

tions, must, in a short time, be drained of all their specie, to the ruin of their commerce, both internal and external.'

On the part of the ministers, these objections were answered, as follows :

'First of all, it is necessary to banish from the present question all this parade of science and erudition, so pompously displayed by our opponents, and which they have collected from the books of speculative men, who have written upon the subject of government. All these refinements and arguments of natural lawyers, such as Locke, Selden, Puffendorff, and others, are little to the purpose, in a question of constitutional law.

'And nothing can be more absurd, than to hunt after antiquated charters, to argue from thence the present English constitution ; because the constitution is no longer the same ; and nobody knows what it was, at some of the times that are quoted ; and there are things even in Magna Charta, which are not constitutional now. All these appeals, therefore, to the records of antiquity, prove nothing as to the constitution such as it now is.

'This constitution has always been subject to continual changes and modifications, perpetually gaining or losing something ; nor was the representation of the commons of Great Britain formed into any certain system, till the reign of Henry VII.

'With regard to the modes of taxation, when we get beyond the reign of Edward I. or king John, we are all in doubt and obscurity ; the history of those times is full of uncertainty and confusion. As to the writs upon record, they were issued, some of them according to law, and some not according to law ; and such were those concerning ship money ; to call assemblies to tax themselves, or to compel benevolences ; other taxes were raised by escuage, or shield service, fees for knight's service, and other means arising from the feudal system. Benevolences are contrary to law ; and it is well known how people resisted the demands of the crown, in the case of ship money ; and were prosecuted by the court.

'With respect to the marches of Wales, this privilege of taxing themselves was but of short duration ; and was only granted these borderers, for assisting the king, in his wars against the Welsh in the mountains. It commenced and ended with the reign of Edward I. ; and when the prince of Wales came to be king, they were annexed to the crown, and became subject to taxes, like the rest of the dominions of England.

'Henry VIII. was the first king of England who issued writs for it to return two members to parliament ; the crown exercised the right of issuing writs, or not, at pleasure ; from whence arises the