, however, in holding the opinions which I have candidly expressed, and acting as I have done, I may misrepresent this community, I have resigned my seat, which you know, and mine, alike, require that I should not hold, with any imputation, I place myself before you again as a candidate for your suffrages. If consistently with my views and opinions, I can represent you, I shall esteem it an honor to be again elected, but if I cannot, I shall nevertheless be content to retire with the conviction, that I have done nothing and said nothing as your representative which can cast any reflection upon you.

I have the honor to be,
Your obt. servt.

JOHN WILSON.

London, December 12, 1849.