

THE CASE OF LORD MELVILLE, 1805.

"Over the *acts*, and thereby over the *persons* of the possessors of the powers belonging to the Administrative Department of Government—the person of the Monarch alone excepted—the House of Commons possesses that control and superiority which is constituted by the direct as well as exclusive right of prosecution, and the virtual power of dismission:—including to the extent of the suffering the loss of office and emolument."—*Bentham's Works*, Vol. V., p. 197.

SIR,

Reference having been made to the case of Lord Melville, and the proceedings taken by the Crown pending his impeachment, I am induced to give a short sketch of these proceedings, taken from *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, for 1805.

Lord Melville's career in Parliament prior to this date had been highly successful, though not very creditable to his political consistency; but, during this year (1805), ugly reports affecting his administration of the Navy Department—of which he was Treasurer and First Lord—assumed a tangible reality; and the Whig party pressed them upon the consideration of the House of Commons, and finally carried his impeachment.

On the 8th April, 1805, Mr. Whitbread moved a series of resolutions in the House, in which the *gravamen* of the charge against Lord Melville was thus stated:—

"That the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Melville, having being privy to and connived at the withdrawing from the Bank of England, for the purpose—as stated by Lord Melville—of private emolument to Mr. Trotter, sums issued to Lord Melville, as Treasurer of the Navy, and placed to his account in the Bank, according to the provisions of the Act, has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty."