

convey it on the wings of the wind to the remotest verge of their extensive country, and that the reverberation of public opinion, re-echoed from these extremities to the Capitol, will influence the general legislature to pass some law for the correction of this great evil at the fountain-head—a law which would be approved by the vast majority of this moral and intellectual nation, and give the United States a new claim to the gratitude and admiration of the world. I am, my dear sir, yours respectfully,

J. S. BUCKINGHAM.

REASONS FOR LEGISLATIVE INTERFERENCE TO PREVENT THE PRACTICE OF DUELLING.

Addressed to the Members of both Houses of Parliament in 1836,
by J. S. BUCKINGHAM, Esq. M. P.

At an early period of the present Session I placed a Notice on the Order Book of the House of Commons, announcing my intention to ask leave to bring in a Bill to prevent the unchristian and barbarous Practice of Duelling. From a variety of causes, wholly beyond my power to control, this motion was delayed and postponed, from time to time, always against my wishes, as I desired its discussion at the earliest possible period, until there was evidently so strong a disinclination to listen to any thing on the subject, under the existing pressure of other public business, that the motion was ultimately withdrawn.

As I am persuaded that the unwillingness to listen to any proposition for abolition of this murderous practice, arises chiefly from the thick mist of prejudice by which the question is surrounded, and the habitual, but unreflecting veneration in which this custom is held; I think it but just to submit the principal facts and reasonings which have induced me—who at one period of my life saw so little objectionable in Duelling, as to hazard my own life at a moment the most critical and painful in all my history—to come to the conclusion that it is as inefficient for all good purposes, as it is powerful for evil.

There is one reason that has hitherto prevented gentlemen from denouncing Duelling in the senate, and seeking to effect its abolition by law; and this has been, the fear of being thought wanting in courage or spirit, and seeking to shelter their personal timidity under a legal prohibition. This want of moral courage is far more frequent than the absence of animal bravery. There are many men who would boldly face the cannon's mouth, though they could not stand up against an absurd and revolting custom of society, if Fashion had stamped it with its approbation; while the fear of man is more powerful in its operation on the great bulk of the community than the fear of God, there will be always found men weak enough to yield up their judgments to those fears, and violate what they know to be the injunctions of religion, the duties of morality, and the ties of parental and domestic affection, because they cannot summon courage enough to withstand the reproaches of the world.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties, I shall endeavour to show that the practice of Duelling is unchristian, unjust, ineffectual, and absurd; that the present state of the law respecting it is inefficient, and inoperative; and that it is perfectly practicable to devise a remedy, which will admit of the amicable and pacific adjustment of all those differences now made the subject of appeal to arms, and settled often in the shedding of innocent blood.

To show that it is unchristian, requires, perhaps, but little proof. A hundred texts of Scripture might be quoted to establish the utter irreconcilability of